

**Mengal resigns from NA**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan National Party leader Sardar Akhtar Mengal has announced his resignation from the National Assembly. In his statement, Mengal expressed frustration, saying, "I am announcing my resignation on Tuesday. I am unable to do anything for my people. There is a lack of interest in the issues of Balochistan, and whenever we discuss these issues, they are blacked out."



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# Burden of inflation reducing: PM

— Cabinet endorses Trade Framework Agreement between Pakistan, Southern Common Market

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that after bringing the inflation rate down to the single digit of 9.6%, more efforts were required to bring in economic growth and stability besides addressing the challenges of circular debt and tax evasion.

"Alhamdulillah, the burden of inflation is reducing gradually. A single-digit inflation rate of 9.6% was reported in August this year which was 27% this month of last year. But we have to keep up our efforts to achieve economic growth and stability, create productive employment, reduce expenditures by rightsizing and downsizing, shrink circular debt, curb evasion of receipts and eliminate smuggling," the prime minister said addressing the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him.

He congratulated the finance minister, State Bank governor and other economic team members for the achievement and said that serious and tireless efforts were underway to achieve the challenging task. "This gradual improvement. We have to take it forward swiftly... The task is cumbersome but we will reach our destination if we remain focused on targets," he remarked.

He said sincere efforts always led nations to excel and Pakistan too could achieve the same as the country had immense resources including competent minds, natural resources and youth. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the cabinet members that the prerequisites of IMF program were under supervision and all-out measures were being taken to fulfill the conditionalities. "Insha Allah, we will fulfill all the IMF conditionalities timely which will follow the consideration and approval by the IMF Board. This will start a new journey. But we should keep in mind that this should be the last IMF program in Pakistan's history," he remarked.

Earlier, in the day, the prime minister wrote on his X that the reduction in Pakistan's annual inflation rate to 9.6% was not an accident but an outcome of the government's efforts. "Pakistan's annual inflation rate has dropped to 9.6% in August, first single-digit figure in nearly 3 years according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. This is not an accident! These are results," the prime minister said. He said that his government's focus was on providing relief to the common man. "Our work is not done, and a lot more needs to

be done but we are making real progress," he remarked.

The federal cabinet also gave ex-post facto approval and endorsed the signing of Trade Framework Agreement between Pakistan and Mercosur, a South American trade bloc comprising Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

The prime minister, who chaired the meeting of the federal cabinet, said that the South American Market could prove advantageous for the Pakistani products which could not be explored yet, he remarked. He instructed the authorities concerned to swiftly pursue the agreements and MoUs related to the economy which had been pending for long.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction over the inflation rate declined to single-digit in August this year and appreciated the finance ministry, State Bank governor, and other allied departments for their efforts in this regard. Calling for more efforts to bring in economic stability, the prime minister said that the creation of employment opportunities was among government's priorities.

The federal cabinet approved the signing of an MoU between the Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Albania's Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs for bilateral political consultation. On the foreign ministry's recommendation, the cabinet also endorsed the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Secretariat, its Personnel and Representatives of Members of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) 2010.

The body approved extension in the tenure of Syed Junaid Ikhlq, Senior Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training as Chairman of Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), till the appointment of a regular officer on the post.

The federal cabinet formed a committee to discuss the drafts of the Religious Tolerance and Interfaith Harmony Policy that will present its report within a month after consultation with all stakeholders. The meeting also endorsed the decisions of Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases made in its meeting on August 26, 2024. The cabinet members also offered Fateha for Member of National Assembly late Rana Afzaal Hussain, the brother of Federal Industries and Production Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain.

## Bill proposing increase in SC judges' strength lands in NA

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A bill seeking an increase in the number of judges in the Supreme Court was tabled in the National Assembly on Tuesday, a day after the similar bill was introduced in the Senate.

"The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2024" was introduced by independent Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir in the upper house to increase the number of apex court judges to 21. In the bill tabled today in the lower house, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) parliamentarian Daniyal Chaudhry called for increasing the number of judges to 23.

The statement and objects and reasons of the bill tabled in the Senate say that increasing the number of judges in the apex court is important because it deals with a significant backlog of cases. The proposed legislation was met with criticism from PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan in today's NA session, who said that such an amendment could be brought only by the government as per the Constitution of Pakistan. "Legislation on the number of Supreme Court judges cannot be done through a private member bill," Khan said.

The PTI lawmaker said that the country's top court works 155 days of the year compared to India's apex court, which works 190 days of the year. "We should increase the Supreme Court's working days to address the rising number of pending cases," he added.

Speaking on the floor of the assembly, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar concurred with the PTI chief's suggestion to increase the number of top court's working days, saying that the duration of the apex court judges' annual holidays should be curtailed. He said that formerly the judges used to embark on long ship voyages to Britain so the apex courts had 60 days holidays twice a year. "Now these holidays should be reduced," he said, adding that the number of apex court judges is still 17 while the population of Pakistan has soared to over 240 million. He, however, revealed that the government has not yet made a final decision on increasing the number of Supreme Court judges and the matter will be decided after a detailed deliberation.

**Judicial reforms govt's top priority:** Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that judicial reforms are the top priority of the present government.

Speaking in the National Assembly on Tuesday, he said the government is actively working on it over the last five months. Eight bills were laid before the house on Tuesday. These included: The Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Article 184); The Criminal Laws Amendment Bill, 2024, the Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Amendment in Article 51, 59 and 106); The Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Article 177, 193 and 208); The Contempt of Court (Repeal) bill, 2024; The Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Article 198); The Civil Servants Amendment Bill, 2024 and the Allocation of Special Seats for Deserving Persons in Universities Bill, 2024.

army authorities will take the petitioner into custody. The brazenly illegal and unconstitutional manner in which he ... has been treated by state authorities over the last two years ... make this a real concern. Such action will also frustrate and undermine the aforesaid relief granted to the petitioner by the honourable LHC as well as the bails granted to him," the petition said.

It further maintained that the instant matter was of "immense public importance as it has a direct bearing on the state of rule of law in the country and involves questions of the petitioner's rights, especially those concerning liberty, fair trial, due process, and dignity". The petition pleaded that the respondents be restrained from handing over Imran to military custody and ordered to ensure that he is kept in civilian custody, subject to the jurisdiction of civilian courts.

A separate petition that prayed for the same relief said: "The balance of convenience lies heavily in favour of the applicant. The respondents will not suffer any inconvenience if the interim relief prayed for is granted. However, the applicant will suffer grave inconvenience if the army authorities get his custody since he will stand deprived of many of his fundamental rights. There is also the apprehension that he will be manhandled. "That in the event that the relief prayed for in the instant application is not granted, the applicant will suffer irreparable loss as his fundamental rights will be infringed in violation of the judgment of the Supreme Court [...] Such loss of liberty and other fundamental rights cannot be compensated in terms of money or in any other manner."

## Imran petitions IHC against 'possible' military custody

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan on Tuesday petitioned the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against his possible military custody for the trials under way against him related to the May 9 cases.

Imran submitted a petition, to the IHC on Tuesday, under Article 199 of the Constitution, under which a high court may take up a matter when there is "no other adequate remedy is provided by law."

The petition mentioned the Islamabad inspector general (IG) of police, Punjab chief secretary, Punjab IGs for police and prisons, Adiala Jail superintendent, Federal Investigation Agency director general, and the interior, defence, and law secretaries as respondents.

The petition said that since the Lahore High Court (LHC) quashed Imran's physical remand in the May 9 cases, "reports have been circulating on television, print, and social media that the petitioner will be shifted to the custody of army authorities in connection with the cases regarding the events of May 9 and 10, 2023. "Many observers and commentators have expressed the view that the army authorities will take the petitioner into custody and try him before a court martial." It argued that Imran's apprehensions were lent credence by Barrister Malik's remarks, adding that it would be a "complete travesty of justice and due process" if Imran was handed over to the military since it would be going against a Supreme Court verdict that the trial of civilians through a court martial was unconstitutional.

"There is a genuine possibility that the

# KP CM approves implementation of APS project

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: In a landmark move towards transforming the social protection regime in the province, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has approved the proposed strategy for implementing the Adaptive Social Protection (APS) Project of the provincial government and authorized the Planning & Development Department to enter into an agreement with the concerned development partner (GIZ) for this purpose.

He was chairing an important meeting in this regard held here at the

Chief Minister's Secretariat on Tuesday. Additional Chief Secretary Home and Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Muhammad Abid Majeed, Additional Chief Secretary P&D Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, SMBR Ikrumullah Khan, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments, and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

The Adaptive Social Protection project, to be implemented with the technical assistance of GIZ, aims to strengthen the social protection system with a special focus on improving linkages among relevant sectors as well as institutionalizing the use of



social protection in disaster management. Under this project, an Integrated Social Protection Information System (Data Centre) would be established, thereby ensuring the all-time availability of complete and accurate information about

the initiatives, programs and activities carried out in the field of social welfare sectors.

Similarly, developing a legal framework, governance and coordination mechanisms, and a monitoring and evaluation framework are also

among the important features of the project. Apart from this, research would be conducted on studying poverty dynamics and vulnerability assessments for evidence-based planning and implementation, in addition to developing a Disaster Risk Reduction Policy for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a Multi-Hazard & Vulnerability Risk Assessment (MHVRA) in the high-risk districts of the province. The Chief Minister, on this occasion, emphasized the need to have complete and accurate data regarding deserving individuals/ households from across the province, adding that the ultimate purpose behind this exer-

cise is to make social activities more effective and result-oriented.

"The provincial government spends a huge amount through multiple welfare initiatives, which benefits would reach the deserving ones in real sense," he remarked, and said that the Adaptive Social Protection project will prove to be a milestone achievement in this regard. He also directed the quarters concerned to immediately implement his directives regarding holding mass wedding ceremonies for poor girls at divisional headquarters of the province, adding that the government would provide a grant of Rs 2 lac per girl for this purpose.

**LHC issues notice to IGP**  
**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court has issued notices to Punjab Inspector General of Police, Dr. Usman Anwar, and the CCPO, demanding explanations regarding the arrest of PTI Lahore President, Sheikh Imtiaz. The court, led by Justice Chaudhry Iqbal, was hearing a contempt of court petition filed by Sheikh Imtiaz's wife, Saima Imtiaz, challenging the arrest of her husband and accusing IG Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of MQM (P) called on Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif.

## Military's top brass vows not to let hard-earned successes be reversed

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: The military leadership has vowed reaffirmed that the Pakistan Army, with the unwavering support of the people, will not allow the hard-earned successes against terrorism to be reversed.

The pledge was renewed during the Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir at GHQ on Tuesday.

Participants offered Fateha and paid profound tribute to the ultimate sacrifices made by the martyrs of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, and citizens who have laid down their lives in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in pursuit of peace and stability of Pakistan. The forum was briefed on the prevailing geo-strategic environment, national security challenges, and strategic and operational responses to emerging threats.

In assessing the inimical forces, malicious actors, subversive proxies, and the facilitators of Pakistan's external and internal adversaries, particularly those active in Balochistan and KPK, the forum deliberated on a range of measures to neutralize these threats.

It emphasised that the Army is a



disciplined institution, upholding the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and loyalty to the state and institution. "The institution's well-established and rigorous system of accountability ensures that these values are preserved with unwavering commitment, allowing no room for exceptions or partiality. This strict adherence to accountability fortifies the Army's integrity, ensuring that no individual is above the law or exempt from scrutiny."

Recognizing the urgency and significance of a robust and effective legal system, COAS emphasized that the Pakistan Army would continue to extend comprehensive support to the government, administrative apparatus, and law enforcement agencies in taking swift and lawful action against terrorists, anarchists, and criminal

mafias. The forum also expressed satisfaction over ongoing efforts against illegal spectrum operating in collusion with terrorist networks.

The critical need to safeguard national cyber space through stringent cybersecurity measures was also underscored. In a show of solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, who continue to suffer gross human rights violations, the forum honored the martyrs of the Freedom Movement. The blatant continued violence and genocide of Palestinians by Israel were also condemned in the strongest terms. The forum expressed confidence in the operational preparedness and readiness of the Pakistan Army and vowed to continue to uphold the standards in pursuit of professional excellence.

## 9 dead in Balochistan, KP rain related incidents

**F.P. Report**

QUETTA: Five children died across Balochistan while four people lost their lives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the past day as monsoon rains continued to wreak havoc countrywide, officials said on Tuesday.

Deaths mount countrywide as various areas continue to receive monsoon showers along with the remnants of cyclonic storm Asna that brought with it heavy rains for Sindh and Balochistan. Since July 1, a total of 39 people have died in Balochistan in rain-related incidents, Younus Mengal, head of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority's control room, (PDMA) told.

The deceased include 19 children, five of whom died in three separate incidents on Monday, Mengal said. The PDMA official said a new spell of rain entered Balochistan a day ago and was expected to continue till tonight in 22 districts. Relief and rescue efforts were under way in the province, he added.

Detailing the deadly incidents, Mengal said a pair of brothers drowned in flash-floods in Zhob District, and their bodies were recovered by the district administration and the PDMA. In Khuzdar District's Tootak area, three children were "immediately rescued" by Levies officials after they fell into a dam but were taken to a hospital, where two of them passed away, the official said. A fifth minor, Mengal added, drowned in a flash flood passing by the Kech River in Kech District.

The PDMA official confirmed that 11 Balochistan districts have been declared calamity-hit as of yet, where the authority's aid efforts were under way. Mengal further said that in view of alerts by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), holidays of PDMA and other government employees had been suspended.

According to a PDMA report issued on Monday, at least 17 people have been injured in rain-related incidents across Balochistan from July 1 to September 1. Some 895 houses have been completely

damaged while more than 14,000 have been partially damaged during the period, with Khuzdar and Jaffarabad being the most affected. Over 111,400 people province-wide have been affected by the rains as seven bridges, 74 kilometres of roads and seven medical health units have been left damaged. On the agricultural side, 58,830 acres of crop have been affected while 373 livestock have perished so far.

Meanwhile, four people lost their lives as heavy rainfalls lashed parts of KP during the last 24 hours, a report issued by PDMA spokesperson Anwar Shahzad said. According to PDMA, three persons died after a bus was struck by a landslide in Upper Kohistan, while a minor was struck by lightning in Malakand District. Meanwhile, the Karakoram Highway, which had been blocked last night due to heavy downpours, was reopened for all kinds of traffic on Tuesday. Several vehicles, including a bulldozer, were stuck on Monday night due to landslide debris brought by the flooding water in the Shukryat area of Upper Kohistan.

The clearance of the road today allowed stranded passengers to leave for their destinations. National Highway Authority (NHA) Deputy Director Ghulam Abbas confirmed that the road was blocked at the Dasu area but now was reopened for all traffic. He said the vehicles stuck in the floods (mudslides) had also been pulled out from the debris.

Reiterating the same, Upper Kohistan District Police Officer Mukhtiar Ahmad, said vehicles stranded on both sides had left for their destinations safely. The PDMA report said that the scenic tourist hotspot, Kumrat Valley Road in Upper Dir's Thal area, was blocked after parts of it caved in after massive floods hit the area. It added that authorities in Upper Dir and other districts had been asked to reopen the roads for traffic at the earliest and establish alternate routes for commuters. According to the report, 96 people had died and 133 injured across KP in rain-related incidents from July 1 to September 2 (Monday).

## MQM delegation meets PM

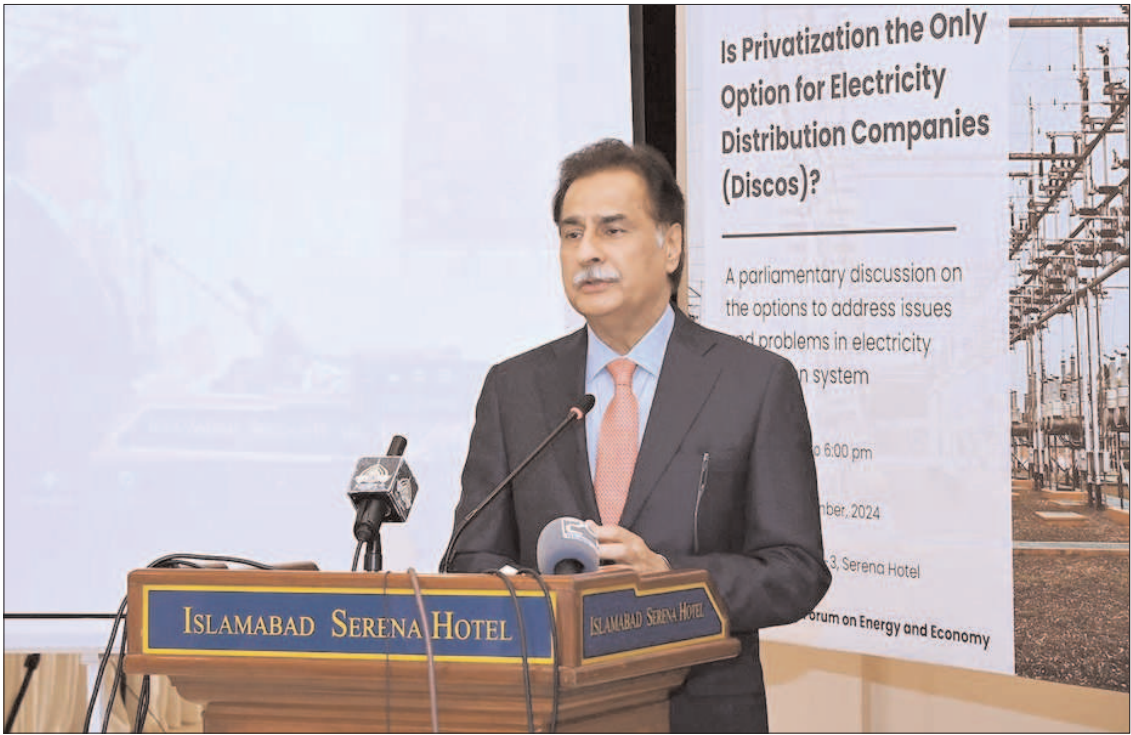
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Pakistan on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and appreciated his economic policies which led to the reduction in the inflation rate to a single-digit.

The MQM delegation, which was headed by party chairman and Minister for Science and Technology, Federal Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and comprised MNAs Dr Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal and Syed Aminul Haq, also lauded the prime minister's business-friendly policies and measures to boost country's exports, according to a PM Office press release.

The delegation members put forward their proposals for economic development and uplift of the people of the country's economic hubs, particularly those of Karachi. Calling the MQM a key coalition partner, the prime minister said that the work on national development initiatives was at a swift pace in coordination with the coalition parties. He assured the delegation that the resolution of the issues confronting Karachi city was among the government's priorities for it being the most important one and a backbone of the national economy.





ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq addressing the participants of the Seminar on "Parliamentary consultation on strategic options for electricity distribution system in Pakistan."

### Murtaza Wahab calls on Faryal Talpur

KARACHI (PPI): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday called on Pakistan Peoples Party's Women Wing President and Member of the Provincial Assembly Faryal Talpur.

He congratulated her on performing Umrah and presented her with flowers. The Mayor Karachi also informed her about the ongoing development projects in Karachi and the performance of municipal institutions during the recent rains.

He mentioned that the PPP is committed to the development and progress of Karachi and assured that we will live up to the expectations of the people of Karachi, with visible progress being made. Barrister Murtaza Wahab also had a detailed discussion with Faryal Talpur about various issues regarding Karachi.

### Govt to form special force for forest

LAHORE (INP): Punjab government has decided to form a special force for forest and wildlife protection and satellite monitoring of woodlands in province.

Provincial government has approved digital monitoring of five big forests of Punjab as the chief minister has directed for digital mapping of forests and wildlife to collect correct data. The government has approved monitoring of Salt Range, Changa Manga, Pirowal and Guzara forests with AI and drones.

The government in a session has decided to conduct digital scanning of the province's rare and precious forests spreading over 1.648 million acres of land. The meeting also decided for digital marking of trees alongside the wildlife and forests.

Punjab's chief minister has directed for constitution of a special force for protection of forests and wildlife. Province's senior minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that the modern technology and artificial intelligence (AI) will conduct monitoring and a forest guard or any officer if found involved in forest cutting will be sent to jail.

### LDA seals 40 properties

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority (LDA) teams, in an on going operation against commercialization fee defaulters, sealed another 40 properties here in Gulshan Ravi and Shadman on Tuesday.

Acting on the directives of LDA Director General Tahir Farooq, action was taken against properties including electronic shops, private offices, schools, paint shops, workshops, furniture stores, and others.

The sealed properties had outstanding commercial fee payments amounting to millions of rupees.

## Judicial reforms Govt's top priority: Law Minister

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that judicial reforms are the top priority of the present government.

Speaking in the National Assembly on Tuesday, he said the government is actively working on it over the last five months.

Eight bills were laid before the house on Tuesday. These included: The Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Article 184); The Criminal Laws Amendment Bill, 2024, the Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Amendment in Article 51, 59 and 106); The

Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Article 177, 193 and 208); The Contempt of Court (Repeal) bill, 2024; The Constitution Amendment Bill, 2024 (Article 198); The Civil Servants Amendment Bill, 2024 and the Allocation of Special Seats for Deserving Persons in Universities Bill, 2024.

The chair referred the bills to the standing committees concerned.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly today passed a resolution recommending the government to take immediate steps for the provision of state of the art medical facilities in

federal capital hospitals and high quality healthcare for all patients.

It was moved by Ms Aliya Kamran.

Responding to a calling attention notice, Minister for Water Resources Musadik Malik said under Green Pakistan Initiative, a plan has been devised to bring barren land in the country under cultivation and enhance per acre crop production. He pointed out that Punjab and Sindh provinces have so far identified land for this scheme.

The house has now been adjourned to meet again tomorrow Wednesday at eleven am.

## Sindh govt, opposition agree to avoid negative politics

KARACHI (PPI): In a landmark decision aimed at fostering educational reform, members of both the government and opposition in Sindh have agreed to set aside their political differences and avoid any negative politics related to education.

The consensus was reached during a meeting between Sindh's Minister of Education and Mineral Development, Syed Sardar Ali Shah, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Sindh Assembly, Ali Khurshidi, who was joined by a delegation from MQM Pakistan. The meeting, held in the Minister's chamber, included key assembly members such as Adil Askari, Najam Mirza, Rashid Khan, and others.

Discussions centered on the development of education in Sindh, with both sides committing to a collaborative and constructive approach.

Shah welcomed the opposition's proposals regarding education, stress-

ing that no negative politics should interfere with the education of Sindh's children. Opposition leaders praised the Minister's initiative on school adoption, which had been communicated to assembly members, and assured that any issues identified within the education sector would be addressed factually and without exaggeration.

Emphasizing the importance of cooperation, Shah remarked, "A democratic system is incomplete without the opposition, and their serious commitment to advancing education in Sindh is commendable." He further noted that despite ongoing challenges, significant strides have been made in educational reform, including the implementation of the Teachers' Licensing Policy and Non-Formal Education programs, which have been lauded nationwide.

Opposition Leader Ali Khurshidi announced that

MQM Pakistan's 37 MPs would soon present a list of schools in their constituencies along with final proposals for the school adoption initiative. He stressed that after taking on the responsibility of monitoring the selected schools; their MPs would continue their diligent efforts and provide full cooperation. Khurshidi reaffirmed that improving schools in their constituencies remains their top priority.

Shah commended the opposition's serious approach in response to his letter regarding school adoption, noting that this collaborative effort would strengthen the tradition of mutual oversight and improvement among both opposition and government members. It was also agreed that the series of meetings to identify and address educational reforms and challenges in Sindh would continue in the future.

## Qamar honey trap case: Two main accused remanded into police custody

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday handed over two main accused - Hassan Shah and Rafique alias Fiki - to police on 7-day physical remand in the play-wright Khalilur Rehman Qamar honey trap case.

Earlier, the police produced both accused before ATC Judge Irfan Haider after an identification parade. The investigation officer submitted that both accused were identified in the identification process. Khalilur Rehman Qamar identified both in jail, he

added. He requested the court to grant a 20-day physical remand of both accused for investigations.

However, the court handed over the accused to police on 7-day physical remand and ordered for their production upon expiry of the remand term, September 10.

Meanwhile, the court also extended judicial remand of accused Amna Urooj, in the case, and directed police to complete the challan against her as soon as possible.

The police had produced

Amna Urooj before the court on completion of her judicial remand. The investigation officer submitted that the challan was being prepared and sought time for its completion.

The alleged attempted kidnapping of Khalilur Rehman Qamar came to light in early July, leading to the arrest of nearly all the suspects by the police.

The Sundar Police had registered a case of robbery and abduction against several accused based on a complaint by Khalilur Rehman Qamar.

### CM to attend IBA Karachi- Stanford university event at US

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has travelled to America to participate in three different events at Stanford University and he will be back next week.

The events include a collaboration between IBA Karachi and Stanford University's Life Design, a Pandemic Preparedness Initiative at Biolab, and a panel discussion titled "From Silicon Valley to Karachi - Transforming Education for Innovation and Local Solutions."

IBA Karachi is collaborating with Stanford University's Life Design Lab towards the development of a Design Lab in Karachi. The collaboration is aimed at developing a Design Lab in Karachi. The Chief Minister will attend the event and participate in discussions.

The CM will also visit Sandford Biosecurity and Pandemic Preparedness Initiative at Biolab and will meet with its Director Dr Jeffrey S Glenn. Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah wants to establish such a lab at the Sindh Infectious Disease Hospital & Research Centre, NIPA, Karachi. Mr Shah will also participate in the Panel discussion From Silicon Valley to Karachi - Transforming Education for Innovation and Local Solution.'

### 8 Sept rally will proceed as planned: Haleem

KARACHI (PPI): PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh on Tuesday responded strongly to the Senate Bill concerning the permission of public rallies in Islamabad, stating that PTI's rally on September 8 in Islamabad would proceed as planned, despite the government's attempts to hinder it.

Mr Sheikh claimed that the ruling party was trembling at the prospect of the PTI gathering, which had already been granted permission. He warned that any attempt to block the rally would not deter the nation and could lead to further action.

He criticized the controversial bill as an attack on freedom of expression, emphasizing that the Constitution grants every citizen the right to peaceful protest. He accused the government of attempting to turn Pakistan into a "banana republic" and urged for legislation that promotes national progress instead of laws that oppress the public.

Sheikh also highlighted that the nation was ready to demand the release of Imran Khan, predicting that the September 8 rally would be the largest in history.

### CPWB rescues 112 child beggars

LAHORE (APP): The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) rescued over 112 child beggars in the provincial capital in August. In a press statement issued here on Tuesday, CPWP Chairperson Sarah Ahmed said that child rescue operations were being conducted in the city on a daily basis due to which a decrease in child beggars was observed at major thoroughfares.

## SHC slams NADRA over blocked ID card of retired employee

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) expressed strong displeasure with NADRA officials over the blocking of a retired employee's national identity card, highlighting the agency's mishandling of citizens' records.

During the hearing, Justice Amjad Ali Sahito criticized NADRA's performance, stating that citizens are suffering due to the authority's errors. "NADRA officials themselves tamper with people's records," he remarked.

Justice Salahuddin Panhwar added that millions are

affected by NADRA's mistakes, questioning the integrity of the organization's processes. Justice Sahito further commented on the hardship faced by citizens, noting, "People are being forced to run from court to court."

Twelve lakh passports have been returned from Saudi Arabia—who is responsible for this? Directors and Assistant Directors at NADRA are involved in tampering with records. How can a person from another family be added to someone's family tree without the consent of NADRA officials?"

The court ordered NADRA to review the records of petitioner Muhammad Hassan within 15 days. The petitioner's lawyer informed the court that Hassan, a retired railway employee, had his ID card blocked in 2021, and again in 2022. NADRA claims that six unknown individuals are listed in Hassan's family tree, though he has no knowledge of them and has already submitted an affidavit.

The lawyer pleaded with the court to unblock Hassan's ID card, as his pension has been suspended due to the blockage.

## Talented youth,' a valuable asset of country': CM

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that talented youth is a valuable asset of any country.

Chairing a review meeting on matters related to Punjab Skills Development Fund in order to make youth a productive human resource, here on Tuesday, the CM said youth will be trained in modern market-driven technologies to excel in global job market.

Through Punjab Skills Development Fund, youth will be guided on the path of financial independence, she added. The CM was briefed by the authorities concerned that youth will be given IT skills and on-job training through Punjab Skills Development Fund. She was also apprised on complete roadmap of Punjab Skills Development Fund in this regard.

CM Maryam Nawaz was apprised that 'Chief Minister Internship Program' has been started in Punjab. She was further briefed that admission to courses for internships and IT skills has been made merit-based for youth.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb and Chairperson Task Force on Skills Development MPA Adnan Afzal Chatha attended the meeting. Principal Secretary to CM Sajid Zafar Dal, Secretary Implementation Danish Afzal, CEO PSDF Ahmed Haleem Khan and other relevant officers were also present.

**CM puts provincial administration on high alert:** Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has put all relevant departments on high alert in view of fear of urban flood-

ing due to heavy rains.

The CM directed DG Khan administration to remain ready to cope with floods and landslides in Mount Sulaiman area. She also directed the authorities concerned to ensure drainage of rainwater as soon as possible.

The CM said that arrangements should be made for early drainage of rainwater from low-lying areas of all cities including Lahore, adding that rain water should not be visible on roads and streets for a long time, all resources should be utilized.

CM Maryam Nawaz directed district administrations, PDMA, Rescue 1122 and other relevant organizations to remain alert to deal with any emergency situation. She also directed traffic wardens to maintain smooth flow of traffic during rain.

## Commissioner reviews operations taken against profiteers

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi, Syed Hassan Naqvi on Tuesday reviewed the efforts being made by the District Administrations to control the government fixed prices of essential commodities and the actions taken against profiteers.

The Commissioner Karachi reviewed the operation against illegal profiteering in a meeting chaired by him here, said a statement.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners, Additional Commissioner-I Ghulam Mehdi Shah, Additional Commissioner-II Ghazanfar Ali Shah, Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Rabia Syed and Assistant Commissioner General Hazim Bangwar.

The deputy commissioners briefed about the efforts made to control prices and prevent adulteration in milk, meat, and other food items in their respective districts.

DC Malir Irfan Salam informed the commissioner about the crackdown on factories producing oil from dead animals and chemical mixed milk, carried out in collaboration with the Food department.

He reported that approximately 700 liters of oil were confiscated by the food department, and the factories were sealed, and two individuals, including

the owner, were arrested.

The Deputy Commissioner Malir further stated that, along with the Food Department team, Assistant Commissioner Ibrahim Hyderi took action against a factory mixing chemicals in milk in Lal Muhammad Khural Bara Bhens Colony.

The Food Department seized 720 kilograms of powder used to make milk and destroyed 800 to 1000 liters of chemically made milk on the spot. One person was arrested, and a case was registered at the Sukhan Police Station while the factory was sealed.

The commissioner directed the deputy commissioners to ensure strict enforcement of official prices. The deputy commissioners shared details of price control actions in their respective districts. The commissioner emphasized the need to make price control measures more effective.

The meeting was also briefed on the relocation of intercity bus stands to the highway. It was reported that bus stands established within the city have been made non-functional.

The meeting was informed that, in the crackdown against profiteers, actions were taken against 138 vegetable sellers, 199 poultry sellers, and 62 meat shopkeepers in 12 days.

## Arora for foolproof arrangements for Mariamabad pilgrimage

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora on Tuesday chaired a review meeting on arrangements for the pilgrimage to Mariamabad during his visit to Sheikhupura.

The deputy commissioner and other relevant officers briefed the minister on the arrangements for the pilgrimage. Minister Ramesh Singh Arora directed that best and foolproof arrangements be ensured for the pilgrimage, which will take place from September 6 to 8.

The minister said that in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab government is taking extensive measures to protect the rights of religious minorities and added that Pakistan has always promoted peace, and minorities play a vital role in nation-building.

The provincial minister emphasised that providing a peaceful environment for all religions to practice their worship and celebrate their festivals is the top priority of the Punjab government. He directed the district administration and the police department to ensure best and fool-proof arrangements during the pilgrimage.



LAHORE: Textile Design show of Lahore College for Women University 2024 by the students at Al Hamra Art Gallery. —APP Photo

## LESCO detects 484 power pilferers

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 484 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) during its anti-power theft campaign in last 24 hour.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Tuesday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 177 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations,

while 27 accused have been arrested by the respective police.

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations.

The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.

During last 24 hours of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were disconnected and charged with detection units. Among the seized connections 16 were commercial, 07 agricultural, and 461 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 344,634 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 12.932 million.



# CS directs accelerated restoration of roads in Chitral and Kumrat



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, chaired a review meeting today, during which he instructed the Communications and Works (C&W) Department to expedite the restoration of link roads in Chitral and Kumrat valleys.

These areas have been significantly affected by recent Glacier Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) he said. The Chief Secretary underscored the urgency of completing the restoration work before the onset of winter, ensuring

that communities in these valleys remain connected through restored roadways.

He commended the district administrations, rescue and line departments for their swift rescue and relief efforts to support the affected communities and tourists.

In addition, the Chief Secretary directed the district administration to develop a comprehensive plan for the rehabilitation or relocation of households affected in Upper and Lower Chitral districts.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary also highlighted the need to address

the educational demands of local communities in Upper Chitral, particularly regarding girls' higher education.

Citing his recent visit to Upper and Lower Chitral, he acknowledged the community's requests for better educational facilities. He directed the Elementary and Higher Education Departments to devise a plan for providing hostel facilities for matriculate girls in proximity to colleges within the district.

This initiative aims to enable girls from remote rural areas to pursue higher education.

The Chief Secretary

emphasized that similar plans should be rolled out across other rural areas of the province.

Moreover, the Chief Secretary instructed the Elementary and Secondary Education Department, along with the Industry, Commerce, and Technical Education Department, to develop and finalize plans for skill development among school graduates.

The initiative should ensure the optimal use of school infrastructure across the province, aiming to equip every student with at least one vocational skill upon graduation, he said. Relevant Administrative Secretaries, Commissioner Malakand division, Deputy Commissioners of Upper and Lower Chitral and Dir Upper districts and other officers attended the meeting which reviewed rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts in flood affected areas of Upper & Lower Chitral and Kumrat Valley in Dir Upper.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister on Finance and Inter-Provincial Coordination, Muzamil Aslam addressing a press conference.

## UoP, SDPI workshop forcuses on academic research

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Department of Economics at the University of Peshawar, in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), successfully organized a workshop under the umbrella of the National Network of Economic Think Tanks (NNETT).

The event focused on the importance of linking academic research with industry needs to formulate evidence-based policy solutions.

The workshop was inaugurated with welcome remarks by the Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Muhammad Naeem Qazi of the University of Peshawar, who underscored the necessity of strengthening the ties between academia and industry, especially under the limited government grant spaces. The Vice Chancellor emphasized that such collaborations are essential for translating research into actionable policy recommendations that can address local challenges effectively.

Quote: "The collaboration between universities and policy institutions like



SDPI is crucial for developing policies that are not only evidence-based but also contextually relevant. This workshop is a step towards ensuring that academic research plays a central role in shaping the future of policy-making in Pakistan," said the Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar.

Abdullah Khalid, Project Coordinator from SDPI provided the opening remarks, highlighting the objectives of the workshop, which included the translation of academic findings into actionable policy recommendations and the importance of relevant

local frameworks in policy development. Ahad Nazir, Associate Research Fellow, the facilitator for the workshop, led the participants-included faculty members from the University of Peshawar, IMSciences, and the University of Agriculture, Peshawar-through various sessions focused on the challenges and opportunities in bridging the gap between research and policy.

The workshop covered a range of topics including the relevance of academic research to local contexts, the development of local policy frameworks, and the strategies needed for effective

policy communication. Special attention was given to case studies that demonstrated the impact of well-coordinated and evidence-based policies in different sectors.

The event also provided an introduction to the National Network of Economic Think Tanks (NNETT), highlighting its role in promotion regional policy development through evidence-based research. Participants engaged in interactive sessions discussing the practical implications of research in policy-making and the ways to enhance industry-academia linkages.

## All set for National Marathon Race



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: All preparations have been finalized for the National Marathon Race in Peshawar which will take place on September 6 coinciding with Pakistan's Defence Day. The race will start at the BRT Chamkani Station and conclude at the Hayatabad Sports Complex. Organized by the Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, The marathon will see participation from athletes across the country Registration for the event will continue until September 6 and so far over 2,000 athletes have registered. Cash prizes worth 1 million PKR will be distributed among the winners.

The opening ceremony will be graced by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur as the chief guest while the closing ceremony will be attended by the Sports Advisor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Fakhar Jahan

who will distribute prizes among the victorious athletes.

To review the race arrangements the Director General of Sports KP Abdul Nasir Khan inspected the track alongside the CEO of Trans Peshawar, Deputy Director of Operations Jamshed Baloch and Organizing Secretary Syed Jafar Shah were also present on the occasion. According to the DG Sports KP Abdul Nasir Khan this is the first time in history that a National Marathon Race is being organized on Defence Day under the provincial sports directorate. The event is being conducted in collaboration with the Athletics Federation of Pakistan and athletes from across the nation will participate.

Syed Jafar Shah has been appointed as the Organizing Secretary for this significant event which is being held for the first time on the BRT track. Various committees have been formed to ensure the successful organization of the race which will start at 9:30 PM from Chamkani Business Center and conclude at the Hayatabad Sports Complex.

The top performers in the National Marathon Race will be awarded cash prizes worth 1 million PKR The first-place winner will receive 300,000 PKR the second-place winner will receive 200,000 PKR and the third-place winner will receive 100,000 PKR. Additionally the top 20 athletes will also receive various prizes and cash awards.

## KPBC to grant high court license to 18 lawyers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council has approved the issuance of high court licenses to 28 lawyers from different districts.

In this regard, a meeting of the Enrollment Committee of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council was held under the chairmanship of Justice Ijaz Anwar, which was attended by former Chairman Executive Committee and Member Bar Council, Syed Mubashir Shah and Member Noor Alam Khan respectively.

On this occasion, interviews were conducted for high court licenses for lawyers from various districts, and a total of 28 lawyers were issued high court licenses, which will be formally enrolled by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council.

## E-transfer policy to ensure merit: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Minister for Education, Faisal Khan Tarakai on Tuesday said that e-transfer policy has been launched to ensure transparency and impartiality in transfer procedure of teachers.

He was chairing a meeting that among others was attended by Secretary Education, Masood Ahmad, Special Secretary, Qaisar Alam, Additional Secretary, Fayaz Alam and concerned officials.

PESHAWAR (APP):

Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture Zahid Chanzeb has said that his department faces various challenges like policy continuity, stability, security issues, infrastructure improvement, environmental challenges, foreign investment, training of personnel associated with the tourism industry and the extol of handicrafts would require strong planning and policies.

He expressed these views during the program Ask the Minister arranged by the Creative Wing of the Department of Information

and Public Relations on Wednesday here.

Advisor for tourism and culture stated that under leadership of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, exertion is headway on projects such as the development of better tourism infrastructure at tourist spots, digital tourism, public-private partnerships, the exploration of new tourist routes, cultural and traditional festivals, and environmental protection. This will strengthen the tourism industry and boost the economy.

He said that the provincial government has planned a

comprehensive strategy for the renovation and replenishment of historical buildings, mosques and places of worship to ensure these sites are preserved for future generations.

Speaking about the promotion of tourism in the merged districts he said that the arrangement of the Orakzai Festival, initiation of camping pods and rest houses not only accentuated tourism but also improved the local economy in the merged districts.

Discussing eco-tourism, the Advisor indicated that an eco-tourism campaign has been launched in collabora-

tion with all development authorities. This campaign includes better cleanliness arrangements at tourist spots, the distribution of biodegradable bags, tree plantation campaigns and measures to protect wildlife.

Zahid Chanzeb further stated that the protection and restoration of cultural heritage in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a priority of the provincial government, as the presence of ancient culture such as Gandhara art and culture attracts foreign tourists, which in turn boosts the economy and presents a positive image of the country globally.

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

Humera Ambreen

**HIS efforts to empower women are not only about promoting gender equality but also about unlocking the full potential of the province's workforce.**

The youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are another key focus of Governor Kundi's leadership. He has championed vocational training programs designed to equip young people with the skills they need to enter the workforce and contribute to the province's economy. Understanding the importance of engaging the youth in positive activities, he has also supported sports and recreational programs, recognizing their role in promoting physical and mental well-being. These initiatives are aimed at ensuring that the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are prepared to lead the province into a prosperous future.

Governor Kundi's dedication to youth empowerment is evident in his efforts to link education with employment opportunities. He fostering partnerships between educational institutions and industries, he is

helping to create pathways for young people to transition smoothly from education to meaningful employment. His vision for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's future is one where every young person has the opportunity to realize their potential and contribute to the province's growth.

**Preserving and Promoting Cultural Heritage**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a province rich in cultural and historical significance, and Governor Kundi has made it a priority to preserve and promote this heritage. Recognizing the importance of the ancient Gandhara civilization, which is of global cultural significance, Governor Kundi has worked to enhance religious tourism, particularly for Buddhist pilgrims. He has engaged with international stakeholders, such as the Bangkok Chamber of Commerce, to discuss cultural exchanges and the promotion of tourism linked to the Gandhara heritage.

Governor Kundi's efforts to preserve cultural sites and promote religious tourism are part of a broader strategy to leverage the province's historical assets for economic

and cultural development. By improving infrastructure around these sites and fostering cultural ties with countries like Thailand, Governor Kundi is helping to attract international tourists and boost the local economy. His vision is to position Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a hub of cultural and religious tourism, showcasing the province's rich history to the world.

**Compassionate Leadership in Times of Crisis**

Throughout his tenure, Governor Kundi has demonstrated a deep sense of compassion and empathy for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in times of crisis. His consistent support for victims of terrorism, natural disasters, and other tragedies has provided comfort and reassurance to those in need. Whether visiting hospitals, attending condolence meetings, or offering prayers for the deceased, Governor Kundi has shown that he is not only a leader but also a caring and supportive figure within the community.

Governor Kundi's compassionate approach extends to his broader governance

style. He has worked tirelessly to ensure that the needs and concerns of the people are addressed, whether through policy initiatives or direct engagement. His commitment to unity and social harmony has been a driving force behind his efforts to maintain peace and stability in the province. By fostering a sense of community and shared purpose, Governor Kundi has helped strengthen the social fabric of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**Energizing the Governorship: A New Era of Active and Engaged Leadership**

For the past six years, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have not witnessed the kind of dynamic and proactive leadership that Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has brought to the office. His tenure marks a significant departure from the passive governance of the past, as he has infused the role with energy, enthusiasm, and a deep commitment to the people he serves. Under his leadership, the governorship has evolved into a force for positive change, one that is visibly engaged with the public and dedicated to addressing

the province's most pressing challenges.

Governor Kundi's approach to leadership has been characterized by a hands-on, democratic style that actively involves the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the decision-making process. Unlike his predecessors, who were often perceived as distant and detached, Governor Kundi has made it a point to be a visible and accessible figure. Whether it's meeting with community leaders, visiting areas affected by crises, or engaging with the youth and women of the province, he has shown that he is a governor who listens to the people and works tirelessly on their behalf.

His leadership style is not just about making appearances; it's about making a real impact. Governor Kundi has reinvigorated the governor's role, turning it into a symbol of hope and action. His energy and enthusiasm have breathed new life into the office, making it a powerful platform for advocating for the needs of the people and driving forward initiatives that promote economic growth, social empowerment, and cultural preservation.

At the heart of Governor Kundi's leadership is a deep sense of empathy. He has shown time and again that he is not just a political figure but a compassionate leader who genuinely cares about the well-being of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His responses to crises, whether natural disasters or terrorist attacks, have been marked by personal engagement and emotional support. Governor Kundi's visits to hospitals, his meetings with grieving families, and his participation in condolence gatherings have all demonstrated his commitment to standing with the people in their times of need.

This empathetic approach has made Governor Kundi a beloved figure in the province. The people see him not just as a leader but as one of their own—someone who understands their struggles and is dedicated to alleviating them. His ability to connect with people on a personal level has been a key factor in his success, helping to foster a sense of unity and collective purpose in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Governor Kundi's tenure has also been marked by a renewed sense of visibility

and democratic engagement. For too long, the office of the governor in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was seen as a largely ceremonial position, with little real influence on the day-to-day lives of the people. Governor Kundi has changed that perception entirely. By actively involving himself in the affairs of the province and making the governorship a driving force for change, he has shown that the office can be a powerful tool for promoting development and improving the lives of the people.

His approach has been inclusive and participatory, encouraging dialogue and collaboration between the government and the citizens. Governor Kundi has consistently emphasized the importance of public input in the governance process, whether through town hall meetings, consultations with civil society, or direct engagement with marginalized communities. The democratic style of leadership has improved governorship and strengthened government-citizen relations.

**A New Dawn for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**  
Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's leadership during

times of crisis has been characterized by determination, compassion, and a clear vision for the future. His focused efforts in combating terrorism, revitalizing the economy, empowering women and youth, and preserving the province's cultural heritage have made him a guiding light for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Governor Kundi's initiatives are not just about addressing immediate challenges; they are part of a broader vision for prosperous and resilient future for the province.

As Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues to navigate its path forward, Governor Kundi's leadership remains a source of hope and inspiration for its people. His determination to foster a secure, thriving, and inclusive society is paving the way for a brighter future, where the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can achieve their full potential and live in peace and prosperity. Governor Kundi's tenure is setting a new standard for what governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can and should be—a leadership that is visible, empathetic, and deeply committed to the people.

Concluded





## In brief

### Man guns down father, mother F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: A man gunned down his father, stepmother and injured stepbrother over property dispute, police said on Tuesday. According to details, the incident took place in Hassanabad area of Charsadda where dispute emerged over distribution of ancestral house. The culprit annoyed over the share he got, opened straight fire killing his father, stepmother, injured a stepbrother and escaped the scene. The bodies and injured were shifted to Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital Tangi for medico-legal formalities. The police registered a case into the incident and started raids to arrest the culprit.

### Three crush plants sealed F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: District Administration Lower Dir here Tuesday sealed crushed plants situated in Samarbagh for creating pollution in the area. According to details, acting on complaints of people, assistant commissioner Samarbagh and assistant director industries inspected various crush plants. During inspection, three crush plants were sealed for creating pollution and ignoring directives of district administrations to maintain area clean and pollution free. The three crush plants were also established on unapproved areas. District administration has warned action against crush plants that are creating pollution and operating in contravention of the directives of provincial government.

### Student abducted for ransom freed

FAISALABAD (INP): The police rescued a student abducted for Rs30 million ransom within 24 hours and arrested two kidnappers here on Tuesday. SSP Investigation Abdul Wahab said that Ayan, a student of grade IX was abducted by car riders outside his residence in Madina Town of Faisalabad. He said that the kidnappers had demanded Rs30 million rupees from heirs for release of the abducted youth. However, on directives of CPO Kamran Adil special teams were constituted which utilizing the technical sources safely rescued the boy within 24 hours besides recovering the ransom money. Two kidnappers were also arrested during the operation while efforts were underway to arrest their culprits.

### Enrollment drive underway F.P. Report

DI KHAN: District Education Officer (DEO) Male Dera Musarrat Hussain Baloch has said the second phase of the enrollment campaign was underway across the district and parents were getting their children enrolled in public schools. Talking to the journalists here at his office, the DEO said that a target of enrolling 20,000 children in public schools of the district was set for this year. He expressed the hope that the set target would be achieved successfully as 17,000 children had already been enrolled during the first phase of the drive. He said the increasing number of admissions in public schools was an ample proof of the confidence being showed by the parents on public schools. He said the free of cost education was the basic right of each child and the same was being ensured in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The government was providing a safe learning environment in government schools under the supervision of highly-qualified teachers even those having PhD degrees. Besides, Musarrat Hussain said, free books and other facilities were also being provided at these schools.

# Wapda employees hold protest

## Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: On the call of provincial leaders against the attack on WAPDA employees during the recovery in Swabi, a protest demonstration was held by All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Workers Union Kohat. Leaders of both divisions, Haji Younas Shah, Muhammad Dawood, Syed Abbas Raza, Syed Isaa and other leaders, all the staff of PESCO Kohat participated in the protest and went to the press club.

Speaking, the speakers said that the administration should immediately arrest the killers of Kamran Lineman, protect the staff and meet the shortage of staff, if the demands are not met, there will be no hesitation in shutting down the electricity in the province. On this occasion, an FIR was also demanded for the attack on the meter reader in Shahpur area.

Commissioner for

## brain storming of children on civic responsibilities:

In order to review progress on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program & "Awami Agenda" a high-level meeting was held with Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Mutasim Billah Shah in the chair at Deputy Commissioner House here Tuesday.

The meeting besides the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram was also attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Heads of Line Departments.

At the meeting, various departments presented their performance reports, on which the Commissioner expressed his satisfaction and directed them to further improve their performance. He directed holding of special awareness sessions for the school going children on a daily basis for their brain storming on cleanliness, hygiene and other basics of routine life.

He also emphasized the need for employees in government departments and institutions to adopt polite behavior with the public. Mutasim Billah said that we should never pay attention to our departments and institutions less than our homes, if not more. He added we should take ownership in the offices at all levels.

He clarified that the purpose of their visits to offices is not the discouragement rather meant to support so as to improve their services to the general public. Commissioner Kohat directed all the departments to appoint a focal person for each work under their purview so that they are accountable for their responsibility. He further directed that the cleanliness is not partial but full time work and its continuity should be maintained at all cost.

# JUI-F workers to join 'Khatm e Nabowat' moot

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl district chief Sirajud Din and general secretary Maulana Muhammad Huzafa informed local journalists that hundreds of the party workers would participate in the proposed 'Khatm e Nabowat' conference to be held at the Minar e Pakistan ground, Lahore on Sept. 7. Talking to local journalists at the Timergara press club they said the party had finalized its preparation to make the event a success.

The JUI-F leaders said that party chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and other central leaders would address the event on the eve of golden jubilee of the khatm e Nabowat. They said that eight management committees for arranging transport had been tasked to complete their preparation soon. The JUI-F activists said the Lahore Khatm e Nabowat conference would set a new direction for the country's politics.

Meanwhile the district president of the Aalami Majlis Khatm e Nabowat Maulana Haji Muhammad said that his workers would

also participate in the JUI-F proposed event in Lahore on Sept 7. Talking to local journalists at Talash he said that the finality of prophethood was part of the Muslims' faith and they would never compromise on it.

**Tehsil council meeting:** The Timergara tehsil chairman Mufi Irfanud Din chaired an informal meeting of the council at his office during which the participants expressed anger over the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government failure to provide them with powers and funds. Speaking on the occasion, Mufi Irfan said the KP government was least interested in empowering local government bodies. He said the local government representatives had planned to hold a massive protest rally for their rights at Peshawar on Sept 4.

He said that local government representatives from the village council to the tehsil councils would participate in the rally that would continue till acceptance of their demands. He said the provincial government had kept deprived the local government bodies of

funds and powers. He said the local government representatives would not hesitate to knock the doors of the Supreme Court of Pakistan if their demands were not accepted by the provincial government.

**Enrollment drive:** The elementary and secondary education department male Lower Dir kicked off its enrollment drive at Timergara. The district education officer Inayatullah Khan while talking to local journalists on the occasion said that so far 10 thousand out of school children had been enrolled in government schools in the Lower Dir district.

He said the department had launched its fresh drive to bring the out-of-school children to educational institutions in the district for which special teams had been formed. The DEO asked parents, area elders, ulama and teachers to play their active role in enrolling the out-of-school children. He said the KP government had decided to enroll 300,000 children during the ongoing academic session.

# Journalists elected members for press club cabinet

## F.P. Report

LARKANA: An important ceremony was held at the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Press Club in Larkana under the chairmanship of Press Club President Muhammad Nawaz Umrani. The program was started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, after which the general secretary Sarfaraz Saleem Phulpoto presided over the ceremony.

On this occasion, the newly joined senior journalist Irshad Ibrahim Shaikh was unanimously elected as the senior vice president of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Press Club Larkana and Yasir Khoso as cameraman. President Muhammad Nawaz Umrani, special guests Muhammad Ashiq Abaro, Gulshir Leghari, Barkat Ali Abro, Khudabakhsh Kalhoro, Fida Chandio, Ghulam Abbas Umrani, Journalist Abdul Hameed Sheikh, Kamran Ali Dythu,

Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Press Club Vice President among journalists. 1 Sahil Lund, Vice President - 2 Abdul Khaliq Jagirani, Information Secretary Mashooq Ali Khoso, Joint Secretary Mukhtiar Ali Lashari and Abdul Majeed Odhani garlanded the newly arrived officials.

He asked to speed up and to raise his voice for the rights of the oppressed people to get the rights of the journalists. Senior Vice President Irshad Ibrahim Sheikh said that I have always supported the oppressed.

Being in this press club, I will always play the role of independent journalism and I will be active in expanding the press club. On this occasion, Fida Hussain Chandio addressed the journalist friends and said, "Thank you to the friends of the press club for allowing me to join this program." I agreed and he further said

that my friend Irshad Ibrahim Shaikh is a hardworking journalist. At the end of the ceremony, a prayer was asked for good and blessings.

**Orientation seminar held:** An "Orientation Seminar" was organized for first year students in Government Girls College which held at Arts and Commerce College Larkana Auditorium Hall. Regional Director Colleges Larkana Professor Altaf Hussain Abro presided over the ceremony, while Additional Director Inspection Professor Ajaz Ali Jamali participated as a special guest. Senior students of Commerce College presented the welcome tableau.

After the recitation of Holy Quran and Naat, the professors of the college gave detailed information to the students about the facilities available in the college and the benefits of commerce discipline.



MINGORA: Vice Chancellor of Khyber Medical College, Zia-ul-Haq and Secretary Information, Arshad Khan inaugurating Barikot College of Nursing.

## Action against illegal housing schemes directed F.P. Report

KARAK: Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq said that students are national assets and future of the country while imparting of quality education and character building of students is pivotal for making the future of the country brighter. He expressed these views while visiting government model high school Dhunni. Chief Executive Officer Education Muhammad Anwar Javed was also accompanied by DC.

DC directed the headmaster and teachers to focus on imparting quality education and character building of students so that in future, students could prove useful and brighten future of the country. He also directed the headmaster to arrange monthly meeting of school council and to improve performance of teachers and condition of the school. DC also inspected government primary school And Girls Elementary School Dhunni and checked attendance of staff, cleanliness, academic activities. DC directed the CEO Education to hold inquiry against absent teacher. DC assured the villagers that condition of schools and performance of teachers would be improved besides provision of all missing facilities in the schools.

**One looted:** Two dacoits looted motorcyclist in precinct of police station Sukheki Mandi and sped away. According to details, Ali Ahsan resident of village Jandoki was on its way to his village on motorcycle along with his mother. On the way, two unidentified armed dacoits stopped him on gun point, snatched fifteen thousand rupees and sped away.

Meanwhile, a man was killed on the spot while another was injured when a speedy driven truck hit their motorcycle on Lahore-Sargodha Road near Sukheki Mandi.

According to details, Mudassar and Muhammad Ayub were going towards Sargodha on motorcycle when an over speeded truck hit their motorcycle. As a result of which, Mudassar was killed on the spot and Muhammad Ayub was injured. Truck driver sped away from palace of accident.

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## Putin meets Mongolian leader

MOSCOW (AFP): Russian President Vladimir Putin met his Mongolian counterpart in Ulaanbaatar on Tuesday, his first visit to an International Criminal Court (ICC) member since it issued a warrant for his arrest last year.

Putin was welcomed by an honour guard as he landed in the capital the night before to begin the high-profile trip, seen as a show of defiance against the court, Kyiv, the West and rights groups that have all called for him to be detained. He then met with Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh at Ulaanbaatar's imposing Genghis Khan Square, also known as Sukhbaatar Square.

A band blared out martial tunes and the Russian and Mongolian national anthems as the two leaders stood in the square near Mongolian soldiers in traditional garb with some on horseback. The Russian leader is wanted by the Hague-based ICC for the alleged illegal deportation of Ukrainian children since his troops invaded the country in 2022.

Ukraine has reacted to the trip with fury, accusing Mongolia of "sharing responsibility" for Putin's "war crimes" after authorities did not detain him at the airport. Kyiv had urged Mongolia to execute the arrest warrant, while the ICC said last week all its members had an "obligation" to detain those sought by the court. In practice, there is little that can be done if Ulaanbaatar does not comply. A vibrant democracy situated between authoritarian giants Russia and China, Mongolia enjoys close cultural links to Moscow as well as a critical trading relationship with Beijing.

It was under Moscow's sway during the Soviet era. Since the Soviet collapse in 1991, it has sought to keep friendly relations with both the Kremlin and Beijing. The country has not condemned Russia's offensive in Ukraine and has abstained during votes on the conflict at the United Nations. The Kremlin said last week it was not concerned that Putin would be arrested during the visit. Genghis Khan square was decked out Tuesday with huge Mongolian and Russian flags for Putin's first visit to the country in five years.

A day earlier, a small protest had gathered there, with a handful of demonstrators holding a sign demanding "Get war criminal Putin out of here". Another protest planned for Tuesday was prevented by tight security from getting anywhere near the Russian leader. They instead gathered around a block from the Monument for the Politically Repressed, which honours those who suffered under Mongolia's decades-long Soviet-backed communist regime. Putin's visit is being held to mark the 85th anniversary of a decisive victory against Imperial Japan by Mongolian and Soviet forces. Ahead of the trip, Putin pointed to a number

of "promising economic and industrial projects" between the two countries in an interview with Mongolian newspaper Unuudur shared by the Kremlin. Among those was the construction of the Trans-Mongolian gas pipeline linking China and Russia, he said. The Russian president also said he was "interested in pursuing substantive work" towards a trilateral summit between himself, Mongolian and Chinese leaders.

Mongolia's government has not commented on the calls to arrest Putin. But a spokesman for President Khurelsukh took to social media to deny reports that the ICC had sent a letter asking it to execute the warrant when he visits. Russia does not recognise the jurisdiction of the ICC. And Amnesty International warned that Mongolia's failure to arrest Putin could further undermine the ICC's legitimacy, while emboldening the ex-KGB spy, in power for almost a quarter of a century. "President Putin is a fugitive from justice," Altantuya Batdorj, executive director of Amnesty International Mongolia, said in a statement.

"Any trip to an ICC member state that does not end in arrest will encourage President Putin's current course of action and must be seen as part of a strategic effort to undermine the ICC's work." Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that his army was rapidly advancing in eastern Ukraine, citing this as proof that Kyiv's cross-border incursion into the Kursk region was failing. His comments came just before he left Russia for a visit to Mongolia, a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC) -- a trip seen as a show of defiance following the court's issuance of an arrest warrant for him last year. Moscow's forces have been notching up territorial gains on the sprawling frontline in eastern Ukraine even as Ukraine launched a shock border incursion onto its own territory. Putin acknowledged the difficulties Ukraine's counteroffensive -- the largest attack by a foreign army on Russia since World War II -- was putting on Russian border regions, but struck a defiant tone. "People are experiencing and undergoing severe hardship, especially in the Kursk region," Putin said in a speech to schoolchildren at a televised event in Siberia. "But the enemy did not achieve the main task that they set themselves: to stop our offensive in the Donbas... We have not had such a pace of offensive in the Donbas for a long time," he said.

The Donbas refers to a large area of eastern Ukraine covering the regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, which Moscow claims to have annexed. Analysis of troop positions showed that Russia's advance in the east gained ground in August, with its forces homing in on the key logistics hub of Pokrovsk, in Ukraine's Donetsk region.

## Russian officials found bodies of 22 killed in copter crash

MOSCOW (AP): Russian emergency officials said they had recovered the bodies of all 22 people from a helicopter that crashed in Russia's Far East leaving no survivors.

The crash occurred in Kamchatka - a pristine peninsula with numerous volcanoes, known for its rugged beauty and rich wildlife. A Mi-8 helicopter with 19 tourists and three crew members on board, took off close to the Vachkazhets volcano and rescuers located the wreckage the following day.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said, citing emergency officials, that it likely crashed due to poor visibility in bad weather conditions. The local branch of the Investigative Committee, Russia's top law enforcement body, said in a statement that an investigation has been launched into a possible pilot error or a technical malfunction. The Mi-8 is a two-engine helicopter designed in the 1960s. It is widely used in Russia, where crashes have been frequent, as well as in neighboring countries and many other nations.

Russian media described the flight operator Vityaz-Aero as one of the largest carriers in the Kamchatka region. After a helicopter crash in 2021, in which eight people were killed, authorities banned the company from transporting passengers pending an investigation into a possible violation of flight safety rules. Vityaz-Aero is the biggest of several local carriers that fly tourists to the Kronotskiy reserve, a top attraction that includes Russia's only geyser basin.

## Ukraine criticises Mongolia

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said that Mongolia's failure to arrest visiting Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin, wanted on an international warrant, dealt a severe blow to the international criminal law system. Putin arrived in Mongolia for talks likely to focus on a new gas pipeline connecting Russia and China.

An International Criminal Court arrest warrant issued last year against Putin obliges the court's 124 member states, including Mongolia, to arrest the Russian president and transfer him to The Hague for trial if he sets foot on their territory. Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Heorhiy Tykhiy said Mongolia's failure to detain Putin was "a heavy blow to the International Criminal Court and the system of criminal law." "Mongolia has allowed an accused criminal to evade justice, thereby sharing responsibility for the war crimes," he wrote on the Telegram messaging app. Ukraine, he said, would work with its allies to ensure Mongolia felt the consequences.

## Finland plans to ban Russians

HELSINKI (Reuters): Finland's government is proposing to ban most Russian citizens from buying property in the Nordic country in a move to protect national security, Defence Minister Antti Hakkanen said. Relations between Finland and neighbouring Russia have soured since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which prompted Helsinki to join the NATO military alliance after decades of non-alignment.

The proposed ban on real estate purchases would exempt dual citizens and Russians with permanent residence in Finland or other European Union nations, and is subject to expert consultations before a later vote by parliament.

"The regulations are aimed at preventing possible hostile influences against Finland," Hakkanen told a press conference. Finland is already monitoring some 3,500 properties in the country linked to Russian owners, the minister said without elaborating.



MANILA: Rescuers and residents ride a truck as they cross a street flooded by heavy rains from Tropical Storm Yagi, locally called Enteng, in Cainta, Rizal province, Philippines.

## Venezuela issues arrest warrant for opposition leader Gonzalez

CARACAS (Reuters): Venezuela's attorney general's office said a court has issued an arrest warrant for opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez, accusing him of conspiracy and other crimes amid a dispute over whether he or President Nicolas Maduro won a July election. Attorney general Tarek Saab shared a photo of the warrant with Reuters via a message on the application Telegram.

The issue of an arrest warrant against Gonzalez would amount to a major escalation in Maduro's government's crackdown against the opposition following the disputed election. Venezuela's national electoral authority and its top court have said Maduro was the victor of the July 28 election with just over half of the votes, but tallies shared by the opposition show a resounding victory for Gonzalez. The warrant follows weeks of comments from top government officials saying Gonzalez and other members of the opposition should go to jail.

"This man has the nerve to say he doesn't recognize laws, he doesn't recognize anything. What's up with that? That's unacceptable," Maduro said in a broadcast on state television. "Citizens agree that laws have to work and that officials do their job." The opposition, some Western countries and international bodies like a

United Nations panel of experts have said the vote was not transparent and demanded publication of full tallies, with some outright decrying fraud. A Gonzalez spokesperson said they were awaiting any notification of a warrant but made no further comment. The opposition has always denied any wrongdoing. "They have lost all notion of reality," opposition leader Maria Corina Machado said on X. "Threatening the President-elect will only achieve more cohesion and increase the support of Venezuelans and the world for Edmundo Gonzalez."

The opposition has published what it says are copies of over 80% of ballot box-level tallies on a public website, while the electoral council says a cyber attack on election night has prevented its publication of the full tallies. The warrant request appeared to be the government's latest salvo in what the opposition says is a crackdown on dissent. Saab has also launched criminal probes into Machado and the opposition vote tally website itself and detentions of opposition figures and protesters have continued in the weeks since the vote. Protests have led to at least 27 deaths and some 2,400 arrests.

Gonzalez ignored three summonses to testify about the website, allowing a

warrant to potentially be issued for him in that case. The warrant was issued after prosecutor Luis Ernesto Duenez requested Gonzalez be arrested for usurpation of functions, falsification of public documents, instigation to disobey the law, conspiracy and association, all allegedly committed against the Venezuela state. Lawyers consulted by Reuters said that Venezuelan law does not allow those over 70 to serve sentences in jails, instead requiring house arrest. Gonzalez, who turned 75 last week, is married and has two daughters; one lives in Caracas and the other lives in Madrid. The US has drafted a list of about 60 Venezuelan government officials and family members who could be sanctioned in the first punitive measures following the election, two people close to the matter told Reuters. Since the vote, the ruling party-controlled national assembly passed a law tightening rules on NGOs and unions denounced alleged forced resignations of state employees espousing pro-opposition views. The warrant request came hours after the Biden administration said an aircraft used by Maduro had been confiscated in the Dominican Republic after determining that its purchase violated US sanctions, a move the Venezuelan government slammed as an act of "piracy."

## Yemen's Houthi rebels target oil tanker in Red Sea

DUBAI (AP): An attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a Panama-flagged oil tanker in the Red Sea, authorities said, as a nearby Saudi-flagged tanker ship also allegedly came under fire from the group.

The attacks are believed to be the latest in the Iranian-backed rebels' campaign that has disrupted the \$1 trillion in goods that pass through the Red Sea each year over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and has halted some aid shipments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and Yemen. The new attacks on oil tankers also come amid efforts to salvage the still-burning Sounion oil tanker earlier hit by the Houthis, seeking to head off the potential ecological disaster posed by its cargo of 1 million barrels of crude oil.

In first assault, two ballistic missiles hit the oil tanker Blue Lagoon I and a third exploded near the ship, the multinational Joint Maritime Information Center overseen by the US Navy said. "All crew on board are safe (no injury reported)," the center said. "The vessel sustained minimal damage but does not require assistance." Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for the attack on the Blue Lagoon I late at night.

The Blue Lagoon I is traveling south through the Red Sea to an unlisted destination. The vessel was coming from Russia's port of Ust-Luga on the Baltic Sea and had been broadcasting that it had Russian-origin cargo on board. In recent months, the Blue Lagoon I traveled to India, which gets more than 40% of its oil imports from Russia despite Moscow's ongoing war on Ukraine and the international sanctions it faces over it. The Greek-based firm operating the ship could not be reached. The Joint Maritime Information Center said it assessed that the ship "was targeted due to other vessels within its company structure making recent port calls in Israel." Saree also cited that as the reason the Houthis attacked the vessel.

Later on, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center reported a second attack off the Houthi-controlled port city of Hodeida. The private security firm Ambrey said an aerial drone hit a merchant ship, though no damage or injuries were reported. The attack happened only a few kilometers (miles) from where the Blue Lagoon I attack occurred, Ambrey said. The US military's Central Command, which oversees American

operations in the Mideast, identified the second vessel as the Saudi-flagged oil tanker Amjad and blamed the attack on the Houthis. The Amjad carried 2 million barrels of oil, it said. "These reckless acts of terrorism by the Houthis continue to destabilize regional and global commerce, as well as put the lives of civilian mariners and maritime ecosystems at risk," Central Command said.

The US military also destroyed two Houthi missile systems in strikes, the command added. The Houthi group did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack on the Amjad. However, it can take the rebels hours or even days to acknowledge their assaults. In the case of the Amjad attack, the Houthis likely did not claim it given a years-long, de facto cease-fire in which the group has not attacked Saudi Arabia as the kingdom tries to reach a peace deal with the rebels. Saudi Arabia also reached a Chinese-mediated detente with Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor, last year that's still holding.

Saudi Arabia launched a war against the Houthis in March 2015 in support of Yemen's exiled government, which earlier had been thrown out of the capital,

Sanaa, by the rebels. Saudi Arabia similarly did not acknowledge the attack on the Amjad, possibly to lower any pressure on it to respond militarily. Yemen's war has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, killing tens of thousands more. The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a United States-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets. The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the US or the U.K. to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran.

Meanwhile, a salvage effort appeared to be underway to tow away the Sounion oil tanker, which was earlier hit by the Houthis and abandoned by its crew. Jamel Amer, an official with the Houthis, wrote online that tugboats assigned to pull the Sounion away should arrive.

## Poland holds a state burial for more than 700 victims

WARSAW (AP): Poland held a state burial for more than 700 victims of Nazi Germany's World War II mass executions, whose remains were recently uncovered in the so-called Valley of Death in the country's north, decades after their deaths.

The observances in the town of Chojnice began with a funeral Mass at the basilica, leading to an interment with military honors at a local cemetery of the victims of the Nazi crimes. The remains were contained in 188 small wooden coffins with ribbons in national white and red colors across them.

Joining the events were relatives of the victims, an aide to President Andrzej Duda, local authorities and top officials of the state National Remembrance

Institute, which carried out and documented the exhumations. "We want to give back memory, we want to give back dignity to the victims of the crimes in Chojnice," presiding Bishop Ryszard Kasyna said.

Duda said in a message that the only reason the victims were killed by the Nazis was because they were Polish and said they would always be held in the national memory. The remains of Polish civilians, including 218 asylum patients, were exhumed in 2021-2024 from a number of separate mass graves on the outskirts of Chojnice. Personal belongings and documents helped identify around 120 of the victims of an execution in early 1945. Among them were teachers, priests, police

officers, forestry and postal workers, and landowners. Historians have established that the Nazis, shortly after invading Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, executed some of the civilians, in a drive to subdue the nation. The remains of another 500 victims are from the January 1945 execution, when the Germans were fleeing the area. Bullets and shells from handguns used by German forces were found in the graves.

Experts will continue to comb the area for more mass graves of the so-called Pomerania Crime. Poland lost 6 million citizens, or a sixth of its population, of which 3 million were Jewish, in the war. The country also suffered huge losses to its infrastructure, industry and agriculture.

## Hondurans disillusioned with leader

TEGUCIGALPA (AP): An incriminating admission by the brother-in-law of Honduras' president just days after the country announced it would end its longstanding extradition treaty with the US is feeding fears among Hondurans that the country's legacy of corruption is continuing.

President Xiomara Castro had inspired hope when she was elected the Central American nation's first female leader in 2021 on a promise to "pull Honduras out of the abyss we have been buried in by neoliberalism, a narco-dictator and corruption."

Despite being married to former President Manuel Zelaya Rosales - ousted in a coup in 2009 - she was a breath of fresh air for many Hondurans after the presidency of Juan Orlando Hernández, who in June was sentenced to 45 years in prison by a US federal court for drug trafficking. But as gang violence has continued to roil Honduras and several scandals have plagued Castro's government, frustration has replaced that initial optimism for many Hondurans who now see her as the same brand of corrupt leader that has long ruled

their country.

"We thought that corruption would end with Xiomara Castro, because they were supposed to be different from previous governments, but they have turned out to be the same or worse," said 44-year-old Gabriel Hernández, who works in marketing in the capital, Tegucigalpa. The latest blow came this weekend, when Castro's brother-in-law, Carlos Zelaya, part of Libre's leadership team in the Congress, admitted that he had met with a leader of the drug trafficking organization "Los Cachiro's" in 2013. Zelaya, brother of the former president, revealed the details to the press when he went to the Public Prosecutor's Office to give a statement related to an investigation into his alleged links to drug trafficking.

He said the drug trafficker offered support to Libre's campaign that year, when Castro made a failed first bid for the presidency. Zelaya explained that at the time, he did not know that people in the meeting were linked with drug trafficking. "Eleven years ago I was invited to participate in a meeting in which there was a group of businessmen who

wanted to make a contribution to the campaign," Zelaya said as he left the Public Prosecutor's Office. "I am convinced that that meeting and everything that happened there was recorded. I fell into a trap. I assume my responsibility." His admission came just days after Castro's foreign affairs minister announced Honduras was ending an extradition treaty with the United States following a spat with an American diplomat. The treaty had been in place for over a century and since 2014, 64 Hondurans have been extradited to the US, largely on drug trafficking charges. Among those was former president Hernández. "I don't think this is a coincidence, I don't think it's random ... This is an issue that could be a turning point in Castro's presidency," Breda said. "Unless Castro steps back and reestablishes the extradition treaty, this move will inevitably be seen as a way to protect their family." Those suspicions were shared by Hondurans like Hernández, the marketing worker, who said that even an "ordinary person like me" knows that it was not a coincidence.



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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's

Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

# AfD's success in Germany leaves some worried

**THE** Alternative for Germany (AfD) had made significant gains in the elections to the two provinces, Thuringia and Saxony. The far right was expected to emerge strong in these elections, and it has fulfilled the prediction.

This development is making the mainstream German parties, the Christian Social Democrats (CSD), the Social Democrats (SD) and the Freedom Party (FP), nervous. The liberal FP has suffered the most damage, unable to get the 5 per cent vote needed to be counted as a national party. In its place, the leftists BSW, which is a reconstitution of the former communist party in the former East Germany, has made gains.

The Social Democrats of Chancellor Olaf Scholz have also taken a beating in these elections. It is the conservative Christian Democrats who are likely to form an alliance with the far left, BSW, to form the government, The AfD and the BSW together have won nearly 40 per cent of the votes in these provincial elections.

Interestingly, Saxony and Thuringia fall in the former communist party-ruled East Germany. It is a reflection of the fact that more than a quarter century after the collapse of communism, East Germany in many ways remains an unassimilated part of united Germany. In Thuringia, the AfD has won between 30.5 to 33.5 per cent of the vote. This does not however enable the party to form the government. The other parties in coalition will prevent AfD from getting into power.

The success of AfD should not come as a surprise because this has been the trend in many of the Western European countries like France and the Netherlands as well, where anti-immigrant, ultra-nationalist parties have exploited the economic distress in Europe and blamed it all on the immigrants. France has recently faced the danger of the far-right Nationalist Party of Marine Le Pen winning a majority in the National Assembly elections. But the other parties, the centrists and the leftists along with the socialists of all hues, joined hands to keep Le Pen from forming the government.

It is clear that something similar will happen in Saxony and Thuringia as well. The concern over the rise and success of a far right party like AfD in Germany is of greater concern to the Germans. It is due to the self-destructive rule of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists (Nazis) in the 1930s that Germany lost its standing as a member of the global community. It is feared that with the emergence of AfD as a serious political player shaping German policy will cost Germany its reputation. Chancellor Scholz said as much: "The results for the AfD in Saxony and Thuringia are worrying. Our country cannot and must not get used to this. The AfD is damaging Germany. It is weakening the economy, dividing society and ruining our country's reputation." The nightmare of Nazi Germany still haunts the country, nearly 80 years after the Second World War has ended in a disastrous defeat for the country.

It is a matter of coincidence that the far-right AfD and the far-left Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW) share a common view on the war in Ukraine. They are opposed to the war and Germany's involvement in it. The mainstream German parties, in conformity with the European Union (EU) stance, are firmly opposed to Russia and support Ukraine. The BSW leader, Sahra Wagenknecht said, "Half the people in Germany are scared of being drawn into a big war. Two-thirds of easterners oppose US missiles (being placed in Germany)." This is a view that is shared in Kremlin as well. Germany's mainstream political parties have to make hard choices about the future.

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# The world needs more, not fewer, risk-taking tech entrepreneurs

Arbab Neil Sengupta

**UNTIL** the dawn of modern telecommunication, messages were usually delivered by human envoys. During a war, for example, a messenger would be sent from one camp to another and, if found to be bearing unfriendly news, he often ended up as a casualty himself, a victim typically of beheading until the advent of the gun.

In the age of the internet, the practice of shooting the messenger is taking on a new form: blaming the news media or a tech entrepreneur for disseminating unwanted information about a favored cause, ideology, personality or organization, and even bringing criminal charges against them. This is becoming a common occurrence just when the world needs more, not fewer, tech innovators and entrepreneurs.

The arrest of Telegram founder Pavel Durov, all of 39 years old, in France is a case in point. Last week, he was released on a bail of 5 million (\$5.5 million) after four days of detention in France, but he is banned from leaving the country and likely faces a lengthy trial there. The Paris Public Prosecutor's Office announced that he faces 12 charges, including illegal transactions, child sexual abuse, fraud and refusal to cooperate with authorities.

It is not just young Durov who has received a rude awakening. With troubling frequency, the chief executives of tech companies are finding themselves in the crosshairs of attacks from both the left and the right, facing allegations that range from colluding with the White House to kowtowing to leaders of America's adversaries.

They are being accused, as in the case of the Dubai-based Telegram, of being simultaneously at the Kremlin's beck and call and acting as a tool of the Kremlin's sworn enemy, the Ukrainian government. Even though, as a recent media report noted: "In Russia, Telegram channels widely cover subjects that are otherwise strictly censored in state media. That includes everything from front-line reports of the

conflict in Ukraine to trials of Kremlin critics and manifestos dispatched from political prisoners."

For his part, Elon Musk, practically from his first day as the owner of X, has drawn flak from an array of critics, most of them ideological allies of the previous management, whom he accused of stifling free speech and engaging in censorship. Since then, the circle of Musk's political enemies on both sides of the Atlantic has only expanded, particularly after his declaration in May 2022 via X that while in the past he had voted Democratic, in the future he could no longer support the party and would vote Republican instead.

In April this year, the US House of Representatives passed legislation that would ban TikTok in the US if the popular social media platform's China-based owner did not sell its stake within a year. Shou Zi Chew, the TikTok CEO who has been grilled by US legislators twice since March 2023, has vowed to "continue to do all we can, including exercising our legal rights, to protect" the platform.

During the second congressional hearing held earlier this year, which focused on the safety of children on social media platforms, Shou was not the only big-tech baron in the line of fire. There was also Meta's Mark Zuckerberg, Snap's Evan Spiegel, X's Linda Yaccarino and Discord's Jason Citron, with Zuckerberg taking the most heat.

For all the bipartisan rebuke the chief executives received, both Republican and Democratic lawmakers understand the necessity to explore ways of dealing with media companies that would not result in a total ban or threaten free speech. They also understand the importance of attracting tech entrepreneurs with a libertarian streak like Musk and offering them unwritten guarantees of freedom from law enforcement harassment, including arrest. After all, it is not just the threat of new products that keeps America's capitalist engine in motion: the role

played by foreign-born scientists and engineers who grow into American entrepreneurs and senior management can hardly be overstated.

The picture is somewhat different on the other side of the Atlantic. Admittedly, European countries are not intrinsically hostile to entrepreneurship and libertarianism, or else French President Emmanuel Macron would not have bothered to state in a tweet in the context of Durov's arrest that "France is deeply committed to freedom of expression and communication, to innovation, and to the spirit of entrepreneurship." According to Statista, across Europe, the share of the adult population involved in the early stage of a startup varies between 14 percent in Latvia and 2.6 percent in Poland. In 2023, 10.8 percent of France's adult population was involved in a business startup, either as nascent entrepreneurs or as owner-managers of new firms.

Historically, Europe has been a global leader in technology and entrepreneurship. "Today, however, Europe as a whole lags not only the US but also China in high-impact entrepreneurship. And many large European countries, such as France, Spain, Italy and Germany, have a deficit of super-entrepreneurs," the City Journal, a publication of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, said in 2022, referring to the nearly 2,500 individuals in the world who have built up billion-dollar fortunes by creating new firms or growing small businesses into large, successful ventures.

In a recent report, The Wall Street Journal linked Durov's arrest to "France's new hard line," which it said "reflects growing concern, particularly in Europe, about the threat that big digital companies pose to society." A French law signed this year requires online platforms to cooperate with authorities in rooting out content blamed for the spread of misinformation, antisemitism, racism and illegal commerce, the report said. Telegram says it has been complying

with the EU's Digital Services Act, which requires cooperation with authorities in countering the spread of illegal content.

What European sticklers for rules and order may have failed to notice is that, since early 2019, the combined worth of the US tech giants has more than tripled to \$11.8 trillion. "Add in Nvidia, the only other American firm valued in the trillions, thanks to its pivotal role in generative artificial intelligence, and they fetch more than one and a half times the value of America's next 25 firms put together." The Economist reported last month in an article entitled "Why America's tech giants have got bigger and stronger."

It is hard to imagine a European leader or a Brussels bureaucrat today echoing the sentiments expressed by Singapore's Lee Hsien Loong in a wide-ranging interview before stepping down as head of government in May. Not only did he praise the contributions of foreign talents in the country's progress, but he also referred specifically to the engineering and management graduates from India's elite Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management who have moved to the island city-state. "If I can get such a pool, come here and work here, it is a tremendous plus for us," he told Channel News Asia.

It would be a pity if European politicians and governments' relationship with tech entrepreneurs is treated not as an exemplar but rather as a cautionary tale for other countries, including those of the Arab world, about how not to fall behind in global competition.

A stronger European commitment "to freedom of expression and communication, to innovation, and to the spirit of entrepreneurship," to quote Macron, can potentially give birth to start-ups that can break down the walls that US tech giants Apple, Amazon, Alphabet and Meta have erected around their fiefs. But that commitment must come in the form of action coupled with a welcoming attitude, not simply carefully worded posts on X or Telegram.

# Netanyahu wants a fait accompli in the West Bank ... What are we doing about it?

Eiyad Abu Shakra

**THE** closed rooms where the region's crises are negotiated have been brimming with both announced and secret meetings. With them has emerged a flurry of news reports in the media and endless rumors and positions on social media platforms.

All of this is happening while decisions on the fate of the Arab region are made abroad.

Even if we actually wanted to take adequate positions in response to the crime of redrawing maps with blood, it is clear that the Arabs do not have the capability, the international community does not have the will and the Americans have no intention of dealing with this crime.

On the other hand, I am no longer confident that the "crisis" we hear Benjamin Netanyahu's government is "suffering" from is real. Nor am I confident about the so-called confusion of the Iranian leadership, which seems to have abandoned the idea of removing Israel within seven minutes. Rather, what recent days have shown makes one wish that Israel was indeed suffering from a crisis and that Iran was confused.

In the past few days, Netanyahu's government has begun the second phase of its semi-explicit plan to exterminate the Palestinians as a people, root them out of their land and do away with their cause by attacking Tulkarm and Jenin. Of course, the same old pretext is always available: "terrorist" cells affiliated with Iran have been established around the two cities, especially in their camps. Meanwhile, nothing in the US takes precedence over November's presidential election.

Not only that, but it seems that all the world's concerns are timed and synchronized to the schedule of the American elections.

Even the major global powers, which have a greater capacity to change things than us Arabs, foremost among them Russia and China, are watching to see which way the winds will blow in the race to the White House between two candidates and parties that differ radically on almost every issue ... except total support for Israel.

After Tel Aviv, Moscow may have the strongest influence — albeit indirectly — on this electoral battle, especially in light of the contrast between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris' views on the greatest global threat to American unipolarity.

Trump has, on several occasions, downplayed the threat posed by Russia — even after Ukraine. He has also hinted at his "personal" ability to deal with Vladimir Putin. Meanwhile, he and the Republican leadership have taken a tough stance on the Chinese threat first and the Iranian threat second. Moreover, several international political figures have emphasized, for some time, Putin's support for far-right policies in most Western democracies, which he is betting on to create internal disruptions.

His opponent, Harris, the Democratic candidate, as well as being the partner and heir to Democratic policies by virtue of being Joe Biden's vice president for the past four years, has been somewhat gray in her views.

Analysts broadly agree that Biden's presidency has essentially been a continuation of Barack Obama's term, during which Biden served as vice president for eight years.

Thus, Harris does not have any particular personal feelings about the ambitions of either Russia or China. Nonetheless, Obama's reading of the Middle East's political map may have become an institutional Democratic Party approach to the region. Both the Iranian and Israeli governments are well aware of this.

Today, Netanyahu is escalating in order to kill several birds with one stone. First, he is furthering an expansionist messianic project under the pretext of needing the support of the unhinged extremists in his government. Second, he is trying to draw Tehran into a battle that it will either lose on the ground or that will destroy its political credibility. Third, he is dragging the Democrats into a regional war against Iran, which he believes the American public is in no mood for, thereby heightening the chances of a Trump victory.

As for Tehran, it wants to avoid such a war, which would expose the tenuous nature of its commitment to the Arab political organization that it has created, invested in and used. It also has no interest in taking a leap into the unknown and facilitating a Trump victory. Indeed, past experiences have shown the former president to be far more amenable to the proposals of the Israeli extreme right than the Obama-Biden school.

Meanwhile, the Israeli war machine is rushing to impose a fait accompli in the West Bank, after having destroyed Gaza and displaced its people. It is likely betting on a Republican victory in November that would free its hand completely. On the Palestinian side, bitter experiences and the latest situation currently unfolding in Gaza do not seem to have led to more rational and realistic assessments and priorities, foremost among them the need to unify stances and stop gambling on the basis of false assumptions.

Unfortunately, some Palestinian factions, both inside and outside the Occupied Territories, particularly in Europe and North America, continue to make such bets, which could potentially squander much of the warranted broad sympathy for the Palestinian cause across the globe.

Here, I conclude by touching on a sensitive and painful subject.

Over the past few decades, we have seen mistakes, even sins, by Palestinian leaders and even some segments of the Palestinian public. These sins were catastrophic. However, the most calamitous of these mistakes remains to hold the Palestinian people and their cause responsible for these sins, especially using these mistakes as a pretext for reveling in their pain, demonizing them and leaving them to face their butchers alone.

The immediate threat, today, is faced by the Palestinians. Tomorrow, it will not be limited to them. Beware of treating them as the proverbial white bull that was devoured first.

— Arab News

# A father's role: The unseen strength behind every success

**IN** the grand tapestry of human existence, there exists no substitute for a father. The father is the unerring constant in the life of a child, akin to the spring that breathes life into the world. His presence brings a peace so profound that in his company, the worries of the world seem to vanish. Just as the sun and its shadows remain continual across all seasons, so too does the role of a father remain unchanged through the ebbs and flows of life.

The importance of a father in Islam is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah, reflecting the profound respect and responsibility associated with fatherhood. The Quran emphasizes the father's role as a provider, protector, and guide for his family. In Surah Al-Baqarah (2:233), Allah highlights

the duty of a father to ensure the well-being and upbringing of his children, stating, "The father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis." This verse underscores the father's responsibility in ensuring the physical and emotional needs of his family are met, laying the foundation for a strong and cohesive family unit.

The Sunnah further amplifies the significance of a father's role, as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) demonstrated through his own actions and sayings. He emphasized the importance of a father's guidance in nurturing the moral and spiritual growth of his children. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The best gift a father can give to his child is good manners" (Tirmidhi). This Hadith encapsulates the father's role in instilling values,

ethics, and Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal. In his lifetime, my father was more than just a figure of authority or a provider. He was a shield against the tempests of life, a silent guardian whose strength made every challenge seem surmountable. His joy was in seeing his children succeed and his solace was their happiness. In his absence, the world feels a shade dimmer and the victories less sweet. The void left by his departure is a stark reminder of how irreplaceable he was and continues to be.

The true measure of a father's impact often becomes apparent only after he has departed from this mortal realm. The depth of his influence is felt in every corner of our lives, in the way we navigate challenges, celebrate triumphs, and even in the quiet moments of solitude. His legacy is not just in the memories he left

behind but in the values he instilled, the wisdom he shared, and the unwavering love he provided. On this day of remembrance, my heart is heavy with the weight of his absence. The memories of my father's guidance and support are a balm to my soul but also a reminder of the void that his absence has created. It is a day to reflect on the profound loss and to pray for the elevation of his soul. May Allah, in His infinite mercy, grant him a place in Jannat al-Firdous, where his spirit will find eternal peace.

For those whose parents are still with them, today is a moment to cherish and appreciate them more deeply. The presence of a father, though sometimes taken for granted, is a blessing that enriches life in ways beyond measure. To have them alive is to have an endless source of strength

and love. It is a treasure that should not be overlooked or undervalued.

In the end, the true worth of a father's role becomes most apparent when he is no longer there. The lament of his absence serves as a poignant reminder of his significance. Those who have the fortune of having their parents with them should hold them close, valuing each moment shared, for the time we have with them is fleeting and irreplaceable.

Today, as I remember my father, I also find solace in the lessons he imparted and the strength he provided. His memory is a guiding light, and his legacy continues to inspire and fortify me. To appreciate those who remain in our lives is to acknowledge the irreplaceable role they play and to honour their presence with the love and respect they deserve.



# The UK’s partial arms ban on Israel is not enough

ON Monday, the British government halted 30 licences that would have allowed British companies to supply military parts to Israel. Those include components for fighter aircraft, helicopters, drones and items that facilitate ground targeting. Foreign Secretary David Lammy explained to parliament that a government assessment showed there was a clear danger these items could be used by Israel to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Anyone who has switched on the news over the past 11 months could have told him as much. Gaza has become a human rights-free zone where history’s first livestreamed genocide is taking place.

This year, lawyers working for the government issued legal advice on whether Israel was breaking international law. A Tory MP, who had seen the document, said she believed that Israel was indeed committing such acts.

The details of this legal advice remain a closely guarded secret despite a promise by the Labour Party, while in opposition, to publish it. We can assume, however, that the analysis made for stark reading as it seems to have finally pushed the Labour government to take action, however inadequate. It will no doubt hope that by taking action on the most egregious arms sales, it will free itself of liability.

And yet, the Labour

government has been desperate to avoid any perception that it is punishing Israel.

Monday’s announcement was taken with “deep regret”, and the foreign secretary was at pains to make clear “this is not an arms embargo” in a speech in which he described himself as a “liberal, progressive Zionist”.

The measures are the bare minimum we should expect. While 30 licences will be halted, 320 are still in force. The UK also plays a role in supplying components for the F-35 fighter jets, the “most lethal ... fighter aircraft in the world”, according to its manufacturer. The fighters are being used extensively in Gaza, and the government has exempted these products from the new measures.

The principal reason appears to be that the UK is under intense pressure from the United States to keep supplying parts. Only last week, Robert O’Brien, an adviser to Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, warned of serious consequences under a future administration if the UK enacts an embargo.

The Labour government and its Tory predecessor have been massively out of step with public opinion, which has, broadly speaking, been horrified by the violence meted out in Gaza. At the last election, Labour lost several seats to antiwar candidates because of its stance on this issue. And a July opinion poll showed a majority of Brits in favour of ending arms sales.

Nick Dearden

Especially worrying for a new government that wants to appear in charge is the backlash from civil servants who have been saying for months that they are unhappy with the official position on arms exports. In mid-August, Mark Smith, a diplomat with years of experience on these issues, resigned after complaining he had been repeatedly ignored. In his resignation letter, he wrote that he could “no longer carry out my duties in the knowledge that this Department may be complicit in War Crimes”.

Smith was right to be worried. The government is facing a legal challenge over its continued supply of arms. And this could quickly get personal. The London police are considering evidence against former government ministers for complicity in war crimes. Last week, my organisation, Global Justice Now, published legal advice showing that civil servants as well as ministers could bear liability for war crimes committed by Israeli personnel.

While this complicity obviously relates to the provision of weapons, military and logistical support and intelligence – which Britain continues to share with Israel – it also includes diplomatic and economic support – in particular, relationships that assist in the ongoing illegal occupation of Palestine.

Unlike Spain and Ireland, Britain has never called into question its trade relationship with

Israel. It continues to allow produce from illegal Israeli settlements to be imported, in effect helping in their maintenance.

But worst of all, the Labour cabinet has said it wants a new trade deal with Israel as one of its priorities. In itself, negotiating such a deal is clearly failing to use the power the British government has at its disposal to prevent a possible genocide. It seems rather to reward Israel for its crimes.

But given that the UK is particularly keen to create closer links with Israel’s security and technology sectors, including those working on artificial intelligence, such a deal could well constitute direct assistance to those Israeli economic actors most implicated in war crimes.

And here we get some indication as to why we see such full-blooded support for Israel from our political elite. As author Naomi Klein wrote in March, Western elites can see in Gaza the future of where our deeply divided, horribly unequal world is headed. Israel’s Iron Dome has become “a super-concentrated and claustrophobic version of the very same model of security to which all Global North governments subscribe. ... It’s a model in which the borders of wealthy states – grown wealthy through their own colonial genocides – are protected by their own versions of the Iron Dome.” The West is heavily invested in that model succeeding in Israel.

It is no coincidence that large parts of the Israeli economy are now dedicated to developing the most advanced technology to control the dispossessed. Jeff Halper of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions says: “The occupied territories are ... a huge laboratory where Israel can perfect all these weapons systems, surveillance systems and technologies. ... Israel needs a controlled conflict.”

This all goes some way to explaining why a Labour government in Britain is so reluctant to call out the most egregious war crimes imaginable. It helps us understand why it is so determined to enhance our economic cooperation with the country that has perpetrated these crimes, even at the cost of unpopularity. Ultimately, it doesn’t want to be locked out of the military and technological partnerships that it believes will dominate the increasingly divided world we live in.

But people in the West should have no interest in our government being part of this global apartheid, not least because these same means of controlling populations will end up, one way or another, being used against us.

Monday’s announcement shows we can make the cost of complicity too high. At a time when just switching on the news has become unbearable, we need to celebrate this victory. But we also need to maintain the pressure – for the sake of the people of Palestine, but also for the sake of all of us.

# World court’s opinion on Israeli occupation hardly a surprise

Yossi Mekelberg

ONE possible reason July’s advisory opinion by the UN’s top court, which stated that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories goes against international law, did not attract much international attention is that most observers felt this was no more than stating the very obvious.

However, as the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is currently entrenching at a faster pace, the prospect of an Israeli military presence in Gaza for years to come has become very real. And because some extreme elements at the heart of Israel’s government are advocating building settlements in the Gaza Strip, stating and amplifying the obvious is more important than ever. Adding to the significance of this advisory opinion is that it marked the first time that this court had delivered a position on the legality of the 57-year occupation, let alone it being crystal clear about its unlawfulness.

Although this advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice is not legally binding, it carries significant moral and political weight and, given the political resolve, could be translated into a binding resolution by the UN Security Council. The long and learned legal document could also serve as a guide for the behavior of individual countries, international organizations and businesses that clarifies how they should engage with the occupation, the settlements, the settlers and those who sustain them.

What links the political and legal aspects of this document is that it was the UN General Assembly that requested that the court give its view on Israel’s policies and practices toward the Occupied Territories and on the legal status of the occupation, including East Jerusalem. It is now for the UNGA and its member states to decide how they will translate this view of the court into a meaningful resolution and policies that will end the occupation and lead to an end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the right of self-determination for both peoples and their living in peace and security side by side.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s response to the ruling reflected an utter disregard for international law and deliberate obliviousness to the international isolation he is leading his country into. Beyond calling the court’s depiction of the occupation as illegal “absurd” and a “decision of lies,” he went on to say: “The Jewish people are not occupiers in their own land – not in our eternal capital Jerusalem, nor in our ancestral heritage of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank).”

This is a denial of both the fact that these territories were acquired by military force and that, as per international humanitarian law, any occupation should be a temporary one, let alone that the Zionist movement accepted the partition of Mandatory Palestine, which facilitated the establishment of Israel

and the international recognition it enjoys within its pre-June 1967 borders.

It is the behavior — or, more accurately, the misbehavior — of Israel in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza that has brought on this decision. Under international law, the occupying power should not change the conditions that led to its acquiring sovereignty over the occupied territory and it is obliged to respect the existing laws and institutions of the occupied territory within reason. This is all based on the assumption that an occupation is temporary, as it should be.

An argument is made by the right in Israel that the Occupied Territories were

deal. The court also rejected the idea that it should refrain from addressing the legality of the occupation as that would likely interfere with the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations process as outlined by the Oslo Accords and subsequent agreements. This argument would have been humorous had it not been so sad.

Considering the current disheveled state of affairs between the Israelis and the Palestinians, it is hard to foresee how any decision by any court could further exacerbate the disagreements between the two and consequently compromise the outcome of (nonexistent) negotiations. If anyone is looking for an absurdist argument, they don’t come any better

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not under the control of the Palestinians when they were occupied in 1967 and hence there was a necessity to establish governing structures and mechanisms. As valid as this argument is, these structures and mechanisms should only have been employed for a limited time, until the transfer of political power to the local population to exercise their right to self-determination, and not as a tool to oppress them and perpetuate Israeli control over these territories.

Instead, for decades now, and especially during the Netanyahu years, Israeli efforts have been invested in burying the two-state solution by altering the facts on the ground that make a viable state with contiguous territory ever more difficult to accomplish.

Israel also challenged whether the International Court of Justice had any legal standing to consider this issue, but it was rebuked by the court, which unanimously expressed the view that it has the jurisdiction to give an advisory opinion on every matter requested by the UNGA. After all, this UN body presented to the court the most pertinent question of how the policies and practices of the occupation are changing the status of the occupation. The answers are crucial to the feasibility of reaching a future peace

than this. There are no peace negotiations in progress and under all Netanyahu governments — the current one in particular — the idea of a two-state solution has been totally rejected, including by a recent Knesset vote passed by a vast majority, which declared that the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories would pose a danger to Israel. The derivative from that is perpetuating an occupation that has now been ruled by the most senior international court as unlawful, as are all of its practices, not least the building of settlements, because they lead in only one direction: to the annexation of large parts of the Occupied Territories.

This advisory opinion of the world court could not have been any clearer in stating that the state of Israel is under an obligation to bring an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Territories as rapidly as possible. And if Israel wonders how this decision has come about, it should first and foremost reflect on year upon year of a harsh occupation that violates the basic rights of Palestinians and of Israel’s grabbing of land for building its settlements, weakening the peace movements in both societies and obstructing any peace initiatives. This should provide most of the answer.

# Can Kamala Harris win back Muslim Americans?

AT last month’s Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Oprah Winfrey urged all Americans to “choose joy” and vote for Vice President Kamala Harris in November’s presidential election. But for many at the conference, joy quickly gave way to disappointment when Ms Harris denied pro-Palestinian voices the right to speak about the war in Gaza.

In the run-up to the convention, the anti-war Uncommitted movement asked for a speaking slot on the main stage. Thirty of its delegates travelled to Chicago to demand a US arms embargo to Israel, as well as an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. But a day before the event started, the Harris campaign told them it wasn’t happening.

The parents of the Hamas-held Israeli hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin were given a chance to speak, and they received a standing ovation. But one week after the convention, Mr Goldberg-Polin was found dead in Gaza – a terrible tragedy.

It is also a terrible tragedy that the war is continuing, with more than 40,700 Gazans dead and no end in sight. Mr Goldberg-Polin’s death will bring more collective punishment to the enclave, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeks to quell the protests at home against his right-wing government. However, that collective

punishment is unlikely to secure the release of the rest of the hostages.

Since the convention, many Democrats I’ve spoken to are thinking twice about voting for Ms Harris. Some say they won’t vote at all; others are backing the Green Party’s Jill Stein, a fierce critic of Israel who is firmly committed to ending the war. Because of the dysfunction in the American electoral system, voting for Ms Stein – or any third-party candidate – essentially means a vote for former president Donald Trump, the Republican nominee.

While few Democrats want Mr Trump back in office, younger voters are struggling to reconcile with President Joe Biden’s policy to provide unconditional support to Israel.

It is true that antagonising Israel is not a popular stand within the party. In late June, a Brookings Institution report titled How deep is the divide among Democrats over Israel? stated: “There is a divide in the Democratic Party, but the anti-Israel candidates [in Congressional and other races] compose only 2 per cent of the primary winners.”

However, it is also a fact that the Biden administration has lost support for its handling of the war. As far back as last November, when the war had only just begun, CNN cited a poll from Quinnipiac University that stated that Mr Biden’s approval rating among Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters was just 56

Janine di Giovanni

per cent for his handling of the war. Compare that to his 76 per cent approval rating for his overall job performance.

“A significant minority of Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters [36 per cent] disapprove of his handling of the war. Those voters tend to be young,” the report added, although it wouldn’t be completely fair to say that this rift in the party is entirely down to a generational rift and the anti-war protests on college campuses alone. Anti-war demonstrators do cut across age groups.

This is not the first time an issue has polarised the Democrats.

One of the great fractures in the party occurred over the New Deal – former president Franklin Roosevelt’s series of programmes, public works projects, and financial reforms and regulations to rescue the country from the Great Depression that ran from 1933-1938. The divisions that began to appear at the 1932 party convention, when Roosevelt was first nominated for president, continued throughout his nearly three terms in office.

Can Ms Harris paper over the cracks like Roosevelt did almost a hundred years ago?

There is little doubt that the Gaza conflict has reshaped the political views of many Muslim-American voters. This traditional Democratic voting block represents more than 3.5

million people, some of whom are either looking at third-party options or staying home on voting day.

According to a recent poll, both Ms Harris and Dr Stein have 29 per cent support among Muslims. Mr Trump is polling at 11 per cent, followed by two other third-party candidates drawing single digit numbers. Tellingly, more than 16 per cent are undecided.

These findings, echoing earlier assessments of the race, demonstrate how the war has eroded Muslim-American confidence – and support – for Democrats.

A Voice of America report this week stated that, while Mr Biden won 65 per cent of the Muslim vote in 2020, more than 700,000 Democratic primary voters – including many Muslims in key swing states – said they weren’t going to vote for him this year. Mr Biden is no longer in the race, but it is yet uncertain how many would reconsider their decision now that he is no longer running.

Ms Harris is not Mr Biden, who holds a romanticised view of Israel and refuses to stand up to Mr Netanyahu. She certainly appears to be more sympathetic to the plight of Palestinians. Now, she doesn’t support an arms embargo against Israel, and she has reaffirmed her commitment to helping the country defend itself. Her husband is Jewish, and she has spoken at events organised by the pro-Israel lobbying group Aipac.

But she insists that she

supports a deal that will secure the release of the remaining Hamas-held hostages and a ceasefire.

Saher Selod, director of research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, a Muslim research group, said: “Whichever candidate can show they’re going to make the shift in terms of the war in Gaza and getting a ceasefire will have an impact on these Muslim voters and who they vote for.”

I am not entirely pleased with Ms Harris’s stand on Palestine – I want a president who will recalibrate American foreign policy towards Israel – yet I will vote for her. This is because a Trump victory will further embolden Mr Netanyahu. The former president has made it clear that he is no friend to Palestine; neither is he a friend to Muslim Americans.

A ceasefire before November will save thousands of lives in Gaza, and it might get more voters for Ms Harris. She will need them. But for that, she has to work hard to gain their trust. She needs to do more than promise to end the war. She needs to put aside the fierce pressure of lobbying groups, such as Aipac, that for too long have influenced American politics with vast amounts of money.

Just as crucially, Ms Harris has a chance to win back voters like me – who no longer trust the Democratic Party but need to believe again that our leaders, for once, will do the right thing.

# How Gaza war could affect Jordan’s legislative elections

Osama Al-Sharif

JORDAN will hold parliamentary elections on Sept. 10 to elect a new lower house of parliament. The four-year term of the now-dissolved chamber, elected in 2020, expires in November. The upcoming polls will be held under a revamped elections law adopted at the recommendation of a political modernization committee formed by King Abdullah in 2021. The new law has designated 41 seats of the 130-seat lower house to political parties, a first since Jordan relaunched its parliamentary system in 1990.

Successive governments have been tweaking election laws since the mid-1990s with one goal in mind: weakening Islamists’ grassroots support and limiting their candidates’ chances of gaining more seats in the house. But these experiments have resulted in mixed, often unexpected, results.

The controversial single-vote system has undercut the chances of Islamist candidates. Still, it has also boosted the presence and influence of up-and-coming tribal contenders while alienating urban voters, especially from the middle class.

The cumulative result was the election of loyalist and service-oriented lawmakers, leaving the Islamists as the only credible opposition bloc under the dome. Passive legislatures were seen as having little or no oversight over governments, which was reflected in low approval ratings among Jordanians and even lower voter turnout — 29 percent in 2020.

The new election law seeks to strengthen political party representation over the coming decade so that future governments will be formed by a coalition of elected parties. Under the Jordanian Constitution, the King appoints the prime minis-

ter and approves the naming of Cabinet ministers. An appointed government must win a vote of confidence by lower house deputies.

Despite more than 40 political parties being registered in 2020, they claimed only 12 seats.

But the upcoming elections will be taking place under extraordinary circumstances. The war on Gaza has electrified the national mood, especially among the Jordanian youth. Since last October, Jordanians have been taking to the streets to protest Israeli atrocities in Gaza. Most protests have been organized by the Islamist base and leftist parties.

While the government has tolerated the anti-Israel, pro-Hamas nationwide protests, it clamped down on activists who became critical of the official Jordanian position in relation to ties with Israel. The country has been deeply polarized over Jordan’s interception of

Iranian missiles and drones that violated the kingdom’s airspace after being launched at Israel in April.

There are about 5 million eligible voters, but past elections have seen a steady decline in voter turnout, especially in demographically and economically mixed urban areas. In 2020, the capital, Amman, a city of about 2.2 million, registered only 12 percent voter participation. It is not clear how the war in Gaza will affect voter mindset this time, especially among the youth.

The new electoral law was supposed to give newly formed centrist and loyalist parties, headed by former bureaucrats and retired leading army figures, a push to take most of the 41 seats allocated to political parties and district-allocated seats. Under the new law, restructuring electoral districts was meant to broaden popular participation, especially in

the urban districts that have seen lower voter turnout for demographic reasons. But the war in Gaza and the stagnant economic situation have taken the wind out of the sails of what promised to be a new and ambitious electoral experiment. With more than 35 registered political parties, only a handful can cross the threshold of 7 percent of the votes required to sit in the lower house.

Of those parties, 28 will be contesting the elections through a single national list and multiple local district lists. The crowded party and district lists, with about 1,000 candidates, will fragment the votes. Critics say that no more than 100,000 Jordanians hold party membership, thus giving parties an unfair quota in the upcoming legislature. Moreover, they point out that potential voters are primarily indifferent to party slogans

and programs that are banal and overtly nonpolitical.

Attention will naturally focus on the Islamic Action Front, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. The courts have annulled the movement’s registration as a charity, but it continues to function nonetheless. In the last legislative elections of 2020, it won only eight seats. However, under the new electoral system, its prospects remain unknown, especially in light of its strong support of Hamas in Gaza.

While most parties and lists have opted to post thousands of posters bearing photos of candidates across the kingdom’s streets and squares as their primary messaging to the voters, the Islamic Action Front has gone a step further by launching populist and emotional appeals on social media platforms. Its underlying political messages have centered on the looming threat of Israel to

Jordan and the support of armed resistance in Palestine, with emphasis on conservative Muslim family values. It is clear that the party is hoping to mobilize conservative Jordanians, including young voters who have become politicized over the war on Gaza.

The party’s national and local lists include East Bankers, Jordanians with Palestinian roots, Christians, Chechens and Circassians. In the local districts, the Islamic Action Front is fielding activists, especially those involved in the once-influential but now defunct Jordanian Teachers’ Syndicate.

In contrast, other parties seek to boost their chances at the polls by using tribal alliances in order to lure voters, especially in rural districts. The biggest challenge facing the political environment will be making the slow transition from tribal allegiances to party affiliation. It is

unlikely that such a shift will begin with this electoral cycle.

The war in Gaza and economic conditions will factor in mobilizing voters in these upcoming elections. But while it is evident that the middle class of affluent West Amman is displaying signs of apathy, there is the possibility that some disgruntled secular voters may back the Islamists as a protest vote to point out their frustration with the dormant political status quo and the worsening economic conditions.

Interestingly, Jordan has a history of vibrant and representative elected political parties, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. The last parliamentary government in the kingdom was in 1956, a coalition of parties that included socialist, communist, Baathist and independent ministers. Political parties were banned in 1957 due to tumultuous geopolitical events.



I Zunaira karim w/o Komail Ali have lost the original property documents of my plot in New City, Gujjar Khan with reg. No.00-C-523/10 Marla. If found, Please contact me at H # 216, Street 5, Sector L-1, Phase 3, Hayat Abad Peshawar.





## In brief

## Kabaddi training camp begins

ISLAMABAD (APP): The training camp of the national team players in preparations for the World Beach Kabaddi Championship kicked off here at the Pakistan Sports Complex on Tuesday. According to Secretary General, Pakistan Kabaddi Federation, Muhammad Sarwar Rana, the selected players will participate in the World Beach Kabaddi Championship to be played in Iran from September 25 to 30. He said that players from different countries will take part in the Championship. A total of 18 players have been invited for National training Beach Kabaddi camp including Usman Ahmed, Afaq Khan, Shoaib Mumtaz Ali, Junaid Khan, Kashif Razaq, Mudassar Ali, Muhammad Safian, Bilal Khan, Usman Ghani, Farhan Ali, Muhammad Amjad Ali, Akhlaq Ahmed, Muhammad Usman Arshad, Muhammad Imran, Waqar Ali, Said ul Maluke Khan and Farman Ali. Nabeel Ahmed Rana are performing coaching responsibilities.

## Tahir named hockey team new coach

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has appointed former Olympian Tahir Zaman as the head coach of the national hockey team. Zaman, a seasoned player with extensive experience, is set to depart for China tomorrow to join the national team and assume his new coaching responsibilities. Tahir Zaman will lead the Pakistan team in the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy, where his expertise and leadership are expected to play a crucial role. The Asian Champions Trophy will be the first major tournament under his coaching, and his performance will likely set the tone for future engagements. Following the Asian Champions Trophy, the Pakistan Hockey Federation and Tahir Zaman are expected to finalize a long-term contract.

## Harsha Bhogle comments on Pakistan's defeat

NEW DELHI (Web Desk): Renowned commentator and Cricket Author Harsha Bhogle shared his two cents on Pakistan's humiliating Test series defeat against Bangladesh at home. Bangladesh outclassed Pakistan by six wickets in the second Test match to complete the clean sweep and win their first-ever series against the Green Shirts. The touring side had won the first Test thumpingly by 10 wickets. Meanwhile, Bhogle, who highlights Pakistan's men's cricket team's strengths and shortcomings exceptionally well, recalled his verdict when he claimed that Pakistan are stronger in the shorter formats but will be exposed in longer formats. He, however, acknowledged that he did not expect Pakistan to lose from Bangladesh. "I remember saying some time ago that the shorter the game, the more dangerous Pakistan would be, and, almost as consequence, that the longer the game, the more vulnerable they would be," he wrote on Twitter. "But I didn't expect it to be this stark. Well as Bangladesh played, this is embarrassing for Pakistan," Harsha Bhogle added. Set to chase a modest 185, Bangladesh knocked the winning runs in the second session of the final day, just 25 minutes before the Tea Break.



RAWALPINDI: Bangladeshi team players pose for a photograph with trophy after winning Test series against Pakistan at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. —APP Photo

## Panthers to be mentored by Saqlain Mushtaq

LAHORE (PPI): Saqlain Mushtaq has been confirmed as Panthers' mentor for this month's Champions One-Day Cup, which will be played in Faisalabad from 12-29 September. The Panthers have also been allocated the Inzamam-ul-Haq Cricket Academy in Multan to prepare and train during the 2024-25 domestic cricket season.

So far, Shoaib Malik, Misbah-ul-Haq and Waqar Younis have been named as mentors of the Stallions, Wolves and Lions, respectively, while Sarfaraz Ahmed will later this week confirm his team name and logo.

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 Panthers will open their campaign against Misbah-ul-Haq's Wolves on the opening day on 12 September, followed by

matches against Dolphins on 14 September, Lions on 16 September and Shoaib Malik's Stallions on 21 September.

Saqlain Mushtaq (is considered as the inventor of 'Doosra'; set the record for the most ODI wickets in a calendar year with 65 scalps in 1996; following year, he took 69 wickets in 36 matches to better his own record; took two consecutive 10-wicket hauls against India in the Chennai and Delhi Tests; in 1999, became the only Pakistan bowler to take a hat-trick in ODI World Cups, it was his second ODI hat-trick; became the then fastest to take 200 ODI wickets; named as one of the Wisden Cricketers of the Year in 2000; played in three World Cups and two Champions Trophy events; has previously coached some of the top-cricket playing nations, including Pakistan, England, New Zealand, West Indies and Bangladesh)

"Preparations for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 begin with the Champions One-Day Cup, and I am thrilled to play a key role as a mentor for the Panthers, a team fea-

turing some of the finest talent in the country. My objective is clear: to elevate these players' performance and pushing them to their maximum potential so we can defend our title with distinction.

"The Champions One-Day Cup is more than just a competition; it's a critical stepping stone for young talent and a cornerstone of Pakistan cricket's future. The path to the Champions Journey starts with age-group cricket and progresses through district and division levels, ultimately reaching regional and departmental cricket, with the Champions Cup as the final proving ground before achieving national selection.

"I am confident that this well-structured, pyramid-like pathway will nurture skilled and polished players, enabling the Pakistan Cricket Board to build strong, competitive teams across all formats.

"I urge players, fans and all stakeholders to fully support this year's Champions One-Day Cup. Together, we can ensure its success, laying a strong foundation for the bright and robust future of Pakistan cricket."

## Cricketers face critical fitness assessments before new contracts

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan cricket team is set to participate in a series of fitness tests this week, which will play a crucial role in determining the allocation of new central contracts to players.

According to sources, the fitness tests for centrally contracted players are scheduled for September 7 and 8 in Lahore. The players who are under consideration for central contracts have been instructed via messages to report to Lahore on September 6. Two days ago, similar fitness tests were conducted for domestic players in Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi. The fitness evaluations will include a variety of physical exercises such as sprints, squats, 1A3 tests, and gym sessions.

These assessments will play a key role in determining which players meet the required fitness standards and, consequently, who will be awarded central contracts. After completing the fitness tests, centrally contracted players are expected to report to Faisalabad on the night of September 8. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is keen to ensure that only those players who meet the rigorous fitness criteria will be granted central contracts.

## Tennis Tournament sees intense quarter-final matches

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Khawar Hyat Khan Memorial National Ranking Tennis Tournament saw intense competitions as players battled for spots in the semifinals across various categories at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Tuesday.

In the Men's Singles quarter-finals, Muzammil Murtaza fought back to win against Abdullah Adnan 5-7, 7-5, 7-5. Muhammad Shoaib also came back from behind to advance to the last four stage, defeating Mudassir Murtaza 5-7, 6-3, 6-2. Yousaf Khalil secured his place in the semifinal with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Barkatullah, while seasoned player Aqeel Khan comfortably dispatched Ahmad Nael Qureshi with a 6-3, 6-1 win.

The Men's Doubles quarter-finals featured dominating performances, with the pair of Mudassir Murtaza and Shahzad Khan defeating M. Talha Khan and M. Huzafa Khan 6-1, 6-0. In a closely contested match, Hamza Roman and Saqib Hayat edged out Sami Zeb Khan and Abdullah Adnan with a score of 7-6(3), 6-7(5), 10-8.

In the Boys' 18 & Under Singles quarter-finals, Bilal Asim overpowered Muhammad Salar 6-1, 6-4, while Hamza Roman won against Abdullah Azhar 6-3, 6-3. Ahmad Nael Qureshi also advanced, beating Asad Zaman 6-1, 6-4.

In the Boys' 14 & Under Singles quarter-finals, Muhammad Junaid triumphed over Zohaib Amjad 4-0, 1-4, 4-2, and M. Hassan Usmani overwhelmed M. Ibraheem Gill 4-0, 4-0.

The Boys' 12 & Under Singles quarter-finals saw Rashid Ali dominate Robin Amoun with a 4-0, 4-0 victory, and M. Ibraheem Gill beat M. Suhaib Javed 4-1, 4-1. The tournament will continue on Wednesday with fixtures starting at 10:00 am.

## Masood laments missed opportunities in the second test loss

R A W A L P I N D I (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan captain Shan Masood expressed his disappointment following his team's whitewash in the recently concluded two-match Test series against Bangladesh.

Pakistan suffered a humiliating 0-2 whitewash against Bangladesh after losing the second Test match at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. The visiting team secured a six-wicket victory on the fifth day.

Bangladesh registered their first-ever Test series victory over Pakistan. The Pakistan national cricket team recorded their fifth consecutive loss after Shan Masood took over from Babar Azam.

Speaking after the match, Shan Masood said that the team has failed to learn from previous defeats. Masood said that

the team had also allowed the opposition to come back into the contest.

He added that Test cricket required higher fitness levels while backing his four-pacers strategy in the first Test.

"Extremely disappointed, we were excited for the home season. The story has been the same as Australia, we have not learnt our lessons," Masood said.

"We thought we were playing good cricket in Australia but not doing the job, that's something we need to work on.

It has happened 4 times in my tenure that we have left the team back into the contest when we were dominating." "I think Test cricket demands something else in terms of fitness.

We played 4 fast bowlers in the first Test and the reason was we thought the workload would be too much for three people to

manage.

And that was proved in this game when we lost a fast bowler in each innings," he added.

Pakistan has failed to secure a Test series victory at home since the South Africa series in 2021. They lost the third Test against Australia in 2022, followed by a 0-3 whitewash against England.

Notably, the Pakistan cricket team has suffered six Test losses at home since the beginning of 2022.

Shan Masood admitted that they posted a decent total in the first innings. He added that the team should have capitalized after restricting Bangladesh to 26/6. Masood also noted that there are positive take-aways from the series.

"274 was a good score in the first innings, me and Saim could have got more runs like Litton.

## Jansher expresses gratitude to PM for support in successful surgery

PESHAWAR (APP): Jansher Khan, the famous world squash champion and world no 1 player for 10 consecutive years, Guinness World Record holder, Sitara Imtiaz, Hilal Imtiaz, and Nishan Imtiaz thanked the doctor and the hospital after successfully undergoing surgery on both his knees at Zimri Orthopaedic Hospital in Islamabad here on Tuesday.

"I thanked the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif for extending all out support to me in undergoing my knees operation. The doctors who made my operation successful with hard work and dedication and also thanked the people, friends, and relatives who sent special prayers and messages for me," Jansher Khan told APP on phone from the hospital.

Jansher Khan, explaining the reason for such a big operation, said that for about a year, I had severe pain in both knees while praying, walking, and doing squash, but I had the strength and endurance to control the pain, but the pain has been for some time unbearable.

The doctors advised me to do the operation as soon as possible, due to which I had to follow the advice, because of which the operation had to be done, he added. "I could have problems and more serious problems and there are very competent and good doctors in Pakistan, due to which I prefer to get my treatment done in my



beloved country and I am feeling very happy and healthy," Jansher said.

Jansher Khan further said that it was a matter of pride for me to shine the name of Pakistan in the field of squash for 10 long years. Being number 1 for 10 years and working hard day and night to get a record title. He said due to which I did not give full time and treatment to my health because of that I had problems with my knees and back. Jansher Khan added that today young players should be advised to take special care of their knees and back along with their training and take small pains seriously so that they can be treated in time and avoid major problems.

Jansher Khan also said special thanked the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif and former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan Army, and Pakistan Air Force who always extended support to me in my difficult times.

Jansher Khan said that Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif gave me full support and guidance in the condition of my illness and approved my treatment immediately.

Jansher Khan further said that the Prime Minister, Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif, and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif always helped, guided, and encouraged him. Even when Jansher Khan won the World Championship in the '90s, Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif used to encourage me, especially in Lahore, and now after retirement, Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif did not forget me and did not leave me alone and provided me with all kinds of help and guidance.

"I thanked Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif from the core of my heart," Jansher concluded.

## Luis Suarez announces retirement from international football

MONTEVIDEO (AFP) : Uruguay icon Luis Suarez announced his retirement from international football on Monday, confirming that he will hang up his boots following Friday's 2026 World Cup qualifier against Paraguay in Montevideo.

"Friday will be my last match for my country," an emotional Suarez, 37, told a press conference.

"It was not an easy decision to make, but I do it with the peace of mind that I will give my maximum until the very last game of my (Uruguay) career."

The former Barcelona and Liverpool striker is widely regarded as one of the greatest players of his generation and will retire from international football as Uruguay's top scorer with 69 goals from 142 appearances. Suarez, who was infamously kicked out of the 2014 World Cup after being handed a four-month ban for biting Italy's Giorgio Chiellini, made his debut for Uruguay in 2007.

The Inter Miami forward helped Uruguay capture the 2011 Copa America, where he was named player of the tournament, and would eventually represent the



South American country in nine major tournaments.

Suarez said Monday that inspiring Uruguay to that Copa crown had been the highlight of his career. "I wouldn't trade the Copa America title for anything," he said. "It was the best moment of my career. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

A dynamic, skilful attacker with a lethal eye for goal, Suarez was also never far from controversy.

As well as the biting incident that ended his involvement in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, he was also one of the villains of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, when his cynical handball on the goal-line denied Ghana what would have been a late winner in the quarter-finals.

Suarez was sent off for that offence and Ghana subsequently missed the ensuing penalty, allowing Uruguay to sneak into the semi-finals after a penalty shoot-out. Controversy also dogged Suarez throughout his club career, notably in 2011 when he was handed an eight-game ban by authorities in England for allegedly racially abusing Manchester United's France star Patrice Evra.

Suarez would later help Uruguay qualify for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, and also featured in this summer's Copa America where he was used largely as a substitute by coach Marcelo Bielsa. He scored his 69th international goal in a third place play-off victory over Canada.

## Test coach McCullum to take charge of England white-ball teams

LONDON (AFP): England Test coach Brendon McCullum will take charge of the nation's teams in all three formats in a bid to revitalise the fortunes of the struggling white-ball sides, cricket chiefs said Tuesday.

The New Zealander has reinvigorated England's Test set-up alongside captain Ben Stokes since 2022 and will seek to bring his attacking "Bazball" approach to the limited-overs teams.

The 42-year-old has extended his contract until the end of 2027, officially taking over the one-day international and Twenty20 sides in January to coincide with a tour of India and the Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

The England and Wales Cricket Board said the broadened role for McCullum was part of a "strategic restructure" of the men's set-up.

"I believe we are incredibly fortunate that a coach of his quality is prepared to commit wholeheartedly to English cricket," said Rob Key, managing director of England men's cricket.

"Being able to align all teams now is particularly exciting and we look forward to taking on all challenges that come our way. "For the last two years, constant clashes between formats have made it challenging for the white-ball environment -- fortunately, these are easing starting from January."

McCullum, a former New Zealand captain known for his attacking batting, said he was excited to extend his role with England.



"This new challenge is something I'm ready to embrace, and I'm eager to work closely with (captain) Jos (Buttler) and the team to build on the strong foundations that are already in place," he said.

He added: "The talent within English cricket is immense, and I'm looking forward to helping these players reach their full potential."

"Energised by the prospect"

McCullum inherits a white-ball outfit that have surrendered titles in both limited-overs World Cups in the past 12 months, which led to the departure of former white-ball coach Matthew Mott in July.

England are currently ranked seventh in ODI (50-over) cricket and fourth in the T20 standings. McCullum will be at the helm as England try to win the trophies back, with the next T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka in 2026 and the 50-over equivalent in southern Africa in 2027.

Former England batter Marcus Trescothick will serve as interim head coach for the upcoming

white-ball series against Australia at home and the tour of the Caribbean.

When McCullum took charge of England's Test side in May 2022 they were at a low ebb, with just one in 17 games.

But under his leadership they have won 19 of their 28 Tests since and score at a remarkably rapid rate.

The biggest disappointment during his tenure has been a crushing 4-1 defeat in India.

Chris Silverwood's sacking after the 2021/22 Ashes was followed by an acceptance that the unrelenting timetable of international cricket, with some Test and white-ball assignments overlapping, was too much for one head coach.

But with England's fixture programme looking more manageable for the next couple of years, McCullum, who still lives in New Zealand, has agreed to extend his role.

"The idea of a unified coaching structure, especially with the schedule easing next year, made perfect sense," he said.

"I'm energised by the prospect of guiding both teams."





## In brief

### Police hands over lost money to driver

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) officials found and handed over a lost amount of Rs 50,000 to a truck driver. According to details, a truck driver approached NHMP and said that while changing the truck tyre near Colonel Sher Khan's interchange, he left the site and after some while realized that an amount of Rs 50,000 had dropped from him during his stay. The NHMP North zone officials took immediate action on his request and after searching in the area traced the amount and handed over it to him. The truck driver expressed his gratitude and admiration for the Motorway Police's honesty and dedication to their duty. Muhammad Saqib, the spokesperson for the Motorway Police, highlighted the significance of this incident as a reflection of the department's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the public.

### Six illegal arm holders arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have apprehended six illegal arms holders and liquor suppliers and recovered illegal arm, ammunition from their possession during crackdown here on Tuesday. According to police spokesman, Bani police held Masood and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession. Similarly, Saddar Wah police held Zahoor ur Rehman and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his custody. While, Saddar Barooni police nabbed Hazrat Wali and confiscated 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession. Jatali Police recovered a dagger from Ansar and 10 liters of liquor was found from Azmat. Following operation, Naseerabad police arrested Rehman and recovered 10 liters of liquor from his possession. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs commended police teams efforts and have stated that the crackdown on illegal activities will be continued, with a particular focus on dismantling organized and active gangs.

### River Indus still experiencing low

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that except for River Indus, which is experiencing "Low Flood" condition at Guddu Barrage and "Medium Flood" condition at Kotri Barrage, all other major rivers in the Indus River System (Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej) are discharging normal flows. According to daily FFC report on Tuesday, Tarbela Reservoir is maintaining its Maximum Conservation Level (MCL) of 1550.00 feet since August 19, 2024. The water level in the Mangla Reservoir is steadily rising and is currently at 1224.20 feet, just 17.80 feet short of its MCL of 1242 feet. The combined live storage of the country's major reservoirs (Tarbela, Chashma and Mangla) stands at 11,962 MAF, which is 89.58% of the total live storage capacity of 13,354 MAF. According to the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore, well marked low earlier over South-western Chhattisgarh (India) has shifted Westwards and now is positioned over West Madhya Pradesh (India). Trough of Westerly Wave previously over Northeastern Afghanistan has moved to Northern Pakistan while Seasonal Low lies over Northwestern Balochistan. Moderate moist currents from the Bay of Bengal were penetrating into the upper parts of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Governor KP Faisal Kareem Kundi giving best Photographer award to senior Photojournalist Riaz Anjum during award ceremony of HCA here at Islamabad club.

## Gilani stresses focusing on human development

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has emphasized the need for concerted and comprehensive endeavors in order to effectively prioritize focus on human development, invest in human capital and to address the climate change challenges.

He called for forging robust partnerships between government institutions, UN agencies, and civil society organizations to ensure a cohesive and effective humanitarian response in this regard.

Addressing the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) annual report launch event to acknowledge INGOs' contributions to Pakistan here on Tuesday, Yousaf Raza Gilani acknowledged PHF and its member organizations for consistently providing the much-needed relief and assistance to the deserving and the affected during challenging circum-

stances over the years.

He said that true strength of a nation lies in its ability to empower the marginalized and vulnerable communities. "Coming from South Punjab, I can personally relate to the struggles and aspirations of communities seeking opportunities and support to not only uplift their own lot, but also fuel national progress", the Chairman Senate remarked in his address.

The Chairman Senate observed that inclusive development is not just a moral imperative but it is essential for the progress and prosperity of our country. "This belief is deeply rooted in the political ideology that has guided me throughout my career. An ideology that prioritized humanitarian values and betterment of deprived communities", he said. Former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto championed this ideology.

He lauded PHF for playing a crucial role in build-

ing a more inclusive and resilient Pakistan. While referring to the report, he stated that the achievements highlighted in the Annual Report 2023 are a testament to their dedication and unwavering humanitarian zeal. Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed his appreciation that PHF member organizations have reached over 21.2 million beneficiaries across 152 districts of Pakistan, with a funding volume exceeding 450 million dollars.

He said that humanitarian assistance and development initiatives have not only alleviated the sufferings of flood-affected communities, but have also laid the groundwork for sustainable development in marginalized areas. Natural disasters like floods can devastate entire regions, leaving behind a trail of destruction and despair, he added. The challenges we face are great, but so too is our resolve.

## PMYP provides platform to empower Youth: Mashhood

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Program (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Tuesday said that PMYP was taking various initiatives to highlight the potential and provide more employment opportunities, resources and support to the youth.

Addressing the awards ceremony of the "China Scholarship for Youth Skill Development" held in collaboration with China TANG International and the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), he said that youth is the future of Pakistan and equipping young individuals with both high-tech and conventional skills was the priority of the government.

The Chairman PMYP congratulated the selected students on merit for the Chinese Scholarship programme and said that Pakistan has a talented youth and has a central role in pro-

gressing the country towards fast-paced development.

"Our goal is to ensure that every young Pakistani has the skills necessary to succeed in today's competitive landscape. By focusing on both high-tech and traditional skill development, we aim to enhance employment prospects and foster economic growth", he remarked.

Calling Youth the "Ambassadors of Pakistan", he urged them to work hard honestly and glorify the name of Pakistan. Rana also acknowledged the strong bond between Pakistan and China and gratitude for China's support in poverty alleviation, youth employment and development.

He informed that China had offered to provide training to around 200,000 youngsters in various fields during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China while during the tenure of the former PM

Nawaz Sharif in 2013-18 students were sent to China on scholarships. He added that as many as 7000 to 10,000 students were getting an education in Chinese universities and making their future prosperous.

On the occasion, he also asked the management of NAVTTC to increase the number of females in the fields of technical education and for scholarships abroad as Malaysia's development of its GDP increased up to 2 to 3 per cent after the inclusion of skilled women.

The chairman said that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar were also launching new initiatives to empower youth. Commending NAVTTC's, TEVTA and TANG's ongoing efforts in cultivating a skilled workforce, he emphasized the pivotal role of skill education in national development.

## Around 40 technical trade centers blacklisted

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HD) had blacklisted around 40 technical trade centers across the country due to the complaints and involved in fraud cases with innocent citizens.

An official source told APP that the main function of this department is to control and regulate emigration under the Emigration Ordinance, 1979, and promote the Emigration of Pakistani Citizens.

It is also the responsibility to look after the emigrants' interests and welfare and advise the Federal Government on emigration policies and procedures.

Monitoring and supervision of Overseas Employment Promoters through 7 Protectorates of Emigrants Offices and

Processing of Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) Licences, he added.

BEOE also provides the platform for pre-departure briefing to Emigrants and mandatory Insurance coverage to Pakistani workers abroad.

Memorandum of Understanding with Foreign Countries for Export of Manpower and Management of State Life Emigrants Insurance Fund (SLEIF) were the main functions of this department.

He said that BEOE has advised the foreign job-seekers to only reach out to the valid Overseas Employment Promoters to avert any loss of time, money, and their energies.

He said there were only 2,577 Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) licenses that were valid as more than 5048 licenses had been pronounced invalid. Out of the invalid OEPs, the licenses of some 670 were canceled

on various grounds while 805 expired and the rest had surrendered.

They said all foreign job-seekers must visit the official webpage of BEOE regularly to get fresh and valid information and protect themselves from unauthorized OEPs.

The officials said that the BEOE was mandated to regulate emigration under the Emigration Ordinance, of 1979, promote the Emigration of Pakistani citizens, and look after the interests and welfare of the emigrants.

Among other functions, the BEOE had been advising the Federal Government on emigration policies and procedures, monitoring and supervising Overseas Employment Promoters through 7 Protectorates of Emigrants Offices, processing Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) Licences, and giving pre-departure briefings to emigrants.

## ANF launches grand operation against drug dealers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has launched a grand operation across the country to curb the drugs from educational institutes, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that ANF on the special directives of Director General (DG) ANF launched the operation in the vicinity of educational institutes to net the drug dealers supplying drugs in educational institutes. He said, two suspects involved in selling drugs in educational institutions in Jhelum and Rawalpindi were arrested during last 24 hours.

Over 2438 grams drugs were recovered from the possession of the accused arrested in Rawalpindi while over 2400 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused arrested in Dina, Jhelum. The arrested accused confessed to supplying drugs to a big private educational institution in Islamabad.

Elements involved in supplying drugs to students of educational institutions do not deserve any concession, ANF spokesperson said. He informed that a grand operation had been launched to keep educational institutions safe from drugs. 60 intoxicated tablets were also recovered from a parcel at a courier office in Rawalpindi and an accused was arrested.

In another operation, 5 kg heroin worth Rs 9 million was recovered from the possession of an accused netted on Jamrud Road Peshawar. It is first priority of ANF to arrest the anti-national elements who are trying to destroy the future of the youth. Cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigations are under process.

## IRSA releases 275,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 275,400 cusecs water from various stations with inflow of 311,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1550.00 feet (maximum conservation level) and was 152.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 180,000 cusecs and 179,500 cusecs respectively.

## Parliament committed to building consensus for tackling collective challenges: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday said that Parliament is the right platform to deliberate upon and find workable solutions to common problems.

Addressing the conference "Parliamentary Consultation on Strategic Options for Electricity Distribution Systems in Pakistan" he said that the energy sector in Pakistan has been grappling with challenges for decades.

He also said that although Pakistan has become successful in tackling the issue of load shedding, however, rationalizing the energy sector is pivotal for tackling the high

cost of electricity in Pakistan.

Ayaz Sadiq said that energy cost is a global challenge. Energy costs have skyrocketed even in developed countries, as has happened in Pakistan. The government is committed to rationalizing the energy cost for end users, he added.

While highlighting the importance of the right person for the right job, he said that soon after taking oath as Speaker of the National Assembly, he conducted interviews of all officials and officers of the National Assembly Secretariat to depute the right person for the right job.

He emphasized the need to rationalize the human

resource for their growth and evolution. He said that Pakistan's parliament became the first parliament to be a "green Parliament" in the region. He also emphasized utilizing renewable energy sources.

MNA Dr Nafeesa Shah said that cheap and affordable energy is an urgent need. She also expressed gratitude to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq attending the event.

She raised issues attached to energy, being faced by the people. "The energy crisis is one of the major bottlenecks which is hindering economic growth and progress of the country," she added.

## Eight bills referred to concerned committees

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as eight bills were referred to the concerned committees on Tuesday for further deliberation and consideration as well.

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Article 184) introduced by Noor Alam Khan, this bill seeks to amend the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It pertains to suo motu powers and proposes that a bench of nine judges should decide on such cases. The bill was referred to the committee.

The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 introduced by Sohail Sultan, this bill seeks to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. It proposes increasing the punishment for cheque bounce cases. The bill was referred to the committee.

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendments to Articles 51, 59, and 106) Noor Alam Khan introduced this bill to allocate reserved seats for

overseas Pakistanis in the national and provincial assemblies.

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar acknowledged that the government is working on this issue, emphasizing the significant role of overseas Pakistanis in the country's development.

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Articles 177, 193, and 208) Noor Alam Khan also introduced this bill, which seeks to prevent individuals with dual nationality from being appointed as judges of the courts.

The Contempt of Court (Repeal) Bill, 2024 Noor Alam Khan introduced a bill to repeal the Contempt of Court Ordinance, 2003 (V of 2003).

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Article 198) introduced by Changaze Ahmed Khan, this bill proposes amendments to Article 198 of the Constitution.

The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2024 Noor Alam Khan introduced

this bill, which proposes that bureaucrats should not hold dual nationality.

The Allocation of Special Seats for Deserving Persons in Universities Bill, 2024 introduced by Syed Rafiullah, this bill aims to reserve special seats for deserving students in universities and higher education institutions.

The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) (Amendment) Bill, 2024 Introduced by Danyal Chaudhary, this bill seeks to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1997, by increasing the number of judges to address the growing number of cases. However, the bill was deferred by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the Senate has discussed the bill in detail and highlighted the need for judicial reforms in the country. The bill also faced objections from Gohar Ali Khan of the Sunni Ittehad Council.

## BISP to expand scope of nutrition programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): In order to combat malnutrition, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has planned to expand the scope of Benazir Nashonuma initiative which is the country's largest nutrition programme.

In this regard, BISP has signed a two-year agreement with the World Food Programme (WFP) in a ceremony held at Rome to extend the Benazir Nashonuma Programme which is also one of the major government-funded initiative in WFP's history.

According to an official source, this partnership strengthens BISP's commitment to combat malnutrition in Pakistan, providing essential support to over four million pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children less than two years of age.

The initiative will help build a healthier future for

Pakistan's children through collaborative efforts.

World Food Programme (WFP) has been the lead implementing partner for Benazir Nashonuma initiative since its inception.

Benazir Nashonuma initiative aims at addressing stunting among pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and their children less than two years of age through the provision of additional cash of Rs. 2,500 per quarter per PLW and boy child each and Rs. 3,000/- per quarter per girl child of BISP beneficiary families. While Rs.1500/- are given to the girls aged between 15-19 years.

For the flood affected areas, Rs. 3500 are given to per PLW and boy child each and Rs. 4000 for girl child.

In return, mothers are required to attend regular antenatal health checks

and awareness sessions during pregnancy, consume specialized nutritious food (SNF), and take their children for immunization and regular health checks.

According to the statistics, Pakistan's high rates of malnutrition (40.2 percent stunting, 28.9 percent underweight, and 17.7 percent wasting) are indicative of an ongoing child nutrition crisis.

The first 1,000 days of a child's life are a window of opportunity to lay a strong foundation for later achievements. This time frame is a period of enormous change characterized by a high degree of plasticity in the child's neurological development.

Investments in the early years of life are the foundation of human capital, and human capital is a key driver of economic development in the modern economy.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhwa presiding over the meeting regarding measures taken for the prevention of Dengue. —APP Photo



72,000 people left country

KABUL (Ariana News): The International Organization for Migration has reported that between August 18 and 24, a total of 72,624 people left Afghanistan, heading primarily for Iran and Pakistan. According to the IOM, the number of people leaving Afghanistan during this period was 11 percent higher than the number of those returning to the country. The report also noted that at least 64,950 Afghan citizens returned to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan during the same period.

Austria to deport Afghans

KABUL (TOLONews): Austria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs state that the country plans to deport Afghan refugees with criminal records back to their homeland. Austria's "The minister of the interior has been in negotiations with the German minister of the interior for a very long time about how we can solve the problem of deportations to Afghanistan because Austria is also deporting Afghans and Syrians right now," said Chancellor Karl Nehammer.

## Countdown begins for substation's completion

KABUL (TOLONews): The spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy and Water informed TOLONews that the construction of the 500-kilovolt Arghandi substation is set to be completed within the next two months.

Matiullah Abid, the spokesperson, highlighted that the project is currently advancing at a rapid pace. Once the construction phase is finished, the installation of the electrical equipment will commence. He further noted that the acting Minister of Energy and Water, in a recent meeting with the heads of an Indian and a local company, underscored the importance of transferring the transformers and finalizing the handover of the 500-kilovolt Arghandi substation. He emphasized that these companies must undertake all necessary measures to ensure the

timely delivery and proper transfer of the transformers. "There were discussions with an Indian and a local company regarding the 500-kilovolt Arghandi substation. It is noteworthy that work on the mentioned substation is progressing rapidly, with the construction expected to be completed in the next two months, followed by the start of electrical equipment installation," he said.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment considers electricity a crucial resource for the growth of various sectors in the country and emphasizes further investments in energy production within Afghanistan.

Jan Agha Naveed, spokesperson for the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, told TOLONews: "Energy is a very important issue. We

must strengthen the energy sector and ensure that energy is provided for all the people of Afghanistan, both for residential and commercial purposes."

Abdul Ghaffar Nizami, an economic analyst, said: "The electricity we import from abroad costs us millions of dollars annually. Therefore, it has become necessary to build standard substations in appropriate locations."

Recently, the acting Minister of Energy and Water, during the inauguration ceremony of this project, has said that with the completion of this project and other projects included in this series, the possibility of importing up to 1,000 megawatts of electricity from Turkmenistan will be created, which will significantly address the electricity shortage problems in the country.

## IEA's supreme leader meets with local officials

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada met with officials of Samangan province on Monday in Balkh province and emphasized the need to maintain unity among the people.

He said it was imperative that linguistic, ethnic and geographical divisions as well as prejudice be avoided.

He also called on officials to take the implementation of his decrees seriously and to bring the people closer to the Islamic system.

Hibatullah also stated that in no way may "work be left to unprofessionals".

"Two classes bring peace and maintain unity, and these two classes are the rulers and the scholars." If the scholars are not afraid of speaking the truth and the rulers do not distance themselves from the implementation of the rulings and decrees, the people will always be at ease and will never distance themselves from the government," he said.

He added that: "The cause of all the misfortunes of the last few decades in Afghanistan has undoubtedly been the differences and the formation of tribal kingdoms, which made the people helpless and displaced and kept them away from the advancements that they were entitled to."

## Minaret of Jam at risk of collapse

GHOR (TOLONews): The historical Minaret of Jam in Ghor province, which sustained serious damage from floods in recent months, remains in a precarious condition. According to local Ghor officials, no measures have been taken so far to strengthen and restore this historical monument.

Abdul Hai Zaeem, head of Information and Culture in Ghor, said: "The retaining walls have not been properly constructed so far, and it is necessary that the Ministry of Information and Culture, which we have repeatedly requested, as well as UNESCO, which receives international assistance to protect the Minaret of Jam, pays serious attention to this matter."

The Minaret of Jam has stood tall for centuries by the Siyah Koh and Hari Rud River, but natural events, especially floods, have somewhat bent its structure.

Several residents warn that if immediate action is not taken to save the Minaret of Jam, this historical relic will collapse.

Mir Rahim, one of the visitors, said: "The collapse of this historical minaret would be a great cultural disaster not only for Afghanistan but for the entire Islamic world."

Jumagul Mohammadi, another visitor, said: "This year's floods have greatly affected the Minaret of Jam, and this minaret, which had been leaning for years, is now on the verge of collapse."

The Minaret of Jam was registered as a World Heritage site by UNESCO twenty-two years ago, but according to cultural figures, UNESCO, or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has neglected this historical monument.

Saqib, a cultural affairs expert in Ghor, said: "The floods were so strong that they reached the base of the minaret, with water rising up to one and a half meters. In such conditions, the collapse of the minaret is highly likely. The existing retaining walls have been completely unable to protect the minaret or control the flood paths."

With a history of nearly a thousand years, the Minaret of Jam is considered one of the oldest mud-brick minarets in the world. Despite all the challenges, this historical heritage remains standing and preserves the values of a magnificent civilization.

## Deputy Minister Mawlawi Jamal calls for expansion of tourism development projects



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Qudratullah Jamal, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Finance, and Administration of the Ministry of Information and Culture, has called for the expansion of development projects and the growth of the tourism sector in Afghanistan.

His remarks came during

a meeting with officials from (The Liaison Office) TLO organization, where they discussed ongoing efforts to support Afghanistan's economic and cultural sectors.

According to a statement from Bakhtar Agency, officials from TLO briefed the Deputy Minister on the

organization's activities and contributions in Afghanistan.

For his part, Mawlawi Jamal commended their efforts and reiterated the potential of the tourism sector as a sustainable revenue source for the country.

"Afghanistan has significant opportunities in the

tourism sector that can provide substantial revenue to both the government and the people if utilized effectively," Mawlawi Qudratullah Jamal stated.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to strengthen bilateral cooperation for further development in these areas.

## Increase in railway trade enhances country's economic connectivity

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Works said that over the past five months, more than 1.6 million tons of goods have been transported via railways.

According to the ministry's information, more than 66,000 tons of commercial goods have been exported through the railways, with the majority being dried fruits, minerals, and beverages.

Afghanistan is one of the countries without access to the sea, and it primarily conducts trade through land routes and air corridors.

Railway trade is completed in a shorter time and

at a lower cost.

Mohammad Ashraf Haq, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works, said: "In the past five months, over 1.6 million metric tons of goods have been transported via the ministry's railway lines from four ports: Aqina, Torghundi, Khaf-Herat, and Hairatan, which include petroleum and non-petroleum products and other materials imported and exported to the country."

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that the establishment of railways plays a vital role in increasing trade with Central Asian coun-

tries and South Asia.

Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the board of directors of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said, "One of the important tasks that the Islamic Emirate has after the power supply is the railway lines, which we must build."

Meanwhile, some economic experts emphasize that investment in railways plays a vital role in increasing trade and economic growth.

Abdul Nasir Rashtia, an economic expert, said: "Besides Afghanistan's need to establish a railway network, regional coun-

tries, especially Central Asian countries, are keenly interested in connecting themselves through Afghanistan to the Chabahar port, Torkham, and Karachi."

Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an economic expert, said: "If we can connect to the world through rail and expand our transit with neighboring countries, we can stabilize our economy and grow our industry."

Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister of Railways of the Ministry of Public Works signed two agreements with Turkmenistan for railway development on Saturday of this week.

## Orphanage for Afghan girls established in Samangan

S A M A N G A N (TOLONews): Officials from the Department of Labor and Social Affairs in Samangan have announced the establishment of a special orphanage for orphaned and unaccompanied girls in the province.

According to them, fifty girls have recently been admitted to this orphanage, and another 25 girls are expected to be admitted soon.

Faiz Mohammad Rehan, the head of the Department of Labor and Social Affairs of Samangan, said: "We plan to accommodate 75 orphaned girls in this orphanage under the Department of Labor and Social Affairs of

Samangan. Currently, we have admitted more than fifty orphaned girls, and we hope to reach the target of seventy-five. The center we have established for girls is located in a part of the city where female teachers are serving these girls."

The girls who have been admitted to this orphanage say they could not attend school before due to a lack of guardianship and economic challenges, but now they are happy that all facilities have been provided for them.

Zahra, an orphaned child, said: "It has been five years since my father passed away, and I could not study because of that.

Now that an orphanage has been built for us in Samangan, I am happy and can study with other girls."

Another orphaned child, Arezu, said: "It has been five years since my father became disabled. When I was at home, we neither had good food nor did I study. Now that we have come here, I am very happy; I study and have good teachers, and I strive to study well."

Abdul Latif, another orphaned child, said: "I am a tenth-grade student. Before this, I was not familiar with my studies and faced many problems. Alhamdulillah, it's been almost a year and a half since I came here, and

now I can properly focus on my studies. Alhamdulillah, everything here, from food and clothing to other necessities, is provided for us."

The head of the Department of Labor and Social Affairs in Samangan stated that more than 200 other children facing economic challenges have been enrolled in preparatory and kindergarten classes and have been provided with free education opportunities.

The head of the Department of Labor and Social Affairs of Samangan also reports that currently, 200 orphaned children, including girls, are living in orphanages in the province.

## Residents of Urgan and Paktika demand action on basic services

PAKTIKA (TOLONews): The residents of Urgan district in Paktika province of Afghanistan are calling on the officials in the interim government to address their challenges in the areas of health, education, and telecommunications.

Pirkoti is a region located in the Urgan district of Paktika province, with a population of approximately 30,000 people. Despite the significant population, only one health center is operational in Pirkoti, providing services to local residents from 8 AM to 2 PM.

According to the residents, this health center does not meet their medical needs within its limited operating hours, and there is a need for expanding health services and facilities in the region.

Abdullah Siddiqi, one of the local residents, said, "Around 30,000 people live here, and we are far from Urgan. The absence of female doctors and specialists often results in the death of mothers and children. The clinic also operates in a private space; a dedicated building should be constructed for this clinic."

Another resident, Abdul Rahman, said, "We face many problems with drinking water. We bring water from distant places using animals, which is not clean and has made our children sick."

Sayed Mohammad also said, "There is a lot of unemployment here, and people are poor. Reconstruction work needs to be done here so people can find employment. We request the insti-

tutions and the government to find a solution for us."

Some other residents of this district say that during the previous government, construction work for some school buildings began but remained unfinished.

Rahim Gul, a resident of Urgan district, said: "During the republic era, the construction of seven school buildings was approved for us, and work on them started, but they have now been left incomplete. Many of these projects are 70 to 80 percent complete."

Abdul Hanan, a resident of Urgan district, said: "When we call someone, first the phone does not work, and if we climb to higher places to get a signal, unknown people enter our calls. This is a big

problem. We want the telecommunication services here to be standardized and expanded."

Local officials pledge that they will address the challenges faced by the residents of this district.

Makhdoom Abdul Salam Saadat, the deputy governor of Paktika, said: "We will build roads and clinics for them. If we succeed in our plan, no village in Paktika will be left without a clinic, road, or clean drinking water. This is our promise and commitment to God and the people, Inshallah."

Previously, residents of other remote areas of various provinces had also requested the officials to provide facilities in the fields of health, education, clean drinking water, and telecommunications services.

## CPSP and MoHE discuss cooperation — to enhance medical draining

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Hafiz Mohammad Hamid Hasib, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education in Afghanistan, urged the Pakistan College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSP) to collaborate with the ministry to advance medical education in the country.

The discussions, held with the CPSP President and a delegation, centered around strengthening educational partnerships and improving medical training in Afghanistan.

Mawlawi Hasib emphasized the extensive challenges that Afghanistan has

faced over the last fifty years, which have had a severe impact on its educational infrastructure, particularly in the medical sector. He called for international support, particularly from neighboring Pakistan, to help address these pressing issues.

In response, Professor Dr. Muhammad Shoaib Shafi, President of CPSP, provided insights into the college's capabilities and expressed a strong willingness to support Afghan medical training initiatives.

He noted that approximately 300 Afghan doctors

are currently pursuing specialization in 27 medical fields across various cities in Pakistan. Additionally, 18 Afghan doctors have recently completed their training at CPSP.

CPSP is an independent institution in Pakistan, has also extended its efforts in several other countries, providing advanced medical education and training. This collaboration could pave the way for significant improvements in Afghanistan's medical education landscape, fostering a new generation of skilled healthcare professionals.

## Meeting finalizes NDC partnership document



KABUL (BNA): A consultative meeting aimed at finalizing the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Partnership document was held under the leadership of Dr. Zainul Abidin Abid, Deputy Minister for Technical and Policy Affairs at the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).

The session brought together key officials, including Ruhullah Amin, Head of Climate Change,

university professors, and representatives from various ministries, all focused on addressing Afghanistan's climate change challenges.

Dr. Zainul Abidin Abid underscored the document's vital importance in fulfilling the commitments of the Paris Agreement. He elaborated that the NDC document, covering the period from 2021 to 2030, outlines Afghanistan's needs across multiple sectors and estimates a funding requirement of approximately \$20.6 billion.

Ruhullah Amin emphasized the significance of the

three-day meeting, which was dedicated to reviewing and refining the draft developed with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Agha Khan Foundation.

The finalized NDC document will be submitted to the UN Climate Change Secretariat after incorporating feedback from this consultative meeting, marking a crucial step in Afghanistan's commitment to addressing climate change and securing necessary funding for future initiatives.

## New car models unveiled by Balkh factory

BALKH (BNA): A local factory in Balkh province of Afghanistan has made a significant leap in automotive manufacturing by introducing two new car models, backed by an investment of 6 million Afghanis, the announcement was made by Habibullah Barakzai, the head of Amin Noor Company.

The factory, known for its production of twelve types of vehicles, including cargo bicycles, is expanding its portfolio with the addition of these new models. The vehicles will feature both electric and petrol options, aiming to cater to a diverse market.

In addition to cars, the factory also manufactures four types of 24-volt batteries, which are distributed across 20 provinces in Afghanistan.

This diversification not only supports local transportation but also contributes to the renewable energy sector.

The introduction of these new vehicles is expected to create a buzz in the market, with plans for a timely launch.

Furthermore, the factory has been a significant employer in the region, providing both direct and indirect job opportunities for around 500 individuals.

## 166 graduates from training

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of National Defense has reported the graduation of 166 personnel from the Abdullah bin Masoud Joint Training Command, following a four-month specialized training program in heavy vehicle engineering and mine clearance.

The ceremony was attended by Mawlawi Baz Mohammad Hamidi, Deputy for Training and Personnel; Mawlawi Nasibullah Madani, Commander of the Joint Training Command; and other officials.

During the event, the officials reminded the graduates of their responsibilities, urging them to embody both outward preparedness and inner qualities such as piety and virtue.

The graduates pledged to protect the country's independence, territorial integrity, and national and Islamic values.



# PM doing injustice to KP: Adviser to CM

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister KP on Finance Muzzammil Aslam said that the financial position of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is at its best in 76 years, while the federal government has collected a less tax of 98 billion rupees in the month of August, by which only Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will get less eight and a half billion rupees while Punjab 29 and Sindh will get 16 billion rupees less.

These views were expressed by Advisor Finance and Inter Provincial Coordination Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muzamil Aslam while addressing a press conference in Civil Secretariat Peshawar here on Tuesday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Adviser Muzzammil Aslam said that Federal budgets are not sustainable, they just give numbers to the media that are later proven wrong. In the last 20 years, not a single federal budget has come out right and the provinces make the budget by looking at the federal tax collection targets.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government gave the provincial budget earlier because we thought that if the tax targets of 11,200 billion rupees is sustainable this year. On the instructions of the IMF, the federal government announced a tax target of 12,900 billion rupees, in which FBR is also not confident to achieve it.

Adviser Finance Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while addressing the press conference said that the mini budgets have already started from the first month of fiscal year. Now the micro budgets will come on regular intervals. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has collected seven billion rupees in taxes in the first two months with an increase of 44 percent, and this is at a time when the economy is faltering. He said that we reduced sales tax from 15 percent to 13 percent while property taxes were halved, he added.

Muzzammil Aslam said that when Shehbaz Sharif and Ishaq Dar failed, Imran Khan had given the IMF program

guarantee before his arrest, so the IMF 9 months standby program was granted. Now the IMF program has been signed in July and since then there is no reports of Board meeting. Muzammil Aslam said it general impression in the media that at present the capital of Pakistan is not Islamabad but at Lahore and decisions are being made in Lahore then those in Islamabad.

Advisor on Finance said that after Punjab's government power subsidy for 2 months announced, the Prime Minister advised the provinces to do the same, which is against IMF MoU signed by provinces.

Advisor Finance said it is coming in the news that the federal government has made a plan that funds will be deducted from the provinces to provide electricity subsidy of 2800 billion rupees, in which 231 billion rupees will be deducted from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. With this amount only 6 rupees unit relief is given to the whole of Pakistan. We believe for 6 rupees per unit subsidy only 600 billion rupees are needed.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Adviser Muzzammil Aslam said that the rate of inflation has increased by 36% in one year while saying that inflation has reached single digits. According to statistics, the price of onion has increased by 144%, the price of vegetables has increased by 57%, the price of pulses by 23% and the price of meat by 21%, Mr. Muzammil Aslam said.

Advisor on Finance said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is doing injustice to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to PTI's malice. He announced additional funds after terrorism in Balochistan. The Funds will be given from NFC, whereas for provinces affected by terrorism like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is no grants or announcement. Muzammil Aslam said that PDM people are saying that PTI is fragmented whereas this fragmented PTI is stronger and more united than PDM and the September 8 PTI rally will prove it.

## PHC halts appointments in Lakki University

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Shahid Khan has stopped new appointments at University of Lakki Marwat including the post of Pro-Vice Chancellor, on Tuesday.

The petition filed by Dawlat Khan and others, represented by their lawyer, Zahir Shah Marwat Advocate. During the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer informed the court that the university had initiated the process of recruitment for various posts, despite the fact that the appointment of the Pro-Vice Chancellor himself was illegal.

Moreover, the Pro-Vice Chancellor had been given additional charge of other universities, and therefore, did not have the authority to make new appointments. The lawyer further stated that the university's registrar had issued an advertisement for new appointments and was himself a candidate, as well as the chairman of the scrutiny committee.

The lawyer questioned that how the registrar could oversee the scrutiny process when he was himself a candidate. The petitioner requested the court to immediately halt the recruitment process in the university. The bench issued a restraining order against new appointments in the university, issued notices to the parties, and sought their response.

## Court convicts rapist

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Child Protection Court has sentenced a case rapist of adolescent minor girl for 25 years imprisonment and imposed fine of Rs 500,000 after establishment of link between complaint and the accused, on Tuesday.

During the hearing, the complainant lawyer Wali Khan advocate informed the court that the victim, who is under 18 years old, was raped by her cousin named Usman, on August 5, 2023, in the jurisdiction of Police Station Sheikh Maltoon, Mardan. The accused fled the scene, and a case was registered.

The lawyer told that all evidence including medical reports had been obtained by the police, proving that the girl had been raped. He emphasized that the identification of the accused was crucial, as the victim had already identified her cousin as the perpetrator. He argued that it was impossible for the victim to have falsely accused him.

The lawyer further stated that if such culprits were released, it would lead to social problems. He requested the court to not show any leniency to the accused. On the other hand, the accused's lawyer claimed that the victim was 20 years old and had consensual relations with the accused. However, the victim later filed a complaint against him. The lawyer also pointed out that the FIR was registered six days after the incident.

In response, Wali Khan told the court that such cases are often hidden in our society, which is why the complaint was filed late. The child protection court, after considering all the evidence, sentenced the accused, Usman for 25 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs 500,000 after conclusion of trial.

## PEMRA's ban suspended

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) has once again suspended the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) notification banning coverage of PTI founder and the party, overturning PEMRA's order from May 31, 2023.

The court's division bench, consisting of Chief Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui and Justice Javad Akbar, rejected PEMRA's appeal against the earlier suspension of its notification by a single judge.

During today's hearing, PTI's lawyer, Barrister Ali Tahir, argued that after the initial suspension of the May 31 notification, PEMRA reissued the same order on November 11, 2023.



DADAR: A man along with children shifting towards safer place after flood hit various areas of Sindh.

# Israeli attacks in Gaza kill 33 more Palestinians

CAIRO (Reuters): Israeli forces killed 33 Palestinians across Gaza in the past 24 hours as they battled Hamas-led militants, Palestinian officials said on Tuesday, but brief pauses in fighting allowed medics to conduct a third day of polio vaccinations for children.

Among those killed were four women in the southern city of Rafah and eight people near a hospital in Gaza City in the north, the Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said. Others were killed in separate air strikes across the territory, it said. The Israeli military said it killed eight Palestinian gunmen, including a senior Hamas commander who took part in the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, at a command center near the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City.

A statement said Ahmed Fozi Nazer Muhammad Wadia had taken command of a "massacre of civilians carried out by Hamas terrorists" in Israel's Netiv HaAsara community near the Gaza border. There was no response from Hamas. The armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad said they were battling Israeli forces in the Zeitoun suburb of Gaza City, and also in Rafah and Khan Younis in the south.

Nevertheless, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that it was ahead of its targets for polio vaccinations in Gaza on Tuesday, day three of a mass campaign, and had inoculated about a quarter of children under 10. The campaign, which was hastened by the discovery of the first polio case in a Gazan baby last month, relies on daily eight-hour pauses in fighting between Israel and Hamas militants in specific areas of the besieged enclave.

Diplomatic efforts to secure a permanent ceasefire and release foreign and Israeli hostages held in Gaza and return many Palestinians jailed by Israel have stalled, however. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that Israeli troops would remain in the Philadelphia corridor on the southern edge of Gaza, one of the main sticking points in reaching a deal to end the fighting and return hostages.

Hamas, which wants an agreement to end the war and see Israeli forces out of all of the Gaza Strip, says such a condition, among some others, would prevent a deal. Netanyahu says war can only end when Hamas is eradicated. The United Nations, in collaboration with the local health authorities, embarked on the third day of a complex campaign to vaccinate around 640,000 children in Gaza.

Rik Peeperkorn, WHO representative for the Occupied Palestinian territories, told reporters in Geneva that it had vaccinated more than 161,000 children under 10 in the central area in the first two days of its campaign, compared with a projection of around 150,000. "Up until now things are going well," he said. "These humanitarian pauses, up until now they work. We still have 10 days to go." He said that some children in southern Gaza were thought to be outside the agreed zone for the pauses and that negotiations continued in order to reach them.

Palestinians say a key reason for the return of polio is the collapse of the health system and the destruction of most Gaza hospitals. Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals for military purposes, which the Islamist group denies. The war in Gaza was trig-

gered by Hamas' Oct. 7 rampage in southern Israel, when its fighters killed 1,200 people and captured more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

Since then, more than 40,800 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, the enclave's health ministry said on Monday. Meanwhile, the spokesperson for Hamas' armed wing Al-Qassam Brigades, Abu Ubaida, announced on Monday that the group has issued new instructions to guards on how to handle hostages if Israeli forces approach their locations in Gaza.

On Sunday, the Israeli military reported the recovery of the bodies of six hostages from a tunnel in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, claiming that Hamas was responsible for their deaths. Ubaida said his group holds Israel responsible for the deaths. He said the new instructions, which he didn't detail, were given to guards of hostages after a rescue operation by Israel in June. At that time, Israeli forces freed four hostages in a deadly raid in which dozens of Palestinians, including women and children, were killed.

"Netanyahu's insistence to free prisoners through military pressure, instead of sealing a deal means they will be returned to their families in shrouds. Their families must choose whether they want them dead or alive," he said. Israel and Hamas have failed to conclude a deal that would end the war and see the release of Israeli and foreign hostages held in Gaza in return for many Palestinians jailed by Israel. Hamas wants any agreement to end the war and get Israeli forces out of Gaza while Netanyahu says the war can only end once Hamas is defeated.

# Warships Babar, Hunain to be inducted into Navy fleet

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Two warships PNS Babar and PNS Hunain will be formally inducted into the fleet of Pakistan Navy on the occasion of Defence Day which is observed on September 6 in Pakistan, said a statement issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Tuesday.

According to the military's media wing, President Asif Ali Zardari will be the chief guest on the occasion of induction of the warships. As per the statement, PNS Babar has been built in Turkiye while PNS Hunain in Romania. These will further increase Pakistan Navy's defence capabilities.

The media wing said construction of PNS Babar began on June 4, 2020. While, it was launched on August 15, 2021, and its commissioning took place on September 23, 2023. Four Babar class ships equipped with vertical launching system were

being inducted into Pakistan Navy, said the statement.

Under Pak-Turkey agreement, two ships are being manufactured in Istanbul and as many in Karachi. It said three other Babar class ships PNS Badar, Tariq and Khyber were under construction. The Babar class ship is capable of surface, underwater and air combat, simultaneously, said the ISPR.

"The 2,888-tonne Babar-class ship has a vertical launch system to deal with aerial threats. The vertical launch system of the 2888 ton Babar-class ship can hit air targets," ISPR said. Meanwhile, recently commissioned third off-shore patrol vessel (OPV) PNS Hunain arrived in Karachi from Romania, the Pakistan Navy (PN) director general public relations (DGPR) said on August 30. The DGPR said a ceremony was held at the PN Dockyard and Commodore

Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Faisal Abbasi was the chief guest on this occasion.

PNS Hunain is a multi-purpose medium sized OPV, with state of the art electronic warfare, anti-ship, anti-air warfare weapons and sensors, self-protection and terminal defence system. The ship was built and commissioned in July this year at Romania's Damen Shipyard. The Commodore Pakistan Fleet, on this occasion, highlighted that addition of PNS Hunain will significantly enhance PN capability of safeguarding maritime frontiers.

He emphasised that induction of such multipurpose state of the art platforms would provide support to PN Maritime Security patrol in the Indian Ocean. Reception ceremony of PNS Hunain was attended by large number of PN officers, CPOs/sailors and families of crew members.

# Bangladesh floods leave 71 dead

DHAKA (Reuters): The death toll from floods in Bangladesh rose to 71 on Tuesday with millions of people still stranded in devastated areas and increasing concern about outbreaks of waterborne disease as the inundation recedes. The floods, triggered by relentless monsoon rains and runoff from upstream waterways, have wreaked havoc over the past two weeks, causing widespread destruction and affecting around five million people.

More than 580,000 families are still marooned in 11 flood-hit districts and in urgent need of food, clean water, medicine, and dry

clothing. Nearly 500 medical teams were helping provide treatment, with the army, air force, navy, and the border guard assisting in relief efforts.

Authorities are now focusing on preventing the spread of waterborne diseases, a common aftermath of such disasters, and ensuring the availability of clean drinking water. The Directorate General of Health Services said nearly 5,000 people had been hospitalised over the past 24 hours for cases of diarrhoea, skin infections, and snake bites. Heavy rain in the capital Dhaka on Tuesday swamped many

districts, submerging roads in knee-deep to waist-high water, causing massive traffic jams as vehicles struggled through waterlogged streets.

Crops worth 33.5 billion taka (\$282 million) have been damaged, affecting more than 1.4 million farmers, according to a preliminary assessment by the agriculture ministry. A 2015 analysis by the World Bank Institute estimated that 3.5 million people in the South Asian country were at risk of annual river flooding, which has only increased in recent years due to climate change.

# Bitter exchange between CJP, Naeem Bokhari

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and senior counsel Naeem Bokhari had an exchange of words during hearing of the case related to commercial activities in Margalla Hills.

A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Isa, heard the review petitions against the closure of Monal and other restaurants. During the hearing, Naeem Bokhari, the counsel for the restaurants' owners, argued that the decision to close the restaurants was not voluntary and

that they were not given a fair chance of hearing.

The CJP remarked that the order was passed with the consent of the restaurants' owners. Advocate Bokhari responded that there were only two options before the owners. He noted that the respondents were not properly heard while making the decision. He said the FIA had probed the case and found that the owners of restaurants were not doing any illegal activity.

The chief justice questioned the relevance of the FIA investigation. Bokhari claimed the agency had pre-

viously cleared the restaurants' owners of any wrongdoing. He also mentioned past incidents wherein authorities overstepped but the chief justice dismissed the arguments as being irrelevant. The counsel and the chief justice exchanged words over the friction. However, Bokhari a little later apologised for raising his voice during the arguments, and the chief justice acknowledged that "sometimes difficult questions are necessary to understand a case". Later, the court reserved the verdict.

# 51 killed in Russian missile strike on Ukraine's Poltava

KYIV: Two Russian ballistic missiles have struck an educational facility and hospital in central Ukraine's Poltava city, killing at least 51 people and wounding more than 200 others, Ukrainian authorities say.

The strike appeared to be one of the deadliest carried out by Russian forces since the war began more than 900 days ago on February 24, 2022. There was no immediate confirmation of the attack from Russia. "One of the buildings of the [Military] Institute of Communications was partially destroyed. People found themselves under the rubble. Many were saved," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Poltava is located about 350km (217 miles) south-east of the capital, Kyiv. The city is on the main highway and rail route between Kyiv and Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, which is close to the Russian border. "All necessary services are involved in the rescue operation," Zelenskyy said, adding that he had ordered

"a full and prompt investigation" into the attack.

He pledged that Russia would "surely pay" for the attack. "As of 6pm (15:00 GMT), 51 people were killed and over 200 wounded in the attack," the office of Ukraine's prosecutor general said. Earlier, Ukraine's Ministry of Defence said Poltava was "experiencing a terrible day".

The missiles hit shortly after the air raid alert sounded, when many people were on their way to a bomb shelter, the ministry said in the statement. "Thanks to the coordinated work of rescuers and medics, it was possible to save 25 people, 11 of whom were retrieved from under the rubble. Currently, rescuers continue their work," it said. Poltava Governor Filip Pronin announced three days of mourning starting on Wednesday.

"A great tragedy for Poltava region and entire Ukraine," Pronin wrote on Telegram. "The enemy certainly must answer for all [its] crimes against human-

ity." He said there may be a further 15 people still under the rubble. Russian military bloggers said the strike targeted an outdoor ceremony.

Ukrainian MP Maria Bezugla, who regularly criticises Ukraine's military leadership, blamed high-ranking officials for endangering soldiers by allowing such incidents. "These tragedies keep repeating themselves. When will it stop?" she posted on Telegram. Zelenskyy repeated his calls for more Western air defences and urged allies to allow their long-range weapons to be used for strikes deeper into Russian territory in order to protect Ukraine.

"We keep telling everyone in the world who has the power to stop this terror: air defence systems and missiles are needed in Ukraine, not in a warehouse somewhere. "Long-range strikes that can protect us from Russian terror are needed now, not some time later. Unfortunately, every day of delay means loss of life." — Aljazeera

# 11 dead as school bus hits students

BEIJING (Xinhua): Eleven people were killed in China's eastern Shandong province on Tuesday after a school bus lost control at a busy pedestrian junction, broadcaster CCTV reported, with disturbing footage showing bodies lying on the road and trapped under the vehicle.

Six parents and five children were killed in the incident while one remained in critical condition. More than two dozen were injured, CCTV said. State news agency, Xinhua reported that the students were waiting outside of their school in Tai'an city in Shandong when the bus slammed into them.

Dongping Police Department said in a statement on WeChat that the vehicle picking up students lost control at a junction in Dongping County, Shandong on Tuesday morning. The accident is under investigation, it added. Numerous such incidents have been reported in the country recently including stabbing events targeting children in schools as well as school buses accidents.

# DR Congo jailbreak attempt leaves 129 dead

DR CONGO (AFP): An attempted jailbreak from the Democratic Republic of Congo's largest prison has left at least 129 people dead and led to women being raped, the interior minister said on Tuesday. The circumstances around the bid to bust out of the Makala prison in the capital Kinshasa, which holds 10 times the number it is meant to house, in the early hours of Monday remain unclear.

Witnesses told AFP they had heard gunfire at around 2am which lasted for several hours in the area of the prison, a popular and residential neighbourhood. Democratic Republic of Congo Interior Minister Jacquemain Shabani in a statement released by video on Tuesday announced a provisional death toll of 129 people. They included "24 who were shot after warnings", he said. At least 59 others had been wound-

ed and were receiving care, he said, adding that many people had been crushed or suffocated and that many women had been raped. In the early hours of Tuesday, gunshots rang out again in the neighbourhood, several witnesses said. "I heard the gunshots around 5am," Sacre, a taxi driver who did not want to give his surname, told AFP.

He also said that the streets in the area were unusually calm with police and soldiers on patrol, AFP journalists saw. Daddi Soso, an electrician in his forties, said he had seen security force vehicles taking bodies away in the early hours of Monday. Police cordoned off the streets leading to the prison. The authorities have given no indication as to how many inmates escaped or attempted to do so.

Government spokesman Patrick Muyaya only said that the security

services were at the scene and asked residents not to panic. A few hours later, he told national television the situation was "under control". Justice Minister Constant Mutamba later announced on X that inquiries were under way "to identify and severely punish the sponsors of these acts of sabotage".

As well as the human toll, the escape attempt caused damage to buildings. Part of the prison, mainly housing the administrative offices, was set on fire, the government said. The prison was already badly damaged during an attack by armed men in 2017, which led to more than 4,000 prisoners escaping, some of them described as "dangerous" by police. Makala prison has a capacity of 1,500 inmates. But it is overcrowded and rights organisations regularly complain about the conditions of detention at the jail.