

**Mengal refuses**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Negotiations of the committee constituted by the government with chief of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal ended in failure as he refused to withdraw resignation. The government's committee held meeting with the BNP's chief with an aim to convince him for resolving the issues through dialogues.

**Ali Wazir granted bail**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has granted bail to former Member of NA Ali Wazir, with the bail set at PKR 25,000 in surety bonds. The decision was made by a two-judge bench comprising Justice Babar Sattar and Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan. Previously, the Anti-Terrorism Court had denied Ali Wazir's bail application, prompting him to seek relief from the Islamabad High Court.



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ISLAMABAD: Mohib Ullah Kakar, an excavator driver, who saved a family stranded in flash flood in Qilla Abdullah, called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

## Fazl wants parliament to lead from front in dialogue with Baloch

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Wednesday urged parliament to take lead in holding dialogue with the people of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in order to address their security concerns.

He was speaking on the floor of the House during the National Assembly session. "There are many areas in KP and Balochistan where you cannot play the national anthem of the country," bemoaned the veteran politician. "The situation is so alarming that the flag of Pakistan cannot be hoisted in those areas," he added.

The JUI-F chief said the issue of missing persons was very important and "we must deliberate on it". "I really want the people of Pakistan to have trust in our armed forces," Fazl said. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Wednesday urged parliament to take lead in holding dialogue with the people of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in order to address their security concerns.

He was speaking on the floor of the House during the National Assembly session. "There are many areas in KP and Balochistan where you cannot play the national anthem of the country," bemoaned the veteran politician. "The situation is so alarming that the flag of Pakistan cannot be hoisted in those areas," he added. The JUI-F chief said the issue of missing persons was very important and "we must deliberate on it". "I really want the people of Pakistan to have trust in our armed forces," Fazl

said. Meanwhile, amid heightened scrutiny and ambiguity surrounding the independent power producers (IPPs) the federal government has claimed that no loadshedding is being carried out in the country due to generation shortfall.

Speaking on the National Assembly floor on Wednesday, Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said that distribution companies (Discos) are carrying out load management in areas based on losses in corresponding feeders. The minister's remarks come as the incumbent government faced much scrutiny owing to exorbitant electricity bills and hours-long power outages across the country — especially during this year's summer.

Ever since coming to power in February earlier this year, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's administration has faced challenges on multiple fronts with power sector being one of them. The Centre faced country-wide protests over prolonged loadshedding and sky-high bills throughout the summer. The incumbent rulers have also faced flak on the IPP issue with calls to review the government agreements with them as the government has admitted that the country has the highest electricity tariffs in the region. However, Energy Minister Awais Leghari has said that the nation would receive "good news" regarding the IPPs soon.

Speaking in the lower house of parliament on Wednesday, Tarar also underscored that feeders with up to 20% losses are exempted from loadshedding. The minister also said that in the first phase, smart meters will be installed on transformers to keep a

check on electricity theft.

Informing the House that Private Power and Infrastructure Board was working on promotion and development of Alternative and Renewable Energy technologies for power generation in line with the government's vision to diversify the energy generation, the lawmaker accentuated that as many as 58 alternative and renewable energy based projects were operational which were producing 3,837 megawatts of electricity cumulatively. Out of these, winds projects amounted to 1,845 megawatts, he added.

Meanwhile, expressing his view on the parliament floor, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik lamented the depletion of indigenous gas reserves and said that the incumbent administration was awarding new blocks for oil and gas exploration along with the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

A unanimous call from both opposition and government members in the National Assembly has led to the formation of a parliamentary committee to investigate the issues surrounding Independent Power Producers (IPPs). The session, chaired by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, saw heated discussions over the impact of IPPs on the public and the broader energy sector.

Mahrin Bhutto of the MQM-P highlighted the severe public impact due to IPP charges, accusing K-Electric of operating as a "state within a state" ignoring federal and provincial directives. Raja Pervez Ashraf from the PPP called for a comprehensive house committee to address the IPP crisis, emphasizing the need for clarity on this pressing issue.

### Solar, wind projects

## K-Electric receives seven bids, Tarar tells NA

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar informed the National Assembly on Wednesday that the Karachi Electric Company has received seven bids for solar and wind power projects aimed at generating 220 megawatts (MW) of electricity.

Responding to a calling attention notice concerning the collapse of K-Electric's electricity transmission and distribution system and the electrocution of numerous individuals in the city during the current monsoon season, he said that the government was committed to ensuring that the seven bids for solar and wind power projects are implemented transparently to enhance K-Electric's capacity.

He expressed the hope that the implementation of these projects would resolve Karachi's electricity challenges. The minister said that between July and August, Karachi experienced increased rainfall. As a precautionary measure, particularly in areas facing drainage issues, K-Electric temporarily shut down 300 feeders out of 1,800.

He further said that, due to these measures, no incidents of electrocution were reported in the city. However, 24 incidents did occur due to internal wiring issues and short circuits within homes. He said an FIR was registered for one such case, but upon investigation, no negligence on the part of K-Electric was found.

He further said that there have been 24 reported incidents during the recent rains in Karachi, but none resulted in fatalities. He added that since the current government took office, significant steps have been taken to improve the country's electricity system. Load shedding primarily occurred in areas with high electricity theft and line losses, he added.

He said that the prime minister was continuously being briefed on efforts to enhance the capacity of K-Electric and other power distribution companies. In response to another query, he said that some load shedding was being done in certain areas due to technical faults, which cannot be attributed to capacity issues.

He said that a task force had been established to review capacity payments.

the task force, he said, will also review the K-electric projects. When questioned about budgeting, he explained that funds were allocated separately for each institution, taking into account their operational expenses.

The minister highlighted that unexpected rains this year have caused issues, particularly in Karachi, where drainage problems have worsened the situation. While the Mayor of Karachi has made significant efforts to address drainage concerns, there remains a need to increase K-Electric's maintenance budget. He informed the National Assembly that a group of individuals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recently stormed a grid station and forcibly turned on the feeders. Warning that such actions could lead to serious accidents, he stated that PESCO has decided to take legal action in this matter.

He said that such issues should be resolved amicably and that storming a grid station was not a viable solution to any problem. Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah referred the calling attention notice to the concerned standing committee for further deliberation.

### PM awards Rs2.5m to excavator operator

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday awarded Rs 2.5 million to an excavator operator who had rescued a family stranded in the flood in the Qilla Abdullah area of Balochistan.

The prime minister, who invited the rescuer Mohibullah to the Prime Minister's House, appreciated his courage to save the stranded family while risking his own life, according to a PM Office press release. "The whole nation including me feels proud of you. I deeply adore your love for humanity. You are a nation's hero as you showed the courage to save human lives," the prime minister said.

He said that Mohibullah had fulfilled the national responsibility by rescuing the stranded people without caring about his own life. Besides awarding Rs 2.5 million from the Government of Pakistan, the prime minister also announced a free-of-charge education facility up to the university level for Mohibullah's children and cost-free healthcare for his family.

"This an honor for me to meet the prime minister of Pakistan. I never thought so. While rescuing the stranded family, I never knew that the act would get that much popular country-wide," Mohibullah said in the meeting. He also thanked the prime minister for acknowledging his gesture and honoring him by inviting him to the PM House. Federal cabinet members Attaullah Tarar, Jam Kamal Khan and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman of PM Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, PM's Coordinator Romina Khurshid Alam and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

### Eid-i-Milad on 17th

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee on Wednesday announced that the crescent for Rabi ul Awwal of 1446 Hijri was not sighted in the country, therefore, the Islamic month will commence from September 6 (Friday).

The announcement came after the moon sighting committee meeting headed by its chairman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad held in Islamabad. As per the announcement, the Eid Milad un Nabi (PBUH) will be celebrated across the country on September 17 (Tuesday).

"We didn't receive reports of moon sighting and the committee, with consensus, concluded that the month of Rabi ul Awwal will commence on September 6 (Friday)," said Maulana Azad in a press conference after the meeting. He said most parts of Pakistan experienced cloudy weather, while some areas had clear skies. However, he said no credible reports of moon sighting were received from any part of the country.

The meeting concluded with a special prayer for the unity of the Muslim Ummah, the protection of the holy cities of Makkah and Madina, the security and stability of Pakistan, national prosperity, unity, the liberation of occupied Kashmir, and the freedom of Gaza and Palestine. Muslims around the world celebrate the birth of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), known as Eid Milad un Nabi, on the 12th of Rabiul Awwal — the third month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

The day is marked by public processions, events and seminars shedding light on the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The 12th Rabi ul Awwal is declared a public holiday, with all public and private offices and educational institutions remaining closed.

# UK suspends aid to Israel

## US faces pressure to follow suit

**Jalil Afridi**

WASHINGTON DC: At a recent press briefing, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller acknowledged the United Kingdom's decision to suspend aid to Israel, citing the country's independent assessment of the ongoing conflict in Gaza. As violence escalates, Miller expressed concern, stating, "The world cannot afford this any longer," and emphasized the urgency of finding a peaceful resolution.

Miller confirmed that the UK informed the US of its decision ahead of time, adding that while the two nations share common values, the US conducts its assessments based on its own laws and processes. He highlighted that several investigations are underway to determine whether Israel has violated international human rights laws, though he noted that, to date, no violations have

been conclusively established by the US government.

The suspension of aid by the UK has raised questions about whether the US might consider a similar course of action. Miller maintained that the US is not a direct party to the conflict and reiterated the stance that both Hamas and Israel must work towards a negotiated peace deal. He underscored that the release of hostages could be a critical step towards ending the hostilities.

Discussions involving the CIA, Secretary of State, and the White House with their counterparts underscore the gravity of the situation, as the US plans another push for a peace agreement in the coming week.

Meanwhile, General Patrick of the Pentagon echoed Miller's statements, affirming that the UK's decision to suspend aid reflects their independent assessment, while the US

has yet to conclude that Israel has breached any international human rights laws.

During the briefing, Pentagon spokesperson, General Patrick Ryder also addressed related issues, including the recent attack on two US marines in Turkey, assuring that both marines are safe and that Turkish authorities are investigating the incident. When pressed on the potential provision of long-range missiles to Ukraine, the Pentagon spokesperson stated that discussions are ongoing but did not provide specific timelines, underscoring the complexities of US defense commitments amid the broader geopolitical landscape.

As global scrutiny intensifies, the US faces mounting pressure to reconsider its stance on military aid to Israel, with advocates urging a reassessment in line with international norms and humanitarian considerations.

### Missing person Faizan Usman case

## IHC orders IGP to submit complete report by 10th

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday ordered Inspector General of Police (IG) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan to submit a final report in the case of Faizan Usman's alleged abduction in court by September 10.

According to the petition, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, filed in the IHC by Usman's father for his recovery, the victim was taken away by men wearing black uniforms and civil dresses without a warrant on July 5. The petition nominated the state, defence ministry, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Islamabad IG, and the station house officer (SHO) of the Shehzad Town Police Station as respondents.

In a court order given yesterday, seen by Dawn.com, the IGP was asked to "seek all assistance and will be provided such assistance" by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) — which was added as respondent number six in

the case — for the missing person's recovery. It had also ordered the IG to produce Usman in court today, adding that if they were unable to produce him, the Islamabad police chief should appear before the court and submit a report on the information he had received from the concerned institutions.

During the hearing on Wednesday, conducted by Justice Babar Sattar, IG Khan said he contacted the FIA,

Pakistan Telecommunications Authority, and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) for more information on the disappearance.

"The court enquired whether the charge [for the abduction] was on intelligence agency, so did you inquire anything from them?" Justice Sattar asked. The police chief said the ministry of defence had been contacted in this regard.

"Contact the intelligence agency, they don't come under the defence ministry but are subordinate to the prime minister," Justice Sattar said. "It seems that

people are being abducted unabated," he said, adding that protecting citizens was the police's responsibility.

"If you fail, then people would come to the courts. A Vigo (double-cabin vehicle) enters a house, a person is abducted, and no one knows what happened, including the SHO. We all know how all of this works," the judge added. He gave the Islamabad police chief time until Tuesday to submit a final report, adding that the police could seek help from anyone if they needed it, and adjourned the hearing till September 10.

According to the petition, Usman was taken away by men in black uniforms and civil dresses without a warrant on July 5. Filed by Usman's father, the petition said that the abductors claimed to belong to the CTD. Usman's father — in the petition — said that the men questioned his son in his office and told him later that they would be taking away his son for a "few days" and would return him shortly.



BADIN: People sitting in open sky due to rain water accumulated in their villages.

# ECP suspends LG Islamabad polls schedule

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has officially issued a notification to suspend the schedule for the upcoming local government (LG) elections in Islamabad.

The elections, which were initially scheduled to be held in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) on October 9, have now been postponed. According to the ECP, the decision to

delay the elections is directly linked to recent legislative developments in the Parliament.

The notification indicates that the local government elections have been postponed due to amendments made to the Islamabad Local Government Act. The changes in the law prompted the ECP to halt the electoral process until the implications of the new legislation were fully understood and integrated into

the election procedures.

The National Assembly passed the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2024, which introduced significant changes to the ICT Local Government Act 2015. The amendments include increasing the number of wards in each union council from six to nine and allowing direct election of all nine general members of each union council by voters in that council.







# Govt establishes endowment fund for artists, artisans

Artists custodians of culture & heritage, says Chanzeb

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has announced the establishment of an endowment fund for the financial support of poverty-stricken artisans linked with different categories of performing and skilled arts. The Endowment Fund has immediately started work under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) in light of the special directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Adviser to CM for Tourism and Culture. In this regard, applications have been invited from the deserving artists and artisans associated with various sectors of arts and crafts in the province while the last date

for submission of applications has been fixed as 23rd of this month. The details of the assistance are available on the website of the KPCTA where the application form can also be downloaded from there. Advisor to CM KP for Tourism and Culture Zahid Chanzeb has formally approved the launching of the fund. He acknowledged that the artisan community is the janitor of our culture and heritage. He said emboldening their creativity and hard work is among the priorities of the provincial government. Zahid Chanzeb said that calligraphy, drawing, handicrafts, jewelry designing, architecture, painting, sculpture, dance, music, literature, theatre, photography, fashion designing, seal

making, ceramics and all other arts and artisans are important means of demonstrating human feelings. He said that the provincial government was quite abreast with the financial challenges of the artists, and hence it is starting such programs which would not only provide financial support to them but also provides maximum opportunities for the promotion of arts. He added that establishment of endowment fund under KPCTA is testimony of KP govt's sincerity towards wellbeing of arts and artisans. Zahid Chanzeb said that deserving artists having domicile of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be directly benefited of this initiative. On this occasion, he also directed the Director

General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority to spare no effort in encouraging and supporting the artists. He further directed that artists are our national asset, therefore KPCTA should take more concrete steps for the welfare of the artists while the process of launching the endowment fund should be implemented immediately to timely help the deserving artists. Meanwhile, the establishment and debut of endowment fund for the welfare of artists by the provincial government has been widely welcomed by the artist community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as from all over the country and has assured the provincial government of its full cooperation in this regard.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister for Information, Barrister Saif talking to Afghan Council General.

## Mismanagement plague Hangu's District Hospital

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: The District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) in Hangu has been left in a state of neglect due to the absence of a Medical Superintendent (MS) and the apparent indifference of the current District Health Officer (DHO), Dr. Ehsan Waheed. Despite holding additional charge as MS, Dr. Ehsan has reportedly been preoccupied with workshops in Abbottabad and Mansehra, leaving the hospital's management to deteriorate. The hospital has been

without a permanent MS for several months, leading to a complete breakdown in its management system. After the previous MS was transferred ten months ago, Dr. Ehsan Waheed was assigned the additional responsibility, but he is frequently absent, resulting in severe operational issues. Despite numerous complaints and letters from former Deputy Commissioner Haider Hussain and current Deputy Commissioner Gohar Wazir to the provincial government regarding Dr. Ehsan's conduct and inefficiency, no action has

been taken to replace him. Further complicating matters, a five-month-old inquiry initiated by former Health Secretary Mahmood Aslam against Dr. Ehsan Waheed has yet to yield any results. The situation within the hospital has worsened to the point where there is a severe shortage of essential medical supplies, including vaccines for snake and dog bites. In the absence of an ultrasound specialist, an inexperienced dispenser has been assigned to perform these critical duties, endangering patients' health.

The hospital is also grappling with poor hygiene conditions, with filth and foul odors prevailing throughout the facility. Local residents have expressed their outrage and called on the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Chief Secretary, and the Health Secretary to urgently appoint a qualified MS and ensure the provision of necessary medical facilities. The people of Hangu demand immediate action to restore the hospital's functionality and provide the timely medical care they deserve.

## Providing quality feed to animals vital: Fazal

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative Societies Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai has said that providing quality feed to animals is very important for their better growth. Legislation is being made to check the quality of animal feed. In order to stop the use of substandard feed, the Provincial cabinet has approved the feed act, which will now be presented in Provincial assembly for approval. He expressed these views in a Seminar organized in Peshawar with the joint cooperation of Center of Animal Nutrition, Livestock and Dairy Development Research and Dairy Lake Pakistan at Veterinary Research Institute Peshawar regarding the efforts to deal with the nutritional needs of animals and the challenges of modern times. Provincial Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and

Cooperative Societies Fazal Hakeem Khan participated in the seminar as a chief guest. Members of Provincial Assembly Akhtar Ali Khan Advocate, Sutan Room, Secretary Livestock Muhammad Fakhr Alam, Dr. Muhammad Ijaz Ali Director General Livestock and Dairy Development (Research), Dr. Asad Khan Director General Livestock (Extension) and Dr. Khalid Khan Principal Veterinary research institute Peshawar were present in the seminar. Research Officer and co-host of the seminar, Dairy Lake Pakistan Director Marketing Hamad Khan Tareen, Dr. Muneeb, Technical Director Dr. Maham, Regional Marketing Manager Dr. Owais and Provincial Technical Manager Kamran Khan participated in seminar. The aim of the seminar was to inform the farmers of dairy and livestock sector about the steps taken by the government to provide

access to various services to the livestock farmers and the products with the best nutrients. Among the participants of the seminar, farmers, corporate sector, university professors of dairy and livestock sector, doctors and business professionals associated with this sector participated in large numbers. The participants of the seminar elaborated on the importance of optimal and high quality modern nutrients in increasing the productivity of animals. The participants enlightened the cattle breeders in detail about the properties of Dairy Lake Pakistan's advanced feed compounds to increase the productivity of animals. Emphasis was placed on access to and use of modern feed compounds in animals. The representatives of Dairy Lake Pakistan had a detailed discussion with the participants of the seminar on the availability of their products and their specifications.

## Peace termed must for society's development

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Hajji, Auqaf, Religious and Minority Affairs Sahibzada Adnan Qadri has said that peace is of great importance for the development of a healthy society. Living with peace and order is the need of people of all religions. Madrasas are guardians of social values. He further said that a huge amount has been allocated for Ashra Rehmatul Lilaalameen while 50 crore rupees have been kept for solarization of Madaras, for which the practical work will be started as soon as the preparation of PC1 is completed. Solar energy will be provided to 400 madrasas in 38 districts. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting of Muttahida Ulama Board and Quran Board in his office in Peshawar. Secretary Hajji, Auqaf, Minority and Religious Affairs Adil Siddique, Administrator Auqaf Hamid Kigiani, former Auqaf Minister Qari Roohullah, Chief khatib Muhammad Tayyab Qureshi and members of Muttahida Ulama Board and Quran Board participated in the meeting. In the meeting, there was a detail decision was made on 12 Rabi Ul-Awwal Rahmatullah Lilaalameen conference, Ushra Rahmat Lilaalameen, solarization of madrasas, construction of Quran Mahal in Regi Model Town in the province, use of fine paper and other materials for printing Quran, solarization, vaccination and child and mother health. Provincial Minister Adnan Qadari said that the construction of Quran Mahal is an important and historical project of the Provincial Government, in the construction of which Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur is taking special interest.

## ESSI members okays issuance of e-cards to labourers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Employees' Social Security Institution (ESSI) members have unanimously approved the issuance of a universal e-card to labourers aimed at protecting their data and records of medical services. The approval was made in the 84th ESSI governing body meeting, held at central office of the ESSI under the chairmanship of Minister for Labour, Fazal Shakoor Khan. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Labour and Chairman ESSI, Mian Adil Iqbal, Additional Secretary Industries Department, Deputy Secretary Finance Department, Deputy Secretary Labour, and other members of the governing body. The provincial minister said labour department is taking tangible steps for the welfare of workers, adding that department is going towards digitization, and very soon, workers will be issued e-membership cards. He said that the e-card will protect labourers data, and records of their medical services provided at ESSI hospitals, saying that labourers all record and data will be available online. The introduction of e-card will make it much easier for patients visiting ESSI hospitals for treatment and will get rid of long queues" he said. A detail presentation was given to provincial minister on the implementation of decisions made in light of the recommendations from the previous meeting of governing body. Various agendas were also discussed during the 84th governing body meeting. The briefing included a detailed discussion on the condition of machines and other equipment used in ESSI hospitals. The provincial minister issued directives to collect complete data of new X-ray machines and other equipment, along with their financial estimates, and be presented at the next governing body meeting.

## Ghulam Ali vows to make SCCI a premier chamber for whole of KP



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former Governor and Patron-in-Chief of SBA, Haji Ghulam Ali, declared that just as the Governor's House was transformed into a people's bazaar, he would ensure the Sarhad Chamber becomes the premier chamber not only of the city but of the entire province. He added that the business community and traders are eager for positive change, and they are committed to achieving it. He expressed these thoughts

during his visit and address in Mohalla Jhangi, Gurdmandi, Shoba Bazaar, and the arms dealers' markets. Haji Ghulam Ali was warmly welcomed in all the bazaars. He met with shopkeepers, members, and voters of the Sarhad Chamber and briefed them on the SBA's manifesto, which was met with overwhelming support and promises of full cooperation. In Gurdmandi, Sher Ali, Shakeel Ibrahim, in Jhangi Mohalla, Zafar Khattak,

Saif-ur-Rahman, Mufti Dr. Ishmat Tufail Gilani, and Salahuddin organized dignified programs and declared their support. They all agreed that in the current situation, the Sarhad Business Alliance is the only group that can be fully trusted. Under Haji Ghulam Ali's leadership, this group will play an effective role in addressing the issues of the city's traders and business community, as well as in restoring the Chamber's reputation.

Haji Ghulam Ali thanked all of them and emphasized that neither he nor any SBA official would stand as a candidate in the Sarhad Chamber elections. Instead, they have fielded candidates from within the community who are experts and highly qualified in their respective fields. He added that the trust expressed by the city's business community and traders in the SBA is unprecedented, and they will strive to live up to it by nominating candidates on merit. He assured that soon, traders will witness positive change through the SBA's platform, but for that, it is crucial to fully support the SBA in the Sarhad Chamber elections. Accompanying him were Malik Mehr Elahi, Siraj Khan, Bakht Mir Shah, Room Khan, Ghulam Bilal Javid, and other members.



PESHAWAR: President of Jamaat-e-Islami women wing Ayesha Syed addressing a press conference at Peshawar Press Club.

## Defense Day: Remembering sacrifices of valiant armed forces

PESHAWAR (APP): From Khyber to Karachi and Chitral to Gwadar, the nation will celebrate the 59th Defense and Martyrs Day with fervent patriotism on Friday. People from all walks of life will honor the martyrs and veterans of Pakistan, who sacrificed their lives and endured injuries to defend the homeland. In addition to military and civilian officials, citizens, senior citizens, academics, civil society members, human rights activists, farmers, laborers, and media professionals will offer heartfelt tributes to the martyrs and heroes of Pakistan's armed forces, who made unparalleled sacrifices during the 1948, 1965, and 1971 wars, the 1999 Kargil Conflict, and fight against terrorism. "September 6, 1965 was a day when India attacked Pakistan in darkness without a warning or a declaration of war by

violating all international laws, conventions and agreements. The whole Pakistani nation along with their valiant military forces stood up against the cowardly enemy and showed unmatched valour in 1965 War," said Brigadier (Retd) Mehmood Shah, senior defense analyst and former secretary law, Fata while talking to APP. Brig Mahmood Shah said Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Artillery had broken the back of the enemy in 65 War. "Pakistan had occupied about 1,617 square miles of Indian territory in 65 war and was in a strong position to occupy Delhi if war continued for a few more days as the morale of enemy troops had completely shattered." Most of the enemy officers of 1965 war had served with Pakistani commanders during the second World (War II) and the latter knew about their so called fighting abilities

and war skills that helped our forces to foil their evil designs, he added. Great tributes would be paid to Major Aziz Bhatti Shaheed (Nishan-i-Haider), who successfully defended the strategic BRB canal near Lahore for five days before embracing shahadat after being hit by an enemy's tank shell on September 10, 1965. Squadron Leader Muhammad Mahmood Alam popularly known as M.M. Alam had shot down two enemy hunter aircrafts and damaged three others on 6th September 1965 besides destroying five more enemy hunter aircrafts in less than a minute on September 7th, which is unprecedented in the history of PAF. Flight Lieutenant Imtiaz Ahmad Bhatti and Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Ahmad Rafiqi thwarted the nefarious designs of the enemy on Halwara and destroyed several enemy's aircrafts.

Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Rafiqi fought bravely in the 65 war and embraced martyrdom. Similarly, Squadron Leader Sajjad Haider exhibited exceptional leadership, indomitable courage and flying skills in operations during the said war. The legacy of unmatched gallantry and sacrifices of our Army Officers and Jawans started with the martyrdom of Captain Raja Muhammad Sharif Shaheed (NH) in 1948 Kashmir War, was carried forward by Major Aziz Bhatti Shaheed (NH) in 1965 war, Maj Shabbir Sharif Shaheed (NH) in 1971 War and Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (NH) and Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed (NH) during Kargil conflict in 1999. Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) was one of those celebrated officers of the Pakistan Army whose indomitable courage and

heroic battlefield performance during Kargil conflict has been highly praised by the Indian Army. "Death was meaningless for the 29-year old celebrated young officer of the 12th Northern Light Infantry (NLI) Regiment, Capt. Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (NH) who fought like a lion against both enemy and harsh weather on an altitude of 17,000 feet on Line of Control (LoC) at Gultary sector at Tiger Hills near Kargil and inflicted heavy human and material losses to the enemy," said Brigadier Mehmood Shah. "On July 5, 1999, Indians forces with the help of two battalions, attacked these posts at Tigar Hills and managed to capture some portion of one of his posts. Despite facing all odds, Capt. Sher Khan led a counter-attack and re-captured the lost portion," he said. "True to his name, Capt. Sher Khan chased the

enemy and conducted many successful raids in the enemy area. During one such raid, he went inside the enemy camp where he inflicted heavy losses to them." During the fierce battle, the lion of Kargil received a burst of machine gun fire in the chest and embraced Shahadat on July 5, 1999. His epic action in the battlefield true to his name earned him the title of "Loin of Kargil". The courageous feat of Capt Sher Khan by accomplishing the assigned mission of forcing the enemy to withdraw left the Indian commander Brig M.P.S Bajwa out rightly impressed by his indomitable courage and splendid battlefield performance and wrote a citation letter, requesting Pakistan that Capt Sher Khan Shaheed had fought bravely and deserved the highest recognition. Later, Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (1970-

1999) and Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed (1967-1999) of the 12th NLI Regiment were decorated with the prestigious Nishan-e-Haider, the highest military gallantry award of Pakistan posthumously. Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed was the first army officer from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who was awarded Nishan-e-Haider. "The shooting down of two Indian warplanes inside LOC one fell in Azad Kashmir and the other in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir besides the capturing of an Indian Pilot on February 27, 2019, had proved the highest professionalism, courage and outstanding fighting skills of the PAF," he said. The unity exhibited by the nation after the Indian air strike on Balakot on February 27, 2019, was almost the same as that of the 65 War, he reiterated. Brig Mehmood said the February 27 successful

action of PAF has clearly testified that our armed forces were fully capable of giving a befitting response to the enemy in case of any misadventure by it. He said the national songs of Melody Queen, Noor Jehan had infused a new spirit of patriotism in the nation during the 1965 war. He said from generals to soldiers, the armed forces of Pakistan had sacrificed their lives for the defence of their motherland, adding that Pakistani forces rendered matchless sacrifices whether it was war against terrorism or natural calamities. The veteran officer said Pakistan had been created after a lot of sacrifices by our forefathers under the dynamic leadership of Q u a i d - i - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah, adding that "we all need to work hard in our respective professions to make it one of the greatest countries of the world".





## In brief

### 3 killed in tractor, pickup collision F.P. Report

BARA: A devastating traffic accident occurred in Khyber's Bara area involving a collision between a tractor and a pickup truck, resulting in the death of three people and severe injuries to eight others. The injured were promptly transferred to Dogra Hospital for emergency medical care and later shifted to a hospital in Peshawar due to the severity of their conditions. Rescue 1122 teams provided initial medical aid on the scene. Dogra Hospital authorities confirmed the fatalities and said the condition of three other individuals remains critical. The accident took place in Alam Godar, Bara, where the tractor collided with a pickup, leading to tragic outcomes. District Emergency Officer Engineer Shariq Riaz Khattak confirmed the incident and the ongoing response efforts.

### Constable, accused shot dead F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: A police constable was martyred when unknown armed men fired at him in Lakki Marwat district on Wednesday morning. Police said constable Waqar Ahmad was in front of his house in Narokhel area of Lakki Marwat when armed men shot him dead. Police said the constable deputated at Police Station Saddar, Lakki Marwat died at the scene. Meanwhile, in the Khesghi Bala area of Nowshera Kalan an encounter took place between the accused and police that lasted for a long period. As a result of cross fire, the accused was killed, police said, adding that firearms were recovered from him and the body was shifted to a local hospital for medico legal procedure. The dead accused was identified as Usama, son of Neher Ali, a resident of Khesghi Bala.

### Seven clinics sealed at Topi F.P. Report

SWABI: District administration Swabi on Wednesday sealed seven unauthorized clinics situated in Topi Bazar. The clinics were sealed during a crackdown launched under special directives of Deputy Commissioner Swabi, Nasrullah Khan. District administration has said that crackdown against unauthorized practitioners would be continued and no one would be allowed to jeopardize lives of people. Area people are also urged to inform district administration about presence of any illegal and unauthorized clinic in their areas.

### Traffic police crackdown F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The Abbottabad Traffic Police on Wednesday intensified their campaign against pressure horns, flashlights, and illegal or non-standard number plates. Acting on the directives of DPO Abbottabad Omar Tufail Khan and SSP Traffic Tariq Mehmood Khan, the police have successfully removed hundreds of illegal number plates, pressure horns, and flashlights from vehicles across the city. The ongoing crackdown has resulted in the issuance of numerous traffic tickets as part of the drive to ensure compliance with traffic laws. This initiative is aimed at reducing noise pollution, preventing distractions on the roads, and maintaining overall road safety standards. The Abbottabad Traffic Police remain committed to upholding these regulations and improving the driving environment for all road users.



PABBI: Mother, wife and sister of Subhan Ullah, a resident of Meera Wazir Garhi addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo

## Commissioner inspected hospitals, schools

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner, Mutassim b Allah Shah visited the districts of Kohat and Karak, where he met with the heads of various hospitals and schools and discussed the responsibilities of teachers and students. He directed teachers to ensure their attendance and focus on students' education and discipline, and to maintain a friendly attitude towards students to increase their interest in attending school.

He also directed hospital staff to ensure their attendance and provide proper care to patients. Later, he chaired a meeting to review the preparations for the polio campaign in September 2024. The Commissioner directed all participants to utilize their full potential to make the campaign successful.

At the end of the meeting, Commissioner Kohat addressed the public, urg-

ing parents to administer polio drops to their children under the age of five and save them from lifelong disability. He also requested the public to cooperate with health teams during the campaign.

Additionally, Commissioner Kohat met with administrative officers and heads of all line departments to discuss the implementation of the public agenda. He briefed them on all aspects of the public agenda, implementation mechanisms, timelines, and responsibilities.

Commissioner clarified that the public agenda is a comprehensive program to ensure good governance in the province, and a comprehensive strategy has been formed for its implementation, which will be ensured according to the timeline set by the provincial government. He visited the Child Welfare Home established at the District Social Welfare Office and met with

the children under care.

**WAPDA workers union hold protest:** 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.

## Residents demand security against land mafia

Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: The residents of Wazir Ghari area of Nowshera, appealed the government for provision of protection against land mafia. The residents held a press conference at Nowshera press club in this regard, on Wednesday.

The residents including Malik Jamal Shah said that Gul alias Zahid and his five sons, nephews and accomplices have made the lives of the area's residents miserable. They have occupied 9 acres of their ancestral land and built their own strongholds on it. They have also occupied his sister's land, which had orchards of almonds and apricots.

The speaker further said that the same land mafia had killed his young son, Ehsanullah, in a firing incident. He demanded that the government take actions against the land mafia and provide them with protection.

Another speaker and wife of Sajid also shared her ordeal, saying that Zahid's sons, Bashir Ullah and Nasim Ullah, had forcibly evicted them from her house, which was worth millions of rupees, and occupied it. She and her minor children are now forced to wander from door to door. She further said that the land mafia had also shot and injured her two minor sons, Jawad (12) and Fawad (7), who were returning from Madrassah. They are still undergoing treatment and are disabled.

The residents of the area appealed to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, and the Inspector General of Police, Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, to provide them with protection from the land mafia and bring them to justice.

## Action against smuggling

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Superintendent of Police (SP) Saddar Usman Khalid on Wednesday directed all the station house officers (SHOs) and In-charges of check posts to further tighten the noose around the smuggling of drugs and noncustom paid (NCP) items.

He issued these directions while chairing a meeting of SHOs and was in charge of check posts here at his office. The meeting was held following the directions of Regional Police Officer Jehanzaib Nazir Khan.

## Protests erupt in Buner after killing of female school teacher

F.P. Report

BUNER: A series of protests erupted in Buner after killing of female school teacher at Gangdara area Khudokhail tehsil last day (on Tuesday morning) while peacefully dispersed with the ultimatum of 72 hours for the arrest of murderers otherwise they will be compelled to arrange protest on larger scale in favor of their demands, on Wednesday.

According to details, female teachers in schools and male teachers with public on roads have protested against the killing of school teacher resident of Jangdara. The protesters have blocked the road in front of the Tehsil Complex Totalai in Khadukhel, demanding arresting the accused. They have given deadline of Saturday to police otherwise to resort district wide protest demonstrations on roads.

Female and male teach-

ers in their schools have tied black bands to mourn over colleague's brutal killing. The strike call was given by the All Primary Teachers Association. Its recall, the teacher was shot dead on way to school on Tuesday morning while local people who had failed to abduct her in a motor car with the intention of forced marriage and the accused escaped.

The male teachers, the relatives of the victim, school teachers and residents of Jangdara and of adjoining areas blocked Buner Sawabi main road in front of Tehsil Complex Totalai and demanded early arresting the accused.

Former Nazim of Dagai Raj Wali Khan and Ghulam Akbar addressed the protestors and said that the broad day light on road murder of a school teacher caused of concern for people of entire Khadukhel and Buner.

**DRC resolves house dispute on mutual con-**

**sent:** Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) Pir Baba chapter resolved dispute over residential house on mutual consent of both parties which was pending in the court of law for six long years, on Wednesday.

The rival parties belonging to Kingar Galai have been resolved the issue forever by mutual consent against deal rupees sixteen lac. Both the parties hug at the DRC office and promised to shun all the differences between them.

The parties have thanked DRC Chairman Wali Rehman, members Zareen Khan, Shahzada, Abdul Rashid, Amir Rehman and local elder Kamin Khan for their conciliatory efforts to resolve the long-standing dispute amicably and save the parties from more rounds of courts and valuable time and effort have saved from spending money, which Allah will give in this world and in the hereafter.

## Dir shopkeepers get free saplings for plantation

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir administration distributed saplings among shopkeepers at Timergara under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government plan regarding 'one shop one plant'. The Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan and Assistant Commissioner Timergara Dr Nida Iqbal along with president of the Lower Dir Chamber of Commerce and Industries Mian Noor Alam, president Anjuman Tajiran Timergara Haji Anwarud Din and Assistant Director Local Government Amir Nizam Durrani distributed free of cost saplings among the shopkeepers. Earlier the officials visited the office of CCI Lower Dir and discussed the plan with the traders' leaders.

The chamber's president

Mian Noor Alam briefed the visiting officials regarding the issues faced by the Lower Dir Chamber of Commerce. Speaking on the occasion the Anjuman Tajiran Timergara president Haji Anwarud Din said that all the shopkeepers would plant two saplings in front of their shops to increase the beauty of the market.

The Deputy Commissioner planted a sapling at the Chamber of Commerce's office and said that every shopkeeper and citizen should plant at least one sapling.

Addressing the business community, the DC said that the profession of shopkeepers was a holy profession that was also adopted by many prophets of Allah. He said the administration would hold a meeting with the business community and the Chamber of

Commerce once a month and practical steps would be taken to solve the problems faced by them.

Similarly, the local administration and traders' body collectively distributed saplings among shopkeepers at Chakdara in Adenzai tehsil. The shopkeepers were asked to plant at least one sapling in front of their shops in order to motivate others to do so. The Adenzai AC Suhail Khan along with AAC and traders' body president Khwaja Faizul Ghafoor visited the markets and distributed saplings among the shopkeepers. The shopkeepers were asked to plant a tree in front of their shops. The Talash traders were also provided with free of cost saplings which will be planted in the bazaar.

## PPP commits to serve public in every odd

F.P. Report

HUB: Every rise has a fall. Surely Allah is the best judge and Allah does not like pride. Those who once considered themselves to be a great thing, did not even like to meet their voters, today they are hiding their faces from the public.

These views were expressed by the senior leader of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), elected representative from HUB and Provincial Advisor for Industry and Crafts Mir Ali Hassan Zehri while talking to various delegations in HUB. Talking to the delegations, he said that those who have usurped the rights of the people for the last forty years are hiding their faces because they have not done any work that the people would have been with them.

The people of Hub have breathed a sigh of relief as soon as the dark age of forty years ended. He said that in the manifesto of Pakistan Peoples Party, public service is the top priority. He said that we do not believe in the politics of revenge, but serving our people and providing them with all possible resources is the source of our politics.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further said that the self-interested elements who have been occupied the HUB for forty years have become frustrated after seeing hundreds of small and big development works taking place in the HUB and their politics has been limited to their house. How can they go to the people when they have not done anything for the people? Alhamdulillah, we have come with the intention of working and are trying to solve the problems

of our people and provide all possible resources. Today, the network of development works has been laid in the HUB and work is being done on public interest projects everywhere.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further said that Balochistan is very close to the hearts of President Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. They want Balochistan to develop and the injustice done to Balochistan, especially HUB district, by vested interest elements in the past should be redressed as soon as possible and Balochistan should be set on the path of rapid development. He said that the city of HUB is starting to change and this positive and noble change is visible to all, while the credit goes to the people of Hub who have defeated the occupying mafia for decades.

## Climate resilience and political stability in KP

Roshni Hadi

**T**HE biggest threat the world faces today is not World War III or economic crises, but climate change. The effects of climate change on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are more severe than ever. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with its mountains, forests, and heavy dependence on agriculture, is particularly vulnerable to climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts, and rising temperatures.

As such, the political stability of the province is crucial for managing these environmental challenges effectively. The 2022 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Climate Change Policy provides a well-structured approach to tackling these issues but also highlights the importance of political stability in ensuring its success.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is highly exposed to natural disasters like landslides and floods, but climate change has exacerbated these problems. Due to global warming, Earth's temperature is rising, which accelerates glacier melt and increases sea levels. These changes contribute to flooding in regions previously

unaffected, severely impacting land, human settlements, and biodiversity. Furthermore, unpredictable weather patterns are making it increasingly difficult for farmers to grow crops, negatively affecting food supplies and the province's economy.

The 2022 Climate Change Policy points out how these risks have escalated in recent years. The situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues to worsen, compounded by political instability. Historically, the province has faced significant challenges due to insurgencies and terrorism, which detracts attention from long-term environmental problems. Without a stable political system, addressing climate change becomes an insurmountable challenge.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 2022 Climate Change Policy is a serious effort by the provincial government to address the climate crisis. This policy focuses on key areas like agriculture, forest conservation, and water management, while also emphasizing the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting renewable energy sources such as solar and wind

power. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's economy is closely tied to its environment. Agriculture, a major source of income for the province, is highly vulnerable to climate change. Approximately 80% of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa population depends on agriculture for their livelihood, and the sector contributes 20% to the province's GDP while employing 44% of its labour force. Key crops, such as wheat, rice, sugarcane, and maize, are increasingly affected by climate-related risks.

The policy underscores the need to train communities in disaster preparedness and construct roads, houses, and buildings that are more resilient to floods and other extreme weather events. It advocates for robust water resource management strategies, including the construction of dams and rainwater harvesting systems, which are essential for sustainable development in the face of water scarcity. Forests play a critical role in maintaining oxygen levels and supporting wildlife. The policy highlights the need to prevent deforestation to protect both human life and biodiversity. The policy calls for the promotion of solar,

wind, and hydropower to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. However, these initiatives require a stable political system and strong cooperation between different sectors to be successful.

Political instability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has historically been influenced by security issues, changes in government, and governance challenges. These issues often slow down or halt climate-related projects, as the government becomes distracted by short-term problems rather than focusing on long-term goals like climate resilience. The 2022 Climate Change Policy seeks to foster a strong relationship between the provincial and national governments, which is essential for securing funds and technical assistance.

These relationships are crucial for implementing the policy's ambitious plans. Additionally, political stability creates a space for civil society organizations, community groups, and NGOs to participate in climate action. When the government is stable, communities are more likely to trust and contribute to these efforts. In contrast, political instability often

leads to frustration and a lack of trust, which makes it harder to achieve climate goals.

To effectively address climate change in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it is essential to focus on both political and environmental stability. The 2022 Climate Change Policy provides a detailed roadmap for tackling climate-related challenges, but its success hinges on the presence of a stable political environment that supports long-term climate action.

Political leaders at both the provincial and national levels must commit to climate resilience. This involves prioritizing long-term solutions over short-term political gains. Political parties and leaders should view climate resilience not only as an environmental issue but also as a critical factor in ensuring political and social stability. Collaboration between the government, local communities, and private businesses is essential. Political stability creates an environment where these groups can work together effectively, ensuring resources are efficiently used and projects are implemented smoothly.

Public participation in climate initiatives, especially at the local level, should be encouraged to

ensure long-lasting success. Finally, climate resilience must be integrated into the overall development plans for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Whether it's infrastructure, city planning, or agriculture, everything must be designed with the capacity to withstand the impacts of climate change. The success of the 2022 policy will depend on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's ability to balance its political, economic, and environmental goals.

Political stability and climate change are deeply interconnected. The 2022 Climate Change Policy provides a solid framework for addressing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's environmental challenges, but its success depends on stable and committed political leadership. Climate change is not only an environmental issue; it affects the economy, social systems, and the overall stability of the province. Strong political leadership, commitment to climate goals, and active community participation are key to ensuring a resilient future for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

*The author is a student of Political Science at the International Islamic University Islamabad.*





**KYIV:** Firefighters working at a site of a sports complex of a university damaged during a Russian missile strike.

## Mongolia ignores an international warrant for Putin's arrest

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin received a red-carpet welcome to Mongolia, as the country ignored calls to arrest him on an international warrant for alleged war crimes stemming from Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The trip, which concluded, was Putin's first to a member nation of the International Criminal Court since it issued the warrant in March 2023. Ahead of his visit, Ukraine urged Mongolia to hand Putin over to the court in The Hague, and the European Union expressed concern that Mongolia might not execute the warrant. The warrant put the government in a difficult position. After decades under communism with close ties to the Soviet Union, it transitioned to democracy in the 1990s and built relations with the United States, Japan and other new partners. But the landlocked country remains economically dependent on its two much larger and more powerful neighbors, Russia and China.

The ICC has accused Putin of being responsible for the abductions of children from Ukraine. Member countries are required to detain suspects if a warrant has been issued, but Mongolia needs to maintain its ties with Russia and the court lacks a mechanism to enforce its warrants. The United States doesn't believe any country "should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression against Ukraine," US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

"We understand that position that Mongolia is in, you know, sandwiched between two much larger neighbors, but we do think it's important that they continue to support the rule of law around the world," he told reporters in Washington. The Russian leader was welcomed in the main square in Ulaanbaatar, the capital, by an honor guard dressed in vivid red and blue uniforms styled on those of the personal guard of 13th century ruler Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongol Empire.

A throng of people watched from behind barriers as Putin and Mongolian President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa walked up the red-carpeted steps of the Government Palace and bowed toward a statue of Genghis Khan. A few protesters who tried to unfurl a Ukrainian flag were taken away by police. Five others who

gathered a few blocks west of the square held up an anti-Putin banner and Ukrainian flag but disbanded after hearing about the arrests.

As Putin was welcomed in Mongolia, his forces struck a military training facility and nearby hospital in Poltava, Ukraine, killing at least 50 people, the country's president said. The strike appeared to be one of the deadliest by Russian forces since the war began on Feb. 24, 2022. The two governments signed agreements on a power plant upgrade in Ulaanbaatar and on the supply of Russian aviation fuel to Mongolia. They also agreed to carry out an environmental study of a river where Mongolia wants to build a hydroelectric plant that Russia is concerned would pollute its Lake Baikal. Putin also outlined plans to develop the rail system between the countries.

He invited the Mongolian president to a summit of the BRICS nations - which include Russia and China among others - in the Russian city of Kazan in late October. Khurelsukh accepted, according to Russian state media. After leaving Ulaanbaatar, Putin arrived early Wednesday in Russia's major Pacific port of Vladivostok, where he is to take part in an economic forum.

The EU said it had shared its concerns with Mongolian authorities. "Mongolia, like all other countries, has the right to develop its international ties according to its own interests," European Commission spokesperson Nabila Massrali said. But she added that Mongolia has been a party to the ICC since 2002, "with the legal obligations that it entails."

Given Mongolia's dependence on Russia and China for trade, energy and security, it was hardly possible to expect the government to arrest Putin, said Sam Greene, the director of democratic resilience at the Center for European Policy Analysis. "The overriding reason for this trip will have been to show that Putin can travel right now," he said. But, Greene added, the warrant narrows the circle of possibilities for Putin, forcing "any government that's going to think about hosting him to consider both the domestic and the international political consequences of that in a way they wouldn't have had to before."

Kenneth Roth, the former longtime director of Human Rights Watch,

said Putin's trip to Mongolia "a sign of weakness," posting on X that the Russian leader "could manage a trip only to a country with a tiny population of 3.4 million that lives in Russia's shadow." Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the trip wasn't about "showing something to Western countries," but rather about developing bilateral relations between two countries rooted in history and "wonderful glorious traditions." His remarks were made to state TV reporter Pavel Zarubin, who posted them on his Telegram channel.

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, denounced the warrant as "illegal" in an online statement. Putin, on his first visit to Mongolia in five years, participated in a ceremony to mark the 85th anniversary of a joint Soviet and Mongolian victory over the Japanese army in deadly fighting over the border between then-Japan-controlled Manchuria and Mongolia. "I am very delighted about Putin's visit to Mongolia," said Yansanjav Demdendorj, a retired economist, citing Russia's role against Japan. "If we think of the ... battle, it's Russians who helped free Mongolia."

Uyanga Tsoggerel, who supports the protests, said her country is a democracy that doesn't tolerate dictatorship and accused Putin of "recklessly humiliating and shaming Mongolia in front of the world." Putin has made a series of overseas trips to try to counter the international isolation he faces over the invasion of Ukraine. He visited China in May, made a trip to North Korea and Vietnam in June and went to Kazakhstan in July for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. But last year, the South African government lobbied against Putin showing up in Johannesburg for the BRICS summit, which he ended up joining by video link. South Africa, an ICC member, faced criticism in 2015 when it didn't arrest then-Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir during a visit for an African Union summit. Enkhgerel Seded, who studies at a university in Moscow, said that historically, countries with friendly relations don't arrest heads-of-state on official visits. "Our country has obligations toward the international community," she said. "But ... I think in this case as well, it would not be appropriate to conduct an arrest."

## US close to agreeing on missiles for Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The US is close to an agreement to give Ukraine long-range cruise missiles that could reach deep into Russia, but Kyiv would need to wait several months as the US works through technical issues ahead of any shipment, US officials said.

The inclusion of Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles (JASSM) in a weapons package is expected to be announced this autumn, three sources said, though a final decision has not been made. The sources declined to be named because they are not authorized to discuss the topic.

Sending JASSMs to Ukraine could significantly alter the strategic landscape of the conflict by putting more of Russia in range of powerful, precision-guided munitions, an important concern of the Biden administration, the officials said. Military analysts have suggested the introduction of JASSMs - which are stealthy and can strike further than most other missiles in Ukraine's current inventory - could push Russian staging areas and supply depots back by hundreds of miles.

This would severely complicate Russia's ability to sustain its offensive operations and potentially provide Ukraine with a strategic advantage. Launching them from points near Ukraine's northern border with Russia could allow them to hit military installations as far away as the Russian cities of Voronezh and Bryansk. In the south, dropping them near the front lines could enable strikes on airfields or naval facilities in Crimea. The JASSM has so far only been integrated into US-designed aircraft. Ukraine will ultimately operate several dozen F-16s, each of which can carry two of the cruise missiles.

One of the US officials said there were efforts to make the missile operable with non-Western fighter jets in Ukraine's inventory, which has not been reported previously. Although the official did not provide further detail on which jets in Ukraine's inventory JASSM could be used with, they operate Soviet-era MiG-29, Su-24 and Su-27 jets. Politico reported last month the Biden administration was "open" to giving Ukraine JASSMs. Ukraine's need for more arms, and more powerful weaponry, is growing as it continues to face intense pressure from Russian forces along its eastern front.

Older-model JASSMs, which are made by Lockheed Martin Corp, have a range of

about 230 miles (370 km). The missiles, about 14 feet (4 m) long, are designed to be somewhat stealthy, making them difficult to spot on radar. They can also fly close to the ground and can be programmed to take circuitous routes that avoid air defenses. There is also a longer-range JASSM missile that can fly more than 500 miles. Reuters could not immediately establish which of the two types Washington was considering, but providing the shorter-range missiles would put less strain on its stockpiles. Giving Ukraine JASSMs would also add pressure for Washington to drop restrictions on how Ukraine uses US weaponry because their effects would be limited if they were not cleared for use on targets inside Russia, said a congressional staffer who works on the issue.

The US has been reluctant to supply weapons that could strike targets deep inside in Russia for fear it would escalate the conflict. Kyiv's allies have been supplying weapons but with restrictions on how and when they can be used inside Russia, out of concern such strikes could prompt retaliation that draws NATO countries into the war or provokes a nuclear conflict. Each JASSM has a large, 1,000-pound warhead, but unlike the Storm Shadow and SCALP missiles already provided to Kyiv by Britain and France, it is not explicitly designed to penetrate hardened bunkers. The newest versions cost about \$1 million each. Global Positioning System (GPS) signals and an inertial navigation system provide guidance. When it nears its target, an infrared imaging seeker can help steer it to an impact point with an accuracy of about 10 feet (3 m).

Although older models might be less resistant to electronic warfare than the current iteration of JASSM, the infrared seeker would help it find its target even amid heavy jamming, said George William Herbert of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey in California. "They're pretty stealthy, but not completely designed around maximum stealth," Herbert said. "A few years ago, a bunch were fired at Syria after chemical weapons incidents, and Russian air defense systems in the country failed to shoot many down, possibly none of them. "I would expect that carefully planned missile flight paths would let JASSM be effective almost anywhere in the war area."

## Protesters in Nigeria face possible death penalty

ABUJA (AP): At least 10 protesters in Nigeria faced a possible death penalty after being charged with treason over their participation in recent demonstrations against the country's worst-in-a-generation economic crisis.

The protesters were arraigned in the capital, Abuja, and accused of acting "with intent to destabilize Nigeria ... and intimidate the president" during the protests. They pleaded not guilty and will remain in prison until a Sept. 11 bail hearing. A British citizen was named among the suspects still at large. The British High Commission did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Nigeria police spokesman Muiyiwa Adejobi accused Andrew Wynne of working with the protesters as a foreign mercenary and building "a network of sleeper cells to topple the government and plunge the nation into chaos." He did not provide any evidence to back up the claim. At least 22 protesters were shot dead by security forces during the demonstrations, Amnesty International has said. Authorities have denied it. The Associated Press confirmed at least three killings. Little is known about the fate of hundreds of other protesters arrested. There have been growing concerns in Nigeria about human rights abuses under the government of President Bola Tinubu, who was elected last year after promising positive change.

## Ugandan Opp figure shot and wounded

KAMPALA (AP): Uganda's leading opposition figure Bobi Wine was shot in the leg in a confrontation with police just outside the capital, Kampala, and was "seriously injured," his political party said.

Video posted online showed Wine surrounded by followers who yelled that he had been shot before some supported him into a car. It was not immediately clear whether he was hit by a live bullet or a tear gas projectile. Images shared by his close associates showed a bleeding wound below the left knee.

Street confrontations between Wine and the police have frequently descended into violence, but this is the first time he has been wounded in such a way. He was being treated at a local hospital. His party, the National Unity Platform, holds the most seats of any opposition group in the national assembly. The party said on X that Ugandan security operatives "have made an attempt on the life" of Wine, whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu. "He was shot in the leg and seriously injured in Bulindo, Wakiso District," it said, referring to a town on Kampala's outskirts. Ugandan police said in a statement that Wine had been advised against holding a street procession when he left a private event in Bulindo. According to the statement, Wine "insisted on proceeding and closing the road, leading to police intervention to prevent the procession."

## UAE leader pardons 57 Bangladeshis

DUBAI (AP): The leader of the United Arab Emirates pardoned 57 Bangladeshi nationals convicted in rapid trials over their involvement in protests in the Arabian Peninsula nation about unrest in their home country.

The decision by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, came after he held a telephone call last week with Bangladesh's interim prime minister, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. Yunus took over Bangladesh after demonstrators drove longtime Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee the country.

The arrests in the UAE underlined the strict laws criminalizing speech and public protest in this Gulf Arab country that is home to the cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The Emirates' state-run WAM news agency gave no figure for the number of Bangladeshis pardoned, but said it involved those who took part in "protests and disturbances across several emirates" in July.

"The decision includes cancelling the sentences of those convicted and arranging for their deportation," WAM said. In Bangladesh, the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha news agency quoted an adviser to Yunus as saying that all 57 Bangladeshis arrested and tried would be coming back to the country soon. The Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal in July gave 10-year prison sentences to 53

## EU ministers take a very public swipe at Hungary

BRUSSELS (AP): Senior government ministers from Ireland, Luxembourg and Belgium took a very public swipe at Hungary, raising questions about whether Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's stridently nationalist cabinet respects European Union values and standards. Hungary took over the 27-nation bloc's rotating presidency in July. Orbán immediately made a surprise trip to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, angering several of his EU counterparts, who insisted that the Hungarian leader did not represent them.

"I will ask also my colleague (European Affairs Minister János Bóka) if tomorrow he plans a trip to Moscow, because this seems to be a habit for Hungarian politicians," Luxembourg Foreign Minister Xavier Bettel said at a meeting in Budapest. Beyond its ties with Russia, Orbán's government has irritated its EU partners by promoting hostility to migrants and LGBTQ+ rights, and by controlling public media. Millions of euros in EU funds have also been frozen over concerns about democratic backsliding in Hungary. Bettel, his Belgian counterpart Hadja Lahbib and Irish European Affairs Minister Jennifer Carroll McNeill said that they had held joint meetings with members of the Hungarian media, civil society and LGBTQ+ representatives ahead of meeting, which Bóka chaired.

Bangladeshi nationals and an 11-year term to another Bangladeshi national. Three others received sentences of life in prison in the Emirates, an autocratically ruled federation of seven sheikhdoms.

Prosecutors accused the men of "gathering in a public place and protesting against their home government with the intent to incite unrest," obstructing law enforcement, causing harm to others and damaging property. Human Rights Watch instead described the men as being "arbitrarily detained, convicted and sentenced to

long prison terms ... based on their participation in peaceful demonstrations." The protests in the UAE followed weeks of demonstrations in Bangladesh by people upset about a quota system that reserved up to 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. The country's top court in late July scaled back the controversial system. Hasina, who had governed the country for 15 years, then resigned and fled Bangladesh on Aug. 5 as the protests intensified.

## Shortages and delays hit morale of Kenyan officers in Haiti

NAIROBI (Reuters): Pay issues and shortages of equipment and manpower have sapped morale among Kenyan police officers deployed to Haiti and hampered their ability to confront heavily armed gangs, four officers told Reuters.

After three years of rampant killing, rape and extortion by gangs that control most of the capital Port-au-Prince, Haiti's transitional government and its international allies are counting on the Kenyan-led mission to restore enough security to hold elections by February 2026.

The Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission was authorised by the UN Security Council last October, but the initial deployment was delayed by political turmoil in Haiti, court challenges in Kenya, and difficulties mobilising funds. The first nearly 200 Kenyan officers arrived in Port-au-Prince in late June and were joined by a similar-sized contingent three weeks later. The force is supposed to increase to around 2,500 personnel from at least 10 countries.

But progress is slow, in part because of financing issues. While the United States has contributed \$369 million in money, equipment and services, a UN fund only has about \$68 million, leaving it over \$150 million short of the estimated \$589 million needed for the first year's operations. The four officers, who spoke to Reuters over the past week on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the mission, said they had been told more equipment was on the way but had not yet seen it and had to fight in the meantime with inadequate

resources.

"The sluggish pace of the whole process means it will be very difficult to stick to the deadlines that the transitional government has agreed," said Diego Da Rin, International Crisis Group's Haiti analyst. Asked about the concerns voiced by the officers, Kenyan police spokesperson Resila Onyango replied: "Last week, MSS received additional vehicles and equipment from the US Government, thus enhancing their joint operations with their Haitian counterparts."

The US State Department said the United States has stepped up deliveries of armoured vehicles, radio sets and computer systems. It said the start of joint patrols in July by Haitian and Kenyan officers was an example of "remarkable" recent progress in Haiti. Haiti's police spokesperson declined to comment.

Two officers said they regularly took heavy fire from gunmen who would position themselves in tall buildings, but that the police had limited ability to respond because their vehicles do not have armoured platforms from which to shoot. They also said they do not always have radios in their vehicles. The State Department said the US Air Force had begun delivering the armoured platforms and that sufficient radio systems were now available.

Some of the officers questioned why they had been deployed before the equipment was ready. "Some people have been saying ... we should just go back home and come when things are ready," one said. The officers said they had mostly been patrolling major Port-au-Prince roads but had carried out some joint opera-

tions with Haitian police - with mixed success.

One was in Ganthier, a town on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, where the Kenyan and Haitian police were initially able to drive out the gangs in July. But the gangs moved back in when the police, who did not have the numbers to hold the town, returned to base, according to one of the officers and Da Rin. Kenyan police said last week the mission had made "significant progress" pushing out the gangs from strategic areas. The State Department said the MSS is intended to grow to 1,000 personnel in the next several months and that Jamaica, which has pledged 200 personnel, plans to make an initial deployment. A Jamaican government spokesperson said the deployment was in the advanced planning stages.

For those already in Haiti, uncertainty around pay has weighed on morale. The officers were told in Kenya that they would receive monthly bonuses of around \$1,500, several times their regular salaries, two officers said, adding they never signed contracts and were not told when they would be paid. After reports appeared in Kenyan media last week that the officers had not been paid their bonuses, the police service said they would receive the money within days. Some officers had received them while others had not, three officers said. But they said they were given no explanation for how their pay was calculated, with some only receiving about \$750. "It is very demoralising," said one, who is a senior officer. The Kenyan police spokesperson did not respond to questions about pay.

## Young Palestinian journalist now continues education in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP): A young Palestinian journalist whose coverage of the widespread destruction and humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip went viral now watches the war from afar in Lebanon.

Twenty-two-year-old Plestia Alaqaq was just over a year out of university with a journalism degree when she found herself in the middle of a war zone. She donned a blue press helmet and vest to interview families in refugee camps and hospitals, posting the videos to Instagram.

"I can't just look at what's happening without doing anything," she told The Associated Press in an interview in Beirut. From Gaza City where she lived, Alaqaq was among a handful of

young journalists and media workers sharing what they saw on social media, with outside journalists unable to access the Palestinian enclave. She now has over 4.5 million followers on Instagram.

Alaqaq landed in Lebanon last month to pursue a master's degree in media studies at the American University of Beirut after being awarded a scholarship named after iconic Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh who was killed in 2022 while reporting on an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank. Today she spends her days on the tranquil tree-lined AUB campus or in the cafes of Beirut's Hamra Street, but her mind remains in Gaza.

"You're a journalist and a Palestinian human witnessing it," Alaqaq told the AP, sitting in the patio of one of those cafes, wearing a black and white traditional keffiyeh scarf. Balancing those two roles "was the difficult part," she said. She had already lived through three wars in Gaza by the time she graduated university, but the war that began on Oct. 7 was on a different scale.

The Israeli aerial bombardment and ground offensive triggered by the deadly Hamas-led attack on southern Israel - which killed some 1,200 people and took another 250 hostage - has killed over 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry.



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## Mpox is spreading faster than the world's will to contain it

**T**HE Democratic Republic of the Congo's Health Minister, Samuel-Roger Kamba, was cautiously optimistic on August 19, when he told his fellow citizens they could expect a much-needed shipment of vaccines against the mpox virus to arrive the following week. But a fortnight later, not a single shot has landed in the DRC.

The reason is not a lack of urgency on the part of Dr Kamba and his government – a novel strain of the virus, known as Clade 1b, has ravaged the country all year. Nor is it a lack of supplies – mpox vaccines exist and have already been used to quell previous outbreaks in rich countries.

Instead, the problem appears to be a combination of bureaucracy and indifference. The DRC has been waiting for the World Health Organisation either to approve the available vaccines or issue an emergency licence that would enable use without such approval. One of these is necessary for organisations like Unicef and Gavi, the global vaccine alliance, to buy and distribute immunisations in developing countries.

Mpox has plagued the world since the 1970s. The last global outbreak began just as the Covid-19 pandemic was receding. Since then, strains of the virus have reached at least 119 countries.

But the DRC has been hit especially hard. Mpox is considered endemic there. Clade 1b has infected at least 15,000 Congolese this year, and killed at least 550. Most of the dead are children, including some who succumbed not to the virus itself, but to starvation because of painful lesions in their mouths and throats preventing them from eating.

Authorities in Kinshasa first requested vaccines from the World Health Organisation and the international community two years ago, when US and EU regulators approved a vaccine developed by Danish company Bavarian Nordic and marketed under the name Jynneos to prevent the spread of mpox among their populations.

Nonetheless, poorer nations like the DRC rely on approval from the WHO – not the US Food and Drug Administration or the European Medicines Agency. Bavarian Nordic submitted its research to the WHO in May of last year, but the WHO only began the process of formally considering that research in mid-August, when it declared mpox a “public health emergency of international concern” following Clade 1b's spread to the DRC's neighbours.

Part of the reason for the delay is the WHO's onerous expectations for research data. The FDA and EMA set a relatively low bar for approval – Jynneos was given the green light without human trials – because of the fears around mpox at the time. The WHO has been far more cautious – too cautious, critics say.

Some experts, however, say the hesitation is warranted. No one knows how effective Jynneos and other vaccine candidates would be against the Clade 1b variant; the outbreaks in the West dealt with a different strain. Data released last month by the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases was not promising.

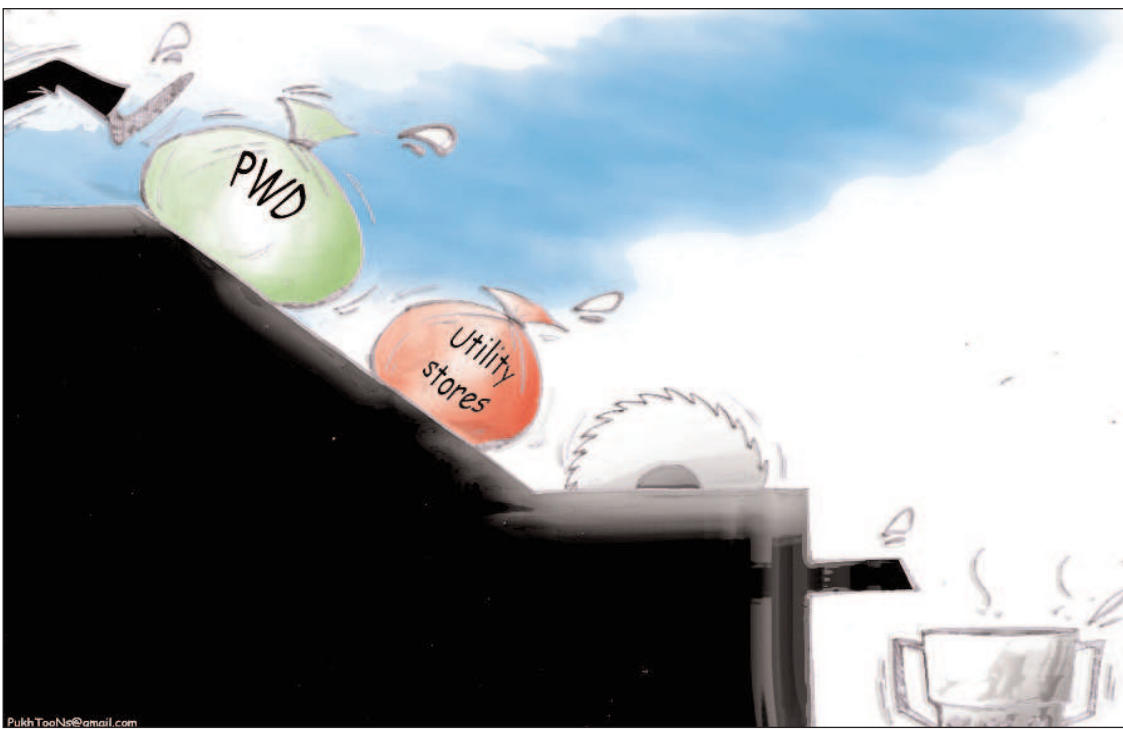
But a lack of attention and funding has been a major issue, too. The urgency that enabled 1.2 million Jynneos doses to be distributed in the US during the last outbreak quickly waned when the virus receded to Africa. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention says that of the \$245 million it has requested to fight mpox, only 10 per cent has been funded.

Under growing pressure, the WHO has eased its rules to allow partners to purchase vaccines in advance of any approval. As a result, the organisation said on Friday that a shipment of 230,000 mpox vaccines will arrive in the DRC sometime this week, donated by the European Commission and Bavarian Nordic.

But that is just a first step; the road from securing a quarter of a million vaccines to getting millions more delivered in the field is very long. Mpox is a relatively slow-spreading virus, but so far it is outpacing our will to fight it.

**Important Notice**

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



## Closing the gender gap in Saudi Arabia

Maha Akeel

**T**HE Institute of Public Administration recently released an insightful study on gender equality in the Saudi public sector during the period 2022-23. The study looked at the reality of gender representation in different job categories in all ministries, the gender balance in the administrative aspects of the work environment and the challenges to achieving gender balance, as well as making some recommendations to achieve this balance.

The study acknowledges that, despite the impressive progress Saudi Arabia has made in closing the gender gap in the past few years, there has been a small regress in more recent years. It is worth noting that the Kingdom is very close to eliminating the gender gap in the education and health sectors, but it remains far from that in the work environment sector.

The study surveyed 2,580 employees from 21 ministries, 29 percent of whom were female. Most of the sample (74 percent) were aged 25 to 45. Their job levels were mostly administrative (61 percent of the sample), followed by supervisory (23 percent) and executive (16 percent). Some top and mid-level leaders were also interviewed.

It revealed that, overall, the gender gap in Saudi Arabia's ministries is small at 8 percent in favor of men – i.e., for every 100 male employees there are 92 female employees – but the gap differs widely in the various types and categories of jobs. The gap in favor of men is particularly apparent in leadership and decision-making roles: 92 percent in directors and general directors roles; 96 percent in ministers, deputy ministers or excellencies roles; 84 percent in directors in diplomacy jobs; and 97 percent in directors in health jobs.

As for professional/specialist-level jobs, overall, there is a gender gap of 1 percent with almost equal representation at a ratio of 99 women to 100 men. However, the difference is again in the categories, and they are interesting. The gap in favor of men is 66 percent in general professional-ranking employees, and 28 percent in specialists in the health professions, but it is in favor of women in the education

sector at a ratio of 100 men to 107 women among university faculty and 100 men to 114 women among teachers. In technical and assistant jobs, the gap is 41 percent in favor of men with a ratio of 59 women to every 100 men, while in the general administration the gap is 96 percent with a ratio of only four women to every 100 men.

In lower/entry-level jobs, the ratio is 73 women to every 100 men, along with 15 women to every 100 men in sales and services, but 134 women to every 100 men among office clerics. In factories, machinery and assembly lines, the ratio is four women to every 100 men. Remarkably though, in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields, whether as technical specialists or in administrative roles, the gender gap is small at 10 percent in favor of men and at 4 percent in terms of hiring new graduates. These numbers confirm that women are still mostly in the education and health sectors, but also in STEM fields, while few are in top leadership roles.

The findings of the survey measuring employees' perception of the organizational aspects of the work environment were also revealing. Overall, responses to the variables measuring the five indicators of the work environment scored 53.4 percent, in other words they agreed and found it balanced or equal between men and women, which was considered average according to the study's scale of 50 percent to 75 percent being average, but it is still relatively low.

The first indicator, organizational procedures, scored 55.9 percent, which included, in descending order of scores, the implementation of gender balance policies, communication channels for reporting discrimination and harassment, flexible work hours and the availability of facilities such as childcare.

The leaders interviewed indicated that, sometimes, women's empowerment is only in appearance to increase numbers and, in reality, women's voices go unheard and their views are not considered. Some also pointed to the absence of an organizing unit responsible for monitoring and following up on the implementation of the

policies that create gender balance and the needs of both genders in the workplace. They called for a guidebook on equitable policies that ensure equal opportunities in employment, promotion and benefits.

The interviewees also said there are no policies that support their work-life balance or necessary accommodations in the work environment and they recommended implementing flexible work for both genders to increase productivity. Some called for allocating budgets to provide services and facilities such as daycare, rest areas and prayer rooms. Those in human resources said that, in some cases, there was no direct communication between female employees and higher management.

The second indicator in the study measured equal salaries, compensations, benefits and bonuses. It scored 55.9 percent, which clearly shows that there is an impression of inequality in favor of men.

The third indicator was equal opportunities (52.5 percent), which included granting equal power and authority, allocating certain jobs to a specific gender, equal job options, equal decision-making opportunities and equal opportunities for promotion, with the last two variables receiving below-average scores.

The directors interviewed explained this with the recent entry of women into the job market, which prevents them from reaching leadership positions and participating in decision-making because they do not have the experience. Others blamed it on poor educational outcomes and the lack of qualified women in some specialties, which led to their poor representation in certain jobs and committees, while yet more said that the type of job or its nature may favor men because it requires working late or being in places not suitable for women.

The fourth indicator was training and development, which had the lowest score (51.7 percent) and was on the variable of providing a career progression path. The directors pointed out that this could be because some are hesitant or uncomfortable working with the opposite gender, which could affect the

equal distribution of assignments, especially those requiring late working hours. They suggested more training for employees to effectively work in a coed workplace. They also agreed that there was a shortage of training for women in specialized jobs and that they require more training in administrative and technical skills.

The fifth indicator was organizational culture (51.6 percent), which measured attitudes, perceptions and collaboration. The score was below average on the impression that both genders have equal talents, such as negotiation skills, with a clear favor for men, along with the impression that both genders are equally productive, with higher favor for women. The directors admitted that there is difficulty in communication, as well as stereotypes about women's abilities and skills. They also pointed out that some employees do not know their rights and responsibilities at work. They stressed on the need to improve internal communication and caring for employees.

It was interesting to note how, in all the indicators, according to the gender disaggregated data of each variable in the survey measuring whether the employees felt they were balanced or leaning in favor of men or in favor of women, even though most said they were balanced, there were more of those who said they favored women than those who said they favored men. The exceptions were in response to assigning extra paid assignments such as outside work hours or commission, having power and authority, decision-making and promotion opportunities, and preferring to work with a specific gender, where there was an admittance of favoring men. That could be because there were more male participants in the survey, but it also shows that some men have the impression that decisions, opportunities and attitudes are in favor of women.

This study is very important in showing where and why there is a gender gap, so that we can address those issues. This indicates a sincere interest in closing the gap and empowering women by leveling the playing field, reducing discrimination and biases, and promoting equal opportunities.

## US has a problem now Netanyahu has been unmasked

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

**T**HE streets of Tel Aviv are flooded with protesters. The head of Israel's largest labor union called for a general strike to pressure Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu into closing a deal that will bring the remaining hostages home and end the war. Netanyahu does not seem to have budged. However, this proves one thing for sure: Netanyahu is a liar. The hostages were never his priority. His interest is to remain in power – and only the prolongation of the war can delay his ouster.

The bodies of six hostages were recovered by the Israeli military at the weekend. Forensic examinations showed that they were killed two to three days before the Israeli military reached them. This incident has demonstrated to Israeli society that hostages cannot be returned by force. A deal needs to be worked out between the two parties. This pushed half a million people to take to the streets on Monday and demand a ceasefire and a deal to bring the hostages back.

Netanyahu puts his own political survival above everything else. He knows he has enough extremists to support him on the street and counter the protesters' crowd if needed. He knows that he has American support, as the current administration is solely focused on defeating Donald Trump and does not want to rock the boat with important pro-Israel donors. Hence, he has a window of two months before the US presidential election. He needs to use it to the full.

Netanyahu is now refusing to withdraw Israeli forces from the Philadelphi Corridor, the previously demilitarized zone between Egypt and Gaza. "If we withdraw, we won't (be able to) return there — not for 42 days and not for 42 years," Netanyahu reportedly said during a Cabinet meeting this week. Basically, Netanyahu is saying that he is committed to occupying Gaza, which means that he is refusing any deal to stop the war and release the hostages.

It is now clear that Netanyahu is more interested in killing Palestinians than in saving his own people. The US has for months been pinning the blame for the failure of the ceasefire talks on Hamas. During the Joe Biden-Trump debate in June, the president blamed Hamas for the continuation of the war. This claim was repeated several times. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also said that Hamas had rejected a ceasefire agreement back in June.

However, on July 2, Hamas accepted the framework presented by the negotiators to end the war. Despite this concession on the Palestinian side, there has been no flexibility from Netanyahu and his government. It is obvious that it is Netanyahu who is rejecting the ceasefire. The fact that the US goes out of its way to cover for Israel is now out in the open. This gravely affects the credibility of the US as an honest broker, and not only regarding the Gaza war. The position that the US has taken will affect its overall credibility over the years to come. How can

Washington's Arab allies trust it anymore?

Even aside from the lies that have now been uncovered, it is easy for any observer to conclude that Netanyahu does not want a ceasefire and that the US is acquiescing to his demands. Anytime there is a glimpse of a deal, Israel commits an atrocity that widens the rift between the two sides. It has never faced any consequences from the US for such behavior. The killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran is a clear example. If you are negotiating with an adversary and go ahead and kill the negotiator, what does that mean?

The US did strike a balance over the last few months. It was publicly saying that it was working on a deal, while in reality giving Netanyahu the green light by exerting no pressure on him to make any compromises. At the same time, it was using its mighty military to prevent Iran and its proxies from thinking of any serious retaliation. This worked well and meant it would not be sucked into a regional war. The Democrats could please their wealthy pro-Israel donors before the election and tell their audience of progressives that they wanted a ceasefire. But not anymore.

Now that Netanyahu has been unmasked and the US and its secretary of state have massively lost credibility, what is the White House going to do? To add to this, there is a massive grassroots movement in Israel demanding a ceasefire. How is the US going to act? Is it time for a change of course?

In a previous article for Arab News, I wrote that the US is expected to continue to pay lip service to the Palestinians, Arab states and the American audience that wants an end to the war. However, in the last few days, the situation has become more dramatic. Netanyahu is assaulting the West Bank, has bluntly refused a ceasefire deal or any agreement with Hamas and has embarrassed his American sponsor, while there are growing domestic calls for a ceasefire.

Of course, Trump is attacking the Biden administration for not doing enough to support Israel. However, the current administration does not want to seem like it is being emasculated by Netanyahu. It is time for the US to present Israel with a take it or leave it deal. The killing of the six hostages is only a prelude to what might happen if there is no deal.

Despite his lust for Palestinian blood, Netanyahu should use his head. He would not want Hamas to get desperate. What if the group killed all the hostages? What would Netanyahu do then? Totally destroy Gaza? Kill another 40,000 Gazans?

Ultimately, he would have failed in his initial goal, which was to save the hostages. His people will hold him responsible for that.

Even though Netanyahu does not seem to be in the mood for reason, the US should be. Netanyahu has been unmasked — Washington cannot cover up for him anymore and it needs to push a ceasefire agreement down his throat.

## We can power our future by breaking free from the tyranny of fossil fuels

**W**E stand on the brink of a defining moment in human history. The decisions we make today will shape the world our children and their children will inherit. As we approach the Summit of the Future to be held on September 22-23 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and consider the Pact for the Future, prepared by governments under the baton of the UN, we must confront an uncomfortable truth: the continued exploitation of fossil fuels is not just an environmental issue – it's a brazen theft of our collective future.

The recent surge in fossil fuel company profits – a staggering \$281bn since the Ukraine war began – may be celebrated by the industry, but for the rest of us, they are a stark reminder of a system that

prioritises short-term gains for the few over the long-term survival of us all.

These profits are not just numbers on a balance sheet; they represent stolen opportunities, fires that burn up homes, fumes that poison our bodies, deadly heatwaves that kill indiscriminately, and vanishing coastlines that displace whole communities: a destabilised climate that threatens the very fabric of our societies.

The Summit of the Future and the Pact for the Future offer us a unique opportunity to rewrite our story. These initiatives recognise that the wellbeing of future generations must be at the heart of our decision-making today. They call for a world of peace, solidarity, and dignity – a world that is simply incompatible with the continued dominance of fossil fuels.

It is therefore no sur-

prise that 77 Nobel laureates and world leaders signed an open letter calling for the transition away from fossil fuels to be firmly part of the pact. In their letter they noted: "If the Summit of the Future does not address the threat of fossil fuels, it will not be worthy of its name, risking undermining a once-in-a-century opportunity to restore trust in the power of international cooperation."

The Summit and its Pact for the Future are kindling renewed confidence in multilateralism today. But that confidence cannot come at the cost of a stable future.

The transition away from fossil fuels is not just about changing our energy sources; it is about reimagining our relationship with the planet and each other. It is about creating a world where prosperity is measured not by

the profits of a few, but by the wellbeing of the many.

Imagine a world where every child breathes clean air, where economic decisions prioritise the wellbeing of people, societies and the planet, where energy is abundant, clean and accessible to all. This is not a utopian dream – it is a necessity, and it is within our grasp. We can change the course of what we have called development. But to achieve it, we must act with the urgency this moment demands of us.

In preparation for the Summit of the Future, a Declaration on Future Generations has been drafted by UN member states in consultation with Indigenous and youth groups, civil society actors, scholars and others, and will be voted on by summit attendees as one of its outcomes. The

current draft rightly emphasises our duty to preserve a liveable planet. How can we claim to honour this duty while continuing to burn the very fuels that jeopardise that future?

To those profiting from fossil fuels, I say this: your ingenuity and resources are desperately needed to build up the clean energy systems we need now.

To governments: I urge you to not only adopt an ambitious Pact for the Future, but to align your policies with its vision of sustainability, equity and intergenerational solidarity. And to every individual reading this: remember your power. Your choices, your voice, your vote – these are the tools with which we will build our future.

We are the farmers of the future, and the seeds we plant today will determine the harvest our chil-

dren reap. The just and equitable path away from fossil fuels is the path of love – love for our planet, love for humanity and love for the generations to come. It is a path that requires courage, innovation and, yes, stubborn, relentless optimism.

The eyes of future generations are upon us. They ask, "What did you do when you knew?" Let our answer be that we rose to the challenge. That we chose a future of clean air, a stable climate and shared prosperity. That we loved fiercely enough to change course when it mattered most.

This is our moment. Let us seize it with all the determination, creativity and hope we can muster. The future – free from the tyranny of fossil fuels – is ours to create. Together, we can and we must build a world worthy of our children's dreams.

— Aljazeera



# Pennsylvania and Georgia may choose America’s next president

**T**HE destiny of the White House may hang on a deadlocked fight between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris for Georgia and Pennsylvania, two battlegrounds that have been decisive in crowning the last two presidents.

The evolving electoral map is revealed in new CNN/SSRS polls out Wednesday of six swing states that captured the transformation in the race since the vice president replaced President Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee.

The surveys show Harris has vastly improved her party’s chances in November and could open several paths to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win. But they suggest any stalling of her momentum could be disastrous to her hopes.

Trump, despite weeks of failing to find a coherent anti-Harris message, still has a serious chance nine weeks out of pulling off one of the most stunning political comebacks in US history. Strong showings in a few key states could land him back in the Oval Office.

More broadly, the new polls show that Harris has at least made a strong start on her extraordinary task of turning around an election that looked lost within the space of a few months. But they also reflect Trump’s stunning and enduring strength among millions of Americans in his third presidential election — eight years after he won his first.

**A tight race after a turbulent summer**

In Wisconsin, likely voters back Harris by 50% to 44% for Trump. In Michigan, the vice president is up 48% to 43%. In Arizona, the former president is ahead 49% to 44%. There’s no clear leader in Georgia and Nevada, where it’s 48% Harris to 47% Trump or in Pennsylvania, where they are even at 47%.

The polls represent a snapshot of the current moment after a tumultuous political summer and shouldn’t be seen as a prediction of what will happen in November. But they help explain how the fight for the White House could unfold in the next two months, underscore the strategic decisions facing both campaigns and pinpoint the current strengths and weakness of each candidate. For instance, across six states, Harris now trails Trump by only eight points on average on who is most trusted on the economy — a significantly lower deficit on the issue that matters most to voters than the one suffered by Biden in earlier polls.

The picture of a finely balanced contest is also a reminder of the critical nature of next week’s debate between Harris and Trump, one of the few scheduled events in the final months to

November that could again turn the race upside down.

**Harris is building a blue wall – but will it be sufficiently broad?**

The polling data suggests that Harris is two-thirds of the way to consolidating, at least for now, the critical mid-western “Blue Wall” states of Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania that have long been the most credible route back to the White House for a Democratic nominee. But the tied race at this point in Pennsylvania suggests that Harris still

Stephen Collinson

their columns, Harris could win the presidency by pairing Wisconsin and Michigan with a Pennsylvania victory and one electoral vote from anywhere else.

But Trump also has a simple route-map back to power. If he wins North Carolina, another swing state not included in these surveys that has gone Republican ever since 2012, he could win a second term just by taking Pennsylvania and Georgia. In this case, it wouldn’t matter how he performs in Wisconsin,

she has not just unified the Democratic base but is also making new inroads among moderate Republicans and independent voters. Another development to watch in coming weeks is whether her apparent strength in Wisconsin and Michigan in the new CNN polls is a harbinger of similar strength to come in Pennsylvania.

But if Harris’ ascent has already peaked, these polls underscore just how close Trump may still be to a second term. A narrow loss by Harris in Pennsylvania that hands the ex-president the

cant advantage among this group, they could lock down the race.

**Warning signs**

There are some warning signs for both the vice president and the former president in the data.

Harris polls at 85% among Black likely voters in Georgia and at 84% in Pennsylvania. These findings may support claims by the Trump campaign that it has made inroads into a constituency that forms a bedrock of the Democratic coalition. According to exit polls in the 2020 election, Biden won 92% of Black voters in Pennsylvania and 88% in Georgia. One key focus of the Harris campaign and grass roots organizing groups will be to try to elevate those numbers in the next eight weeks and to make sure Black voters get to the polls in big numbers. In both states however, Black registered voters express less motivation to vote than White voters do.

Trump, meanwhile, has spent recent days oscillating in his position on reproductive rights and IVF fertility treatments, keenly aware that his most significant domestic political achievement – the construction of a conservative Supreme Court majority that overturned the nationwide constitutional right to an abortion – has turned into a massive electoral liability. The CNN/SSRS polling bears this out. It finds that Harris has increased Biden’s lead on abortion and reproductive rights across the six states surveyed and that it now stands at an average of 27 percentage points among women.

The current messaging from each side underscores this fraught moment in a bitter race.

Trump’s team put out a memo on Tuesday that pulsated with frustration that Harris’ policy reversals and ties to Biden, an unpopular president, were not already decisive in Trump’s favor. His top advisers Susie Wiles and Chris LaCivita wrote that their candidate had the true momentum. “Do the Democrats and voters realize this? Or does the mainstream media, in its attempt to manage public opinion and continue the ‘Harris Honeymoon,’ report a version of reality that is at odds with the facts?” they said.

The Harris campaign released its own memo over the weekend seeking to temper euphoria that lifted the vice president at her Chicago convention. Democratic leaders, after all, need their voters to fear a close race and see a Trump return as a realistic probability in order to boost turnout.

“Make no mistake: we head into the final stretch of this race as the clear underdogs,” Harris Campaign Manager Jennifer O’Malley Dillon warned.

— CNN

## Europe’s standing takes a new hit from the far right

Mohamed Chebaro

security solutions to the migration issue.

That translated into the first victory for Alternative for Germany on a state level, despite its Saxony and Thuringia chapters having been classified by the security apparatus as right-wing extremist and despite the party’s leadership having become repeatedly embroiled in scandals over sympathetic comments about Hitler’s SS and repeating Nazi slogans.

Before the elections, roughly a third of voters in Saxony and Thuringia had named immigration and asylum policy as the issue that was most important to them. Another sore point was support for Ukraine. In Thuringia, the Alternative for Germany’s heartland, two and a half years ago.

The Alternative for Germany became the first far-right party to win a state-level legislature election in Germany since the Second World War, as it took 32.8 percent of the vote in Thuringia. It also came a close second in neighboring Saxony, winning 30.6 percent, just behind the mainstream conservative Christian Democratic Union’s 31.9 percent.

Meanwhile, the leftist populist Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance won more votes than all three parties in Scholz’s coalition, finishing third in both states just eight months after its founding.

The strength of these anti-NATO, anti-immigration and Russia-friendly parties will make forming ideologically coherent coalitions ever harder at both state and federal level.

Regional and state government elections in Germany rarely garner much attention, but this time around the votes cast for extremist parties in Saxony and Thuringia could further upset an EU already on the edge. The bloc has, in recent years, seen the decline of traditional parties and the rise of insurgents and populist disruptors. Such leaders and parties have gained a lot of traction from France to Italy and Hungary to Germany, but especially in the EU’s eastern, ex-communist parts, with immigration being the key factor in their rise.

The anti-migration, anti-Islam Alternative for Germany spent the last weeks of its campaign drumming up the message that Scholz’s coalition government has been failing its citizens, without clear evidence of course. It used both old and recent deadly mass stabbings and other violent attacks carried out by migrants, some of whom were linked to Daesh, to whip up outrage and anger among voters.

An attack that killed three and injured eight in the western city of Solingen last month, perpetrated by a failed Syrian asylum seeker, was one such incident that was used to spread fear and the toxic narrative of the extremist parties. But it was also used by mainstream politicians, who raced to call for deportations, stricter asylum laws and other

nations seeing a surge in the electability of marginal forces like populists, nationalists and alt-right forces need to ask are whether their democracy and liberal values have been held to ransom by migrants wielding knives and whether they are happy for stabbings to become a catalyst for the far-right’s popularity?

The answer to these questions is no doubt complex, as the roots of the problem can be found in many of the challenges states, societies and economies face today, such as weaker growth, dwindling state revenues and poorer welfare state provisions due to increased costs, austerity and inflation, which most countries in the world are grappling with. This is often boosted by the ready capacity of social media to exaggerate and

**Regional and state government elections in Germany rarely garner much attention, but this time around the votes cast for extremist parties in Saxony and Thuringia could further upset an EU already on the edge. The bloc has, in recent years, seen the decline of traditional parties and the rise of insurgents and populist disruptors. Such leaders and parties have gained a lot of traction from France to Italy and Hungary to Germany, but especially in the EU’s eastern, ex-communist parts, with immigration being the key factor in their rise. The anti-migration, anti-Islam Alternative for Germany spent the last weeks of its campaign drumming up the message that Scholz’s coalition government has been failing its citizens, without clear evidence of course. It used both old and recent deadly mass stabbings and other violent attacks carried out by migrants, some of whom were linked to Daesh, to whip up outrage and anger among voters.**

54 percent of respondents in an exit poll said they thought Western states should offer less military support to Kyiv. This region is historically more sympathetic to Russia and also more affected by the industrial downturn witnessed in the aftermath of the 2022 energy crisis.

With only a year to go before the next national election is held in Europe’s largest economy, the poor results for Scholz are set to increase the pressure on the chancellor to be tougher on immigration. He will also need to work harder to persuade voters that the government’s course on Ukraine is the only avenue to protect their freedoms.

But anything that this German government does is unlikely to appease the supporters of the extreme movements that have gradually taken root in society. Their appeal is based on false premises and often weaponized by anti-Western forces and narratives from inside and outside the country. The question of immigration and the dynamics that control it are so multilayered that no single nation or bloc of states could offer a solution that deals with the root causes of dispossession, conflicts and the offer of safe refuge and protection for the many, despite the abuses of the few.

The questions that

amplify problems, thanks to malicious algorithms, the distribution of fake news and troll-induced narratives that appeal to the most basic of human instincts, driving up fear at the expense of hope.

The victory of an extreme-right party in Germany coincided with neighboring Poland commemorating the start of the Nazi invasion of its territories 85 years ago on Sunday. The far-right’s first victory in a German state election in the post-war era must prompt more soul-searching in Berlin, not more bickering among Scholz’s battered and unloved coalition. Failing that, the European project is on course to lose its balance after losing Britain to Brexit and France to the alt-left versus alt-right forces, while many other member states have embraced populism and institutionalized its existence as a force that dominates or divides the composition of parliaments across the bloc.

This fragmentation of the political landscape in Germany will only undermine the standing of Europe and Western democracies as a whole, amid an international geopolitical discord that seeks to redraw the map of influence across the globe, even through weaponizing migration or destabilizing nation states from within.

## Feeble response to Israel’s Hodeidah strike proves international hypocrisy

**T**HE longer Israel’s war in Gaza drags on – having already killed more than 40,000 Palestinians – the more its critics rightly ask how Israel’s government is able to continue with minimal pushback from global powers.

Israeli leaders have, for most of the past year, justified their actions by saying that they are in a unique position in having to respond to Hamas’s unprecedented attack on October 7. But the way western powers treat Israel is part of a broader pattern of special treatment that can be seen in its actions elsewhere.

Back in July, the Yemeni city of Hodeidah once again became a flashpoint after Israel bombed its main port in retaliation for a Houthi-claimed drone attack on Tel Aviv the day before that killed one person. Israel’s attack indiscriminately targeted the port, hitting oil storage tanks,

as well as a power plant in the Salif district. Nine people were killed and at least 83 injured. The resulting inferno lasted for more than a week and the initial damage assessment came to an estimated \$20 million.

The summer passed without much response or attention from the international community. With the benefit of hindsight, and as Israel’s war in Gaza approaches its 12th month, it is worth asking why.

At the time, the US, UK, France – the P3 group of nations – and the UN expressed concern and called for “restraint”, but they did not condemn the attack. More than 80 per cent of Yemen’s humanitarian aid flows through the port of Hodeidah; Israel’s air strike threatens to impede this.

Such a muted response to the attack stands in contrast to the intense pressure experienced in 2018 by the Arab

Coalition, the regional grouping that fought the Houthis from 2015, when its forces were less than three kilometres away from Hodeidah, and close to taking it from the Iran-backed rebels.

Despite the military advantage of the coalition-backed forces, the P3 and the UN called for a ceasefire and applied diplomatic pressure, with Mark Lowcock, then the UN’s leading humanitarian affairs official, telling the Security Council that an all-out assault could lead to a “catastrophic famine”. The UK’s foreign secretary at the time, Jeremy Hunt, shuttled between capitals to also put pressure on the coalition. At the time, the Coalition’s aim had been to secure Hodeidah port and ensure it was not used for weapons smuggling, not destroy it as has happened now with the Israeli strike.

Regional states might today see the West’s miscalculations as an enabler

of the Houthis, inadvertently helping the rebels to use Hodeidah as a launchpad from which to threaten global maritime trade and security.

The difference in reactions to the Israeli strikes on Hodeidah – characterised by limited expressions of concern rather than outright condemnation – reflects much of the international community’s muted response to Israeli actions generally, the selective application of humanitarian concerns in international politics by bigger powers, the centrality of Israel in American, British and French grand strategies for the Middle East, and the varying perceptions of the regional actors involved.

In 2018, the international community made a global humanitarian outcry and put pressure on the Arab Coalition to halt the Hodeidah offensive. Yet the humanitarian dis-

Ibrahim Jalal

humanitarian catastrophe. At the time, a tweet was attributed to a senior Houthi official who apparently threatened to bomb Hodeidah port to prevent the Yemeni government from using it.

In retrospect, the humanitarian concern seems to have been more about the ill-calculated geopolitical considerations of bigger powers rather than looming famine.

July’s Israeli attack on critical Yemeni civilian facilities was quickly overshadowed by broader geopolitical considerations. In part, Israeli framing of its operations as self-defence, counterterrorism, or confronting Iranian influence often resonates with the West’s strategic narratives and priorities, not to mention Israel’s political clout and influence in the US.

There is a reason why each US president seeks the endorsement and support of pro-Israel groups but not of any regional

Arab state. Western logic behind maintaining a strong relationship with Israel is driven by grand strategic interests and historical guilt over the largely western persecution of Jews that ultimately led to Israel’s establishment.

Several influential media outlets in the West tend to demonstrate sympathetic views to Israel regardless of the deaths caused by its actions in Gaza.

In parallel, hostile or at least sceptical western depictions of regional states are common, as seen with respect to Saudi Arabia during the 2018 Hodeidah offensive or during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

These same factors may have also conditioned the international response to Israel’s Hodeidah attack. And while a few international human rights organisations have voiced concern, with some even saying that Israel’s action in

Hodeidah may amount to a war crime, these isolated statements have not translated into the same level of condemnation nor diplomatic pressure seen in 2018.

Biased media depictions coupled with unprincipled humanitarian advocacy, as well as the lack of a robust strategy that goes beyond symbolic support exists in parallel to the image tarnishing of Arab Coalition members. Together with persistent Israeli lobbying in the UK and the US, this has culminated in rising pressure and suspension of weapons sales by several countries that continue to arm Israel despite the catastrophe it has created in Gaza.

At core, the disparity of responses to Israel’s bombing of Hodeidah reveals a bigger story of enduring double standards in international politics, with detrimental effects especially for civilians.





# PSX stays bullish, gains 491 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 491.69 points, showing a positive change of 0.63 percent, closing at 78,848.01 points against 78,356.32 points on the last working day.

A total of 969,768,756 shares were traded during the day as compared to 436,672,976 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 12.255 billion against Rs 12.255 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 443 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 259 of them recorded gains and 138 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 46 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 234,639,397 shares at Rs 1.37 per share,

Pervez Ahmed Company with 48,686,662 shares at Rs.1.44 per share and Kohinoor Spinning with 45,083,409 shares at Rs.11.41 per share.

Mari Petroleum Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 130.69 per share price, closing at Rs 3,641.42, whereas the runner-up was Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with a Rs 114.50 rise in its per share price to Rs 17,550.00.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 82.33 per share closing at Rs 6,917.67 followed by PIA Holding Company Limited with Rs 54.92 decline to close at Rs 854.03.

**Rupee loses 06 paise against dollar**

Pakistani rupee on Wednesday witnessed a devaluation of 06 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and

closed at Rs 278.76 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.70.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.75 and Rs 280.25 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by 11 paise to close at Rs 308.07 against the last day's closing of Rs 308.18, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen went up by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.92, whereas a decrease of 05 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs365.67 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs365.72.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 paise each to close at Rs75.89 and Rs74.27 respectively.

**Gold rates decrease further by Rs1,400 to Rs.260,100 per tola**

The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.1,400 and was traded at Rs.260,100 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs.261,500 the previous day.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat gold also declined by Rs.1,200 and was sold at Rs.222,994 against Rs.224,194 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs.204,411 from Rs.205,511, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.50 to Rs.2,900 whereas that of ten gram silver declined by Rs.42.86 to Rs.2,486 and Rs.2,950, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$17 to \$2,481 against \$2,498, the Association reported.



**KARACHI:** President KCCI Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh alongwith others cutting a ribbon to inaugurate IFTECH & PLASTI&PACK Exhibition at Karachi Expo Centre.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where four ships, Northern Jamboree, Maersk Cabo Verde, Afra Rossi and Clipper Kythira scheduled to load/offload Container, LSFO and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, FOTCO Oil Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Ullswater, Pacific Tulip and Kaley carrying LPG and Coal are arrived at outer anchorage port during last 24 hours.

A total of nine ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers ship 'Northern Jamboree' left the port on today morning, while three more container ships, Maersk Cabo Verde, Neptune-J and DSI Pyxis are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 112,274 tonnes, comprising 62,137 tonnes imports cargo and 50,137 tonnes export cargo carried in 3,006 Containers (1,432 TEUs Imports& 1,574 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 10 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Haj Mohammad, Pacific Tulip and Ullswater & four more ships, YC Azalea, MSC Mumbai VIII, MSC Suape and Maersk Nyassa scheduled to load/offload Cement, Coal, LPG, Palm oil and Container are expected to take berths at MW-2, MW-4, SSGC, LCT and QICT respectively on today, Meanwhile four more ships, CMA CGM Nabucco, Colombo Express, Wan Hai-316 and Maran Gas Asclepius with Container and LNG are due to arrive at port on Thursday.

## PFC to join expo from Sep 24

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will participate in 5-day 21st China-ASEAN Expo, being held at Nanning, China, from September 24.

Presiding over the council board of directors meeting here on Wednesday, Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq highlighted that the expo serves as a major platform for fostering economic and trade relations between China, ASEAN countries, and beyond, making it an ideal venue for showcasing Pakistan's growing furniture industry.

PFC's delegation, led by top industry leaders, will present a range of high-quality, handcrafted Pakistani furniture, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship.

He said it will offer valuable opportunities for Pakistani manufacturers to network with international buyers, explore new markets, and establish long-term business partnerships.

PFC's participation underscores its commitment to expanding Pakistan's furniture export footprint, strengthening ties and enhancing the global visibility of Pakistani products. The event is expected to boost Pakistan's trade relations in the region, he concluded.

# SCCI demands opening of Pak-Afghan Highway for smooth trade

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq urged the government and authorities concerned to take notice of closure of Pak-Afghan Highway and immediately open the route for vehicles, laden with bilateral and transit trade goods.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Fuad Ishaq said that Pak-Afghan highway near Bagyari/Parang Sang was closed for the last one month, resultant it is not only affect-

ing bilateral trade and transit trade but also inflicting huge financial loss to traders' community.

Therefore, he demanded immediate opening of Pak-Afghan Highway to carry out smooth trade and remove difficulties of the business community.

It was reportedly that a local tribe has closed the route near Bagyari/Prang sang in protest for the last one month, because of which, transportation of mutual trade/transit trade vehicles were badly affected and billions of rupees

loss were incurred to traders and hurt the trade as well.

Fuad Ishaq urged relevant authorities and local administration to take proactive steps to open the Pak-Afghan highway, because the closure and hurdles in Pak-Afghan trade isn't beneficial for the country's economy, business and trade.

The SCCI chief called upon the federal government and relevant authorities to take steps to facilitate cross border trade and provision of facilitation to traders, importers and exporters.

# OGDCL joins United Nations Global Compact — to promote sustainable uplift goals

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's leading oil and gas exploration company, on Wednesday announced its official membership in the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, to promote sustainable development and ethical corporate governance and create a better world.

By joining the UNGC, OGDCL aligns with a global network of over 17,000 companies and 4,000 non-

business participants committed to creating a sustainable future. As part of the initiative, OGDCL will engage with a global network of companies and organizations united by a shared vision of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This membership reaffirmed OGDCL's commitment to embedding the UNGC's ten universally recognized principles into its strategic and operational frameworks. These principles focus on human rights protection, fair labor practices, environmental stewardship, and anti-corruption measures.

As a member of this global initiative, OGDCL will actively engage with companies and organizations worldwide to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.

This collaboration will enhance OGDCL's efforts in corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability, reinforcing its role as a responsible corporate entity.

OGDCL is committed to integrating sustainability into its core operations, advancing global sustainability, and positively impacting the communities and ecosystems it serves.

# Colgate Oral Health Month 2024 launched

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Colgate Pakistan, the nation's trusted oral care brand, is keeping Pakistan smiling by spreading awareness about good oral hygiene habits through Oral Health Month 2024.

Increasing oral health awareness, access, and action, Colgate Pakistan's Oral Health Month 2024 will commence on 2nd September and will continue till 11th October, 2024; an endeavour that underscores Colgate's continued commitment to fostering improved oral hygiene for all. Travelling across 22 cities nationwide at over 700 locations - including institutes, clinics, and

schools, Oral Health Month will give people from all walks of life access to FREE dental check-ups.

Colgate Pakistan hosted an event at Mövenpick Hotel Karachi to kick off the Oral Health Week in the city. The event was graced by the Head of Periodontology Department & Director PhD Program Dental Health Sciences of Jinnah Sindh Medical University Karachi, Professor Dr. Muhammad Khalil Khan, and Registrar, Dow University of Health Sciences, Associate Professor, Ashar Afaq, who also commended Colgate's dedication to 'Keep Pakistan Smiling.' The Oral Health Week is running from 2nd

September to 6th September, 2024, in Karachi, other major cities in Sindh, and Quetta. This activity can be accessed between 9 am and 1 pm. This initiative also emphasizes the crucial role of oral hygiene in overall health, aligning with Colgate's mission to improve the oral health of everyone in Pakistan.

With close to 40 years of rich heritage in Pakistan, Colgate continues to bridge the gap in oral health awareness by empowering individuals with vital knowledge on maintaining oral health. Colgate envisions a future where the nation's smiles are brighter, healthier, and cavity-free, and brimming with confidence.

# Engineering goods export up by 26.78% to \$28.426m

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of engineering goods from the country witnessed an increase of 26.78 per cent during the first month of the current fiscal year 2024-25 compared to the same month of last year.

The country exported engineering goods worth \$28.49 million in July (2024-25) against the export of \$22.423 million in July (2023-24), showing a growth of 26.78 per cent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

The engineering goods that contributed in trade

growth included transport equipment the export of which went up by \$75.55 per cent to \$2,099 million during the month under review from \$0,311 million last year while the export of specialized machinery for a particular industry also rose by 125.61 per cent to \$5,509 million from \$2,442 million.

Similarly, the export of rubber tyres and tubes surged by 13.57 per cent to \$6.103 million from \$5.374 million whereas the export of other machinery increased by 19.35 per cent to \$7,030 million to \$5,890 million.

Meanwhile, the goods that contributed in negative growth included electric fans the export of which declined by 8.21 per cent from \$2,305 million to \$2,116 million while the export of auto parts and accessories dipped by 3.83 per cent from \$1,798 million to \$1,729 million.

On a month-on-month basis the engineering goods exports from the country declined by 9.28 per cent during July 2024 as compared to the exports of \$31.338 million recorded in June 2024, the PBS data revealed.

# Emirates touches down for first time in Antananarivo

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Emirates, the world's largest international airline, marked a significant milestone with its inaugural flight landing in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The arrival of flight EK707 at Ivato International Airport was celebrated with a water cannon salute, followed by an exclusive event attended by VIPs, government officials, industry guests, and media. Among the distinguished attendees were His Excellency Andry Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, and the First Lady, who personally welcomed the Emirates delegation led by Adnan Kazim, Deputy President and Chief Commercial Officer of Emirates Airline.

This historic event underscores the strengthening ties between the UAE and Madagascar. The inaugural flight, which operated

with an almost full passenger load from Mahe, Seychelles, was commanded by Captain Bruce Pope and First Officer Solo Chuk, a Malagasy pilot with 14 years of experience at Emirates. The linked service between Mahe and Antananarivo offers enhanced travel options by combining two trips into one, providing a seamless journey for passengers.

After the welcome ceremony, Adnan Kazim, along with senior representatives, showcased the Boeing 777-300ER aircraft that will serve this route. The aircraft, configured in three classes, features eight private suites in First Class, 42 lie-flat seats in Business Class, and 310 spacious seats in Economy Class. The introduction of this aircraft on the route marks Emirates as the only airline operating to Madagascar with a three-class configuration, enhancing premium travel options

for passengers.

President Rajoelina expressed his enthusiasm for the new service, stating, "In just four months, through shared determination and hard work, we have successfully launched this long-awaited inaugural flight between Dubai and Antananarivo with Emirates. This is a historic moment for Madagascar, and I am convinced that it will act as a catalyst and a true lever for tourism and economic development in our country."

Adnan Kazim echoed the sentiment, highlighting Madagascar as a "new and exciting destination" on Emirates' global network. He emphasized Emirates' commitment to supporting Madagascar's tourism industry, which aims to attract one million tourists by 2028. The airline's enhanced connectivity and premium travel options are expected to play a crucial

role in achieving this goal.

The inaugural flight schedule has been optimized to facilitate connections to key points in Europe, the Far East, West Asia, and the Middle East, making international travel to and from Madagascar more accessible. Passengers on this route can enjoy Emirates' award-winning inflight services, including regionally inspired menus and a world-class entertainment platform, ensuring a luxurious travel experience.

Madagascar, the world's fourth-largest island, offers a unique adventure for travelers, boasting rich biodiversity, stunning scenery, and three UNESCO World Heritage sites. The country's commitment to ecotourism allows visitors to immerse themselves in nature while respecting the environment, making it a truly one-of-a-kind destination.

## Ecotourism and waste management:

# Nestlé conducts capacity building training under TREK program

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Nestlé Pakistan carried out a two-day training on ecotourism and sustainable waste management in Naran, under Travel Responsibly for Experiencing Ecotourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (TREK) that embodies Nestlé's vision for a waste-free future.

Under the TREK initiative, over 450 public and private sector participants have been trained in Abbottabad, Swat, Galiyat, Chitral, Peshawar, Kumrat and Naran. The training comprised sessions on categorizing waste, the impor-

ance of recycling, learning to conduct waste audits, basic food safety and the importance of WASH compliance among others. Participants included representatives from hospitality sector, government and civil society.

Speaking on the occasion, Tashfeen Haider, Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority said, "Department of Tourism's collaboration through the TREK with Nestlé Pakistan and World Bank Group will strengthen the efforts to create livelihood opportunities and effectively address the issues faced by

the tourism sector including waste management."

Talking about the initiative, Sheikh Waqar Ahmad, Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Nestlé Pakistan said, "Our partnership with the government and World Bank Group on TREK, will help realize our vision for shaping a waste-free future, by driving new behavior for a cleaner environment."

Nestlé Pakistan's commitment to TREK includes 2 pillars: A massive awareness campaign focusing on Reduce, Reuse and Recycle and a Stakeholder Engagement plan which includes activities that will

help in countering the issues of waste, pollution and destruction of wildlife, in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 12, 13, 15 and 17.

Nestlé is committed to its vision for a waste-free future - to ensure that none of its packaging, including plastics, ends up in landfill or as litter, including in oceans, lakes or rivers. Nestlé is dedicated to taking collective action with stakeholders to accelerate efforts to protect, renew, and restore the planet and ensure that food systems continue to nourish people for generations to come.

# Business leaders hails inflation in Pakistan reach at single digit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Economists and business leaders hailed on Wednesday that Inflation in Pakistan has reached at single digit after three years, on which the business community and household consumers expressed its pleasure.

At present, the inflation rate in the country is 9.6% and in rural areas, the inflation is up to 6.3 %, which is also an indicator of the decrease in the prices of essential commodities.

Meanwhile Speaking to APP, renowned economist,

and Executive Director of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) Sajid Amin said that the inflation rate touched to its climax of 40% and now it is natural to come down.

He said that this global trend of inflation is coming down, which is affecting every country in region and the global market.

Along with this, there has been a significant reduction in the inflation rate in rural areas and this will have a positive impact on the country's economy, he said.

President, Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh lauded Pakistan's annual consumer price inflation rate slowed to 9.6% in August, the first single-digit reading in almost three years.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) decelerated further to 9.6% year-on-year in August, down from the previous month's 11.1%

He said the economy had been battling with inflation topping 20% since May 2022, peaking at a staggering 38% last May and these skyrocketing inflation rates coincided with the reforms implemented as part of a much-needed International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme.

He also expressed satisfaction over the "nosediving of inflation rate" in the country and up-gradation of credit rankings by international financial institutions, including Fitch and Moody's.

Atif said that that

Pakistan's exports have the potential to reach \$ 60 billion, but due to the high cost of electricity in Pakistan, the industry is affected.

He also said FPCCI showed its confidence in the role of special investment facilitation council for the revival of the country's economy.

The President FPCCI stressed implementing measures to stabilize energy prices at 9 cents and ensure a fair pricing mechanism that does not overburden industrial consumers."

According to PBS, inflation rate in Pakistan eased to 9.6% in August 2024, down from 11.1% in the previous month, marking the lowest reading since October 2021.

Prices eased for housing and utilities (22.2% vs 25.3% in July 2024), transportation (3.2% vs 12.2%), clothing and footwear (17.3% vs 18.2%) and restaurants and hotels (10% vs 11.2%).





In brief

China shine in Paralympic powerlifting

PARIS (AFP): China's women dominated the first day of powerlifting at the Paris Paralympics as Guo Lingling improved her world record in the up to 45kg class on Wednesday. Lingling, 35, took her best on the bench press from 121kg in February to 123kg in Paris with Britain's Zoe Newson in second place, 14kg lighter with her leading effort. Lingling's contributions in front of a vocal but half-empty La Chapelle Arena kept her country atop the overall medal table at Paris 2024. "I am very excited and happy, and the atmosphere at the stadium was also very inspiring to me," Lingling said. "The Chinese government spends a lot of money training people. "So China will always be first on the gold medal tally," she added. Earlier, compatriot Cui Zhe had secured a Paralympic record in the up to 41kg category. Zhe turns 38 in December and finally claimed the gold medal by lifting almost three times her weight in 119kg following four silvers in her previous Games appearances. "I have always had faith in myself and believed that I could get the gold," Zhe said. "I've been very determined with this target and never given up, always giving my best performance at competitions. "I've felt that I've had a mission that I've never "completed. "To become a Paralympic champion has always been my target and I've always had faith in getting it done," she added. In the men's competitions, Jordan's Omar Qarada defended his up to 49kg title with a 181kg lift and Cuba's Pablo Ramirez is the favourite in the up to 45kg final later in the day.

Khabib back in Nurmagomedov's corner

MOSCOW (Agencies): Usman Nurmagomedov says Khabib Nurmagomedov "is a gift from God" as the Russian prepares to make a return to the Bellator champion's corner on Saturday. Khabib took a break from cornering his gym team-mates following his retirement from MMA but was part of UFC champion Islam Makhachev's corner at UFC 302 in June. Usman, who is Bellator's reigning lightweight champion, has not had the benefit of his cousin's cornering since July 2022 at Bellator 283. "People like Khabib, it's hard to find anyone like K h a b i b , " Nurmagomedov said. "He supports us so much. He knows everything about MMA, like nobody else. "When he is in camp, everything is different. You're feeling different and you learn so much." Usman Nurmagomedov makes his return from a doping ban against Alexandr Shabliy on Saturday in San Diego, defending his world title. The Russian received a six-month suspension last October, but he was not stripped of his belt. He is coached by Khabib's former trainer Javier Mendez, who also works with lightweight Makhachev and bantamweight Umar Nurmagomedov. Usman Nurmagomedov picked Makhachev as the number one lightweight in the world right now, with himself as second. Nurmagomedov is the favourite against fellow Russian Shabliy and has a record of 17 wins and one no-contest after his last victory was overturned to a no-contest because of his doping ban. Asked if he felt the weight of carrying the Nurmagomedov name and to remain undefeated, he said there was "no pressure".



EDINBURGH: Josh Inglis (L) and Travis Head of Australia celebrates during the T20 International match between Scotland and Australia.

## Australia cruise to seven-wicket win over Scotland

EDINBURGH (Agencies): Australia cruised to a seven-wicket win over Scotland at the Grange in the first T20 international of their three-match series. Having been put in to bat, the hosts set a target of 155 with opener George Munsey top scoring with 28. But despite losing Jake Fraser-McGurk for a duck on debut, Australia scored freely during the power-play, reaching a record score of 113-1 in the first six overs. Travis Head was the main source of the destruction, smashing 80 off just 25 balls with 12 fours and five sixes, to guide Australia home with 62 balls to spare. The sides meet again on Friday and Saturday for the final two games of the series. "That's what you expect against one of the best sides in the world," Scotland captain Richie Berrington told BBC Sport. "We started pretty well with the bat, but unfortunately a few of us got in and didn't kick on. Credit to the Australian bowlers,

they made it hard to get away and capitalise on that good start. "We're really disappointed but it's a great experience, particularly for some of our younger guys." Australia demolished fragile Scots After Scotland gave Australia a scare at the T20 World Cup in June, there was some hope that they could go one better and provide an upset in Edinburgh. However, with no Scottish batter scoring more than the 28 by opener Munsey, it was always going to be a struggle restricting Australia to less than 154. Oli Hairs' early dismissal set the tone as he was caught in the second over, as the Scots failed to build a single partnership of more than 50. Munsey was able to get hold of a few looser deliveries, hitting three sixes in his 16-ball spell, before he was dismissed by a brilliant Josh Inglis catch behind the stumps. A few batters saw shots

snaffled on the boundary while Mark Watt (16) was removed thanks to an incredible Marcus Stoinis grab at extra cover. Scotland dismissed Fraser-McGurk with just the third ball but that early optimism was soon ripped apart by a devastating Head performance with the bat. He and skipper Mitchell Marsh hit 14 consecutive boundaries - five sixes and nine fours - to rocket up to 113-1 after just six overs. Watt was able to dismiss both the Australian batters in the same over but the match was a foregone conclusion by that point, with Inglis and Stoinis able to knock off the remaining 33 runs. "I was a little nervous coming out so it was nice for me and the captain to get some runs," Head told BBC Sport. "It's been a nice period for the last couple of years. It was a tricky start losing Jake, but always nice to have Mitch at the other end, and my role is to maximise the power-play - we did that."

## Sinner eyes US Open semi-final as Swiatek looks to halt US surge

NEW YORK (AFP): Jannik Sinner attempts to reach a maiden US Open semi-final on Wednesday as fellow world number one Iga Swiatek hopes to stem an American championship surge. Sinner is the only top-four player left in the men's draw following the exits of Novak Djokovic, Carlos Alcaraz and Alexander Zverev. However, he is yet to reach the last-four in New York and faces a test of his credentials against fifth-ranked Daniil Medvedev, the 2021 US Open champion. Sinner defeated Medvedev from two sets down to win his first major at the Australian Open in January before the mercurial Russian avenged that loss at Wimbledon. "I will try to think more about Wimbledon than the Australian Open," said Medvedev, also the 2019 and 2023 runner-up at the US Open. "Against Jannik, I feel like in a way we know our game, what we will try to bring to the table, and then it comes to always a moment's deuce, break-point, maybe try to surprise him or not, what he will do, what I will do." Victory would give Medvedev a place in a 10th Grand Slam semi-final. The winner of that quarter-final will face either Australia's 10th-ranked Alex de Minaur or Britain's Jack Draper, the world number 25. Left-handed Draper is into his first Grand Slam quarter-final and is the first British man to make the last eight in New York since Andy Murray in 2016. Draper has not dropped a set over four rounds, win-



ning 47 of 48 service games and saving 20 of 21 break points. "I just need to keep going," Draper said. "I have great people around me and I love playing here in New York... I love playing on the big stage." De Minaur is also looking to reach his first Grand Slam semi-final and is playing in his first tournament since a hip injury forced him to hand Djokovic a walkover in the Wimbledon quarter-finals. If the Australian achieves his 50th Grand Slam match win, he would become the first from his country to reach the US Open semi-finals since Lleyton Hewitt in 2005. With Frances Tiafoe and Taylor Fritz already lined up for an all-American men's semi-final on Friday, and Emma Navarro safely into the women's last four, home fans are dreaming of a title sweep this weekend. Swiatek eyes title Andy Roddick was the last US man to lift a Grand Slam singles trophy in New York in 2003 while Serena Williams, Sloane Stephens and Coco Gauff have triumphed in the women's tournament in the last decade. Jessica Pegula will attempt to become the

fourth American player in the semi-finals. However, she has the tricky task of taking on world number one and 2022 champion Swiatek, the four-time French Open winner who is seeking a sixth Grand Slam title. Swiatek boasts a 6-3 career edge over the sixth-ranked Pegula who has fallen short in six Grand Slam quarter-finals. Poland's Swiatek defeated Pegula in the quarter-finals in 2022 on her way to the US Open title. Wednesday's other quarter-final sees Brazilian world number 21 Beatriz Haddad Maia face unseeded Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic. A semi-finalist 12 months ago, Muchova then suffered a serious wrist injury which sidelined her until June this year. A former top 10 player now ranked at 52, Muchova has yet to drop a set, knocking out two-time champion Naomi Osaka and this year's French Open and Wimbledon runner-up Jasmine Paolini. Left-hander Haddad Maia, a semi-finalist at Roland Garros last year, is the first Brazilian woman to reach the quarter-finals in New York since Maria Bueno in 1968.

## PCB Regional tournament starts on Sept 5

LAHORE (APP): The Regional Inter-District senior cricket tournament is set to start in six regions across the country including Abbottabad, Bahawalpur, Hyderabad, Karachi, Multan and Sialkot on Thursday, Sept 5. The tournament will kick off on September 8 in eight other regions including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Dera Murad Jamali, FATA, Faisalabad, Islamabad, Larkana, Peshawar and Quetta Regions. The Inter-district senior tournament matches in Rawalpindi Region and Lahore Region will begin from 12 Sept 12. A total of 103 district/zonal teams will play 255 matches across the 16 regions in the country while over 1500 players will participate in the tournament.

The tournament will provide talent for the upcoming Quaid-e-Azam Trophy and the National T20 Cup 2024-25 where 18 teams of the 16 regional sides will take on each other.

## Dravid to return as Rajasthan head coach

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Rahul Dravid is set to return to Rajasthan Royals (RR) as head coach ahead of the 2025 IPL season, following the culmination of his tenure as India coach after the 2024 T20 World Cup win in June this year. ESPNcricinfo has learned that Dravid recently signed a deal with the franchise and has had initial conversations on player retentions ahead of the upcoming mega auction. He has a long-standing working relationship with the RR captain Sanju Samson, who came through the under-19 ranks on Dravid's watch. Dravid has history with RR. He was their captain in IPL 2012 and 2013, and served as team director and mentor in the 2014 and 2015 seasons. In 2016, Dravid moved to Delhi Daredevils (now Delhi Capitals) until he became the head of the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru in 2019. In 2021, he was appointed head coach of the India men's team and ended his three-year stint with their first ICC title in 11 years. RR are also likely to sign former India batter Vikram Rathour as one of Dravid's assistant coaches. Rathour, a former India selector, was part of Dravid's coaching staff at NCA before he became India's batting coach in 2019. It is understood that while Dravid will take charge of Rajasthan Royals in the IPL, Kumar Sangakkara, who has been their director of cricket since 2021, will continue with their franchise and look after their teams in other leagues - Paarl Royals in the SA20 and Barbados Royals in the CPL. RR have not won the IPL title since the inaugural season in 2008; their next best finish was in 2022 when they came runners-up to Gujarat Titans.

## Bangladesh defeat sees Pakistan fall to 8th in Test rankings

KARACHI (AFP): Pakistan fell to their worst Test ranking in nearly six decades on Wednesday, the International Cricket Council said, after their shock 2-0 series defeat to low-ranked Bangladesh. Bangladesh inflicted a six-wicket defeat on the home team in the second Test in Rawalpindi on Tuesday, their first series win against Pakistan. "Pakistan dropped two

places — from sixth to eighth — in the Test rankings after suffering a shock series loss at home to Bangladesh," the International Cricket Council (ICC) said. The ICC said it was "their lowest rankings since 1965" in the 12-team table, which is topped by Australia followed by India and England. Bangladesh are ninth in the latest rankings

There are now no Pakistan bowlers ranked in the top 10 after paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi fell to 11th from his ninth place before the Bangladesh series. Wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan is the only Pakistani remaining in the top 10 batting rankings, while Babar Azam dropped three places to 12th. Azam managed just 64 runs in the two Tests against Bangladesh.

## Aqeel, Shoaib advance to Tennis Tournament final

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Khawar Hyat Khan Memorial National Ranking Tennis Tournament continued with an action-packed day of matches at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Wednesday. Competitors from various age groups displayed their skills in closely contested matches across several categories. In Men's Singles semifinals, Veteran tennis player Aqeel Khan defeated Muzammil Murtaza with a score of 6-3, 6-4 to clash with rising star Muhammad Shoaib, who in the other contest overpowered Yousaf Khalil in a dominant performance 6-1, 6-1.

In Ladies Singles quarter-finals, Amna Ali Qayum cruised to victory over Kainat Ali with a flawless 6-0, 6-0 win, while Soha Ali triumphed against Lalarukh Saji 6-2, 6-0. Earlier, in Ladies Singles pre-quarter-finals, Meheq Khokhar defeated Zara Khan 6-0, 6-0 in a one-sided affair. Amna Ali Qayum outclassed Zainab Ali Raja 6-0, 6-1. Soha Ali overcame Fatima Ali Raja with a 6-0 win. Ushna Suhail outplayed Zunaisah Noor 6-1, 6-1. Sheeza Sajid won against Laiba Iqbal 6-2, 6-2. Lalarukh Sajid defeated Amna Saqib Jadoon 6-2, 6-2. Mahrukh Saji outclassed

Maham Jadoon 6-1, 6-0. In Boys 18 & Under semifinals, Bilal Asim emerged victorious against Hamza Roman in a three-set thriller, winning 6-3, 1-6, 6-0. Ahmed Nael Qureshi defeated Ahtesham Humayun with a scoreline of 6-3, 6-2. In Boys 14 & Under semifinals: Shayan Afridi beat Muhammad Junaid Khan 5-3, 4-2, while Hasan Usmani overcame Razik Sultan in a closely fought match 5-4(1), 4-2. In Boys 12 & Under quarter-finals, Rashid Ali secured a 4-2, 4-0 win over M. Aayan, whereas Muhammad Muaz defeated M. Ibraheem Gill 4-1, 4-0.

## Pakistani schoolgirl wins bronze at Asian Jr Boxing C'ship



ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistani student Ayesha Mumtaz has won the bronze medal at the Asian Junior and School Boxing Championship in Abu Dhabi, "Radio Pakistan said on Wednesday. "She defeated Thi Hong Yen Nguyen of Vietnam in the quarterfinal." According to local media reports, Mumtaz competed and demonstrated "exceptional abilities" in the 46kg weight category as the only participant from Pakistan, with her "well-executed" jabs proving decisive against the Vietnamese opponent. Pakistan Boxing Federation President Muhammad

bronze medal at the Asian Junior and School Boxing Championship in Abu Dhabi, "Radio Pakistan said on Wednesday. "She defeated Thi Hong Yen Nguyen of Vietnam in the quarterfinal." According to local media reports, Mumtaz competed and demonstrated "exceptional abilities" in the 46kg weight category as the only participant from Pakistan, with her "well-executed" jabs proving decisive against the Vietnamese opponent. Pakistan Boxing Federation President Muhammad

Mahmood congratulated Mumtaz on her win, saying her triumph was a testament to the potential of Pakistani athletes. "The PBF remains committed to fostering young talent across the country and anticipates further success from Ayesha Mumtaz and other emerging athletes," media reports quoted him as saying. The only other female medalist from Pakistan in the Asian Boxing Championships was Hadiya Kamal, who won a bronze in the 2022 edition due to a direct entry into the semifinals, state media said.

## Sarfraz Ahmed joins Dolphins as mentor-cum-player

LAHORE (APP): Wicket-keeper batsman, former captain Sarfraz Ahmed on Wednesday joined Dolphins side as mentor-cum-player for the Champions One Day Cup 2024 and expressed the resolve to make a meaningful contribution towards player development and professional growth of the cricketers and coaching staff. Addressing a press conference to accept mentorship and unveiling of Dolphins logo at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) headquarters Gaddafi Stadium here on Wednesday, he said he would play his due role in mentoring players for the future and help in bridging the gap between domestic and international cricket. With Sarfraz's joining Dolphins as mentor, the process of appointing mentors of the five teams has completed as Waqar Younis (Lions), Shoaib Malik (Stallions), Misbah ul Haq (Wolves) and Saqlain Mushtaq (Panthers) have already joined the sides in the Champions One Day Cup which due to start on September 12 at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad. Dolphins will be based at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre in Karachi, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced today. Dolphins will be one of the five sides to participate in the Champions One-Day Cup, which will be held in Faisalabad from 12-29 September. "What makes this role even more exciting and challenging is that I will

also be participating in the tournament as a player. While my passion and drive to win each match remain as strong as ever, my role will also involve supporting and assisting the captain, players, and coaching staff to enhance their skills and become better players," Sarfraz added. Reminiscing on his old memories with an old team with the surname Dolphins but no geographical affiliations with the current side, the two-time ICC events winner said, "I am fully committed to this role and am eager to make a meaningful contribution to the Dolphins side, with whom I have been involved in some of the most memorable matches. These include the last-over loss to the Stallions in the 2007/08 T20 Cup final, a 78-run victory over the Bears in the 2009/10 Pentangular One-Day Cup final and a 37-run loss to the Lions in the 2010/11 T20 Cup final." He said mentoring a highly-rated Dolphins side in what promises to be a keenly contested and hard-fought tournament is something he is eagerly looking forward to, adding that it will be a new experience for him and he is excited about the opportunity to learn and further develop his skills as a cricket professional. "With the country's best players and top-notch coaches under the watchful eyes of experienced former stalwarts as mentors, I am confident that this Champions One-Day Cup

will exceed the expectations of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the passionate Pakistan cricket fans, whose unwavering support is always crucial. I believe all players will deliver their best performances, making this tournament an overwhelming success," the former captain hoped. 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. Sarfraz Ahmed captained Pakistan to victories in the ICC U19 World Cup 2006 and ICC Champions Trophy 2017 while he was also a member of the Pakistan side that won the ACC Asia Cup 2012. Sarfraz led Pakistan to No.1 in ICC T20I Team Rankings and also became the first Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter to score a World Cup century when he scored 101 not out against Ireland in Adelaide in 2015. He holds the record for most dismissals in an ODI (all 6 catches) and is only the second wicket-keeper to have captained his side in 50 or more ODIs. Sarfraz Ahmed is 17th on the ODI list of wicket-keepers with 2,000 runs and 100 dismissals while he has played in two 50-over World Cups and one T20 World Cup.





## In brief

### PM believes in consistency of policies: Ihsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister of Commerce and Industries Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan said on Wednesday that the Prime Minister believes in consistency of policies in every field. Talking to a private news channel, he said that like every field, the betterment of cricket needs consistency of policies. The Prime Minister gave responsibilities to the Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), and he, after assuming charge, introduced the best policies, he added. He said that although the PCB was an autonomous body, the PM directed to ensure the merit. The current performance of the Pakistan cricket team is not satisfactory, but the consistency of policies will show improvement, he added. He said that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) government, in its past tenures, invested in youth in terms of youth festivals and sports festivals. The government is invested in sports activities so that the best results can be achieved, he added.

### Police granted time to recover citizen

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday granted time to the capital police till September 10, for the recovery of missing person Faizan Usman. Justice Babar Sattar heard the case wherein the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad appeared on the directives of the court. Additional Attorney General prayed the court to grant a further two days for the recovery of the citizen. The IGP said that they have written to the Intelligence Bureau (IB) through the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to track the mobile phone of Faizan Usman. Justice Sattar remarked that it was the responsibility of the police to protect the citizens if it failed then the people would come to courts. A man has been lifted from home but the concerned police station wasn't aware of it, he said. The court said that it was granting time till Tuesday and instructed the police to submit the final report at the next hearing.

### IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Dhalla, H-8/2, I-8/2, I-9/2, NECOP, Pind Padian, Valley, Gulshan-e-Sehat, Sangjani, Shah Allah Dutta, Paswal, Air University, PM Housing Colony, NASTP, Qaziabad, Rehara, CM Pak Zong, Isolation Hospital, Sharifabad, Khanna East Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Old Kaliam, Chatta Hatial, Bisali, Industrial, Bhal, Gumti, Jarrar Camp, Gracie Line, Japan Road, Sahala Feeders., Rawalpindi City Circle, Zeeshan Colony, Misrial Road, Khanna 2, Ulnoor, Wahidabad, Tiramiri, Ghori Garden, Suhadrani Road, Rehman Enclave, Khadripur, Azizabad, Gangal, Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Airport, Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Bhai, Sarai Alamgir, Military College, Shamsabad, Mandi Bhalwal, Islampura, Kangar, Qazian, Colonel Muhammad Akram Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Dhoda, Mult Chowk Feeders and surrounding areas.



ISLAMABAD: Art lovers inspect the exhibition with interest during the opening ceremony of Muhammad Azaz Hafeez's photo exhibition and book launch of 'Black and White Grey' at PNCA. —APP Photo

## Chinese delegation calls on Engr Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Chinese delegation called on the Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam here at Kashmir Council on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the Chinese delegation expressed its interest in

investing in different mineral deposit areas, said a press release.

The federal minister said that Gilgit Baltistan was a very safe and peaceful region for foreign investment.

Referring to the time tested friendship between Pakistan and China, Engr Amir Muqam said that

both nations enjoy a cordial friendship.

He said that the government of Pakistan would encourage Chinese investors by providing them with all the required facilities.

The Chinese delegation expressed interest in the minerals sector mapping and survey.

### Shiza Fatima, Uzbekistan Envoy discuss cooperation in IT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunications Shiza Fatima Khwaja and the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov on Wednesday discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the IT and telecommunications sectors.

According to a news release, both agreed on the importance of increasing collaboration in these areas. Shiza Fatima Khwaja said that Pakistan values its relationship with Uzbekistan and highlighted the potential benefits of cooperation in technology.

She said that both countries could gain significantly from each other's experiences in the field. The Ambassador expressed Uzbekistan's eagerness to strengthen cooperation with Pakistan in IT and telecommunications. He proposed the establishment of a joint working group between Uzbekistan's Ministry of Digital Technologies and Pakistan's Ministry of IT and Telecommunications. He suggested initiating a startup exchange program between the two countries.

### ANF recovers over 28 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting raids across the country managed to recover over 28 kg drugs and arrested four accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He said that ANF teams were conducting raids to net drug traffickers supplying drugs in educational institutions. 46 intoxicated tablets were recovered from an accused arrested near two educational institutes located on Gojra Road, Jhang. The accused confessed selling drugs to students of educational institutions.

He said, strict action would continue under zero tolerance policy against those involved in selling drugs to students as such elements were destroying the future of the youth. Along with educational institutions, the ANF teams are also engaged in curbing the supply of drugs across the country, he added. The spokesman said that in an operation, 544 grams ice was recovered from the bag of a Jeddah bound passenger going from Allama Iqbal International Airport.

## Naqvi meets Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad, discusses establishment of peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday met with Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Pakistan Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad.

During the meeting measures to establish peace and eliminate terrorism and sectarianism were discussed. In addition, matters related to Religious harmony, tolerance, and inter-sect unity were also discussed.

The interior minister said that terrorists have no religion, adding that scholars have always guided the nation in the fight against terrorism and still there is a dire need for it.

He stated that to develop an effective narrative against terrorism, a national campaign to consult scholars of all sects will be started soon. He underscored that the war against terrorism is the war for the survival of Pakistan.

He stressed that scholars need to again play their role to eliminate the menace of terrorism. "The enemy wants to harm national unity by creating unrest but we will defeat the nefarious designs of the enemy through our unity", he said.

Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad said that the "Paigham-e-Pakistan" is a great narrative that has declared terrorism, extrem-

ism, and sectarianism as haram. He added that everyone needs to play their role in promoting inter-sect and interfaith harmony and national unity in the current situation.

He praised the efforts and services of the interior minister towards establishing peace in the country. He said that the entire nation stands united with the valiant armed forces and security agencies to eliminate the scourge of terrorism and extremism.

Mohsin Naqvi appreciated Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad's services for religious harmony, national unity and solidarity.

## Feasibility study being carried out to install smart meters: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Taron on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that a feasibility study was being carried out in phase 1 to install smart meters at every transformer to check power pilferage adding that as per an estimated \$ 6 billion would be required to switch around 28 million domestic consumers on smart meters.

Responding to various supplementary questions during Question Hour, the minister said that out of 28 million domestic consumers, 17 million falls under the protected category who utilized upto 200 units per month. The World Bank will provide 70% of the funds for the smart meters project, while the government will arrange the remaining 30 per cent, he added.

He said no load shedding is being carried out in the country on account of generation shortfall. All power distribution companies (DISCOs) were carrying out load management in their areas based on the losses of feeders, he added.

He said that feeders with losses of up to 20 per cent were exempt from outages. To another question, he said the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) was actively pursuing the promotion and development of Alternative and Renewable Energy technologies for power generation in line with the government's vision to diversify the energy mix.

He said a total of 58 ARE based projects having cumulative capacity of 3,837 megawatt (MW) were operational. These include 1,845 MW wind power projects.

## Unicef-Pakistan, climate ministry join hands to build climate resilience



ISLAMABAD (APP): Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Pakistan, Abdullah A. Fadil called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam here on Wednesday to discuss boosting collaboration in protecting children from adverse impacts of climate change.

During the meeting held here, both sides pledged to work closely to protect children from devastating consequences of climate change-caused disasters, particularly floods and diseases, spokesperson of the Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Ministry Muhammad Saleem said.

The ministry official further said that PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid highlighted during the meeting with Unicef coun-

try representative in Pakistan that the children of Pakistan are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as extreme weather events such as floods, heat waves, droughts, glacial lake outburst floods and shifting rainfall patterns threaten their health, education, and overall well-being.

During the meeting, Romina Khurshid highlighted that as the world grapples with the intensifying climate risks, children in Pakistan are emerging as one of the most vulnerable groups and facing severe implications of various climate change-caused disasters, particularly floods, heat waves, the spokesperson Mr. Saleem added.

"What we have learned from recent climate change-caused disasters in Pakistan, is that the country, already one of the most

climate-affected countries globally, is experiencing intensified impacts including extreme heat waves, flooding and shifting weather patterns.

These climate disruptions are disproportionately affecting children, who are particularly sensitive to environmental changes due to their developing bodies and lower adaptive capacity," remarked Ms. Alam.

The ministry official also said that during the meeting it was highlighted that addressing the climate vulnerability among children is not possible without targeted interventions particularly in health, education, water and sanitation sections, to protect future of the younger generation.

Suggesting sectoral interventions, the PM's climate aide said that investing in healthcare infrastructure and services to address climate-induced health challenges, with a focus on maternal and child health for strengthening overall health systems; building resilient educational facilities and implementing strategies to ensure that children's education is not disrupted by climate events so as to ensuring educational continuity; supporting mental health by providing mental health services and psychosocial support to children affected by climate-related stress.

## BISER declares HSSC annual examination 2024

RAWALPINDI (APP): Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Rawalpindi (BISER) here on Wednesday declared annual result of Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) examination 2024.

Member National Assembly (MNA), Hanif Abbasi was chief guest at a ceremony held at Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi (FIWU).

Chairman, Punjab Higher Education Commissioner (HEC), Professor Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Khan, Executive Director, Inter Boards Coordination Commissioner (IBCC), Ghulam Ali Mallah, MPAs, Chairman BISER, Muhammad Adnan Khan and several officers of the Education Department were present on this occasion.

Natasha Rizwan secured

the overall first position with 1142 marks while Mohammad Nazir Akhtar and Ayaz Shabbir got overall second position with 1141 marks. Farah Rashid secured overall third position by taking 1140 marks. 38,734 female students and 24,557 male students participated in the first HSSC annual examination.

The success rate of male students remained 45.87 percent while the success rate of female students was 63.65 percent. The overall percentage of successful candidates was 56.75. Medals and prizes were awarded to the students who secured prominent positions in the examinations.

Addressing the participants, Hanif Abbasi congratulated the students and their parents for getting prominent positions in the exams. According to the vision of

the Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, merit policy is being promoted in the province, he said adding, the future of the country is connected with the successful youth of today. Hanif Abbasi said that the board under the chairmanship of Adnan Khan ensured timely announcement of the results which is commendable. All modern facilities would be provided to the students so that they could get quality education, he added.

Hanif Abbasi stressed the need of adopting a positive attitude and said that any news must be verified. Along with providing health facilities across the city, the education sector would be further developed, he added. The future of the country depends on the hard work of the young generation, Chairman HEC said on this occasion.

## Malaysia-Pak bilateral ties establish in all spheres since countries' independence: Malaysian Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): The High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, has said that Malaysia values its relations with Pakistan immensely and admirable bilateral relations have been established in all spheres since the countries' independence.

Today, on Malaysia's Independence Day, I would like to express that the strategic partnership established between Malaysia and Pakistan, which affects the all sectors of economy and including trade in every sector, the High Commissioner said while addressing the 67th Malaysian National Day ceremony held here Wednesday.

He said, "Malaysia's 'strategic partnership' with Pakistan holds immense potential and

both Malaysia and Pakistan share a deep-rooted bond, and we are committed to further strengthening our brotherly ties, particularly in areas such as trade, investment, and technological collaboration."

The High Commissioner said that Malaysia was the third largest trading partner of Pakistan and bilateral trade between Malaysia and Pakistan was \$1.8 billion. He said that there were huge opportunities of cooperation in the Halal Industry, Green Technology, Energy, Tourism, Education and Industry and Trade between Pakistan and Malaysia.

He said that with the theme 'Malaysia MADANI: Jiwa Merdeka', this year's celebration highlighted the spirit of togeth-

erness across all segments of society, reflecting the holistic unity of a developed and progressive nation that safeguards its diverse populace and fosters a shared national identity.

"It is not merely a celebration but, more importantly a reflection of the resolve on the journey of nationhood that brought Malaysia the strength she enjoys today. This moment did not only signify the birth of a new nation but also laid the foundation for the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 when Sabah and Sarawak joined hands with the federation. Together, we have grown, through trials and tribulations, emerging stronger as a united nation.

As we celebrate our 67th year of independence, we must also

recognize the significant strides Malaysia has made in building a resilient and dynamic economy, and our country has grown into a key player in the global market with a diversified economy that spans sectors such as manufacturing, technology, and services. This economic progress is not only a reflection of our nation's hard work and determination but also a crucial foundation for our future aspirations," the envoy said.

He said that the significance of this day lied not only in remembrance of the struggles and sacrifice of the founding fathers but also in recognizing the diverse cultural tapestry that defines Malaysia today. "The principles of unity, tolerance, and mutual respect remain central to the Malaysian identity, reflecting a

nation that has learned to embrace its multiculturalism as an indelible strength," he said.

The High Commissioner said, "Every year, on August 31, Malaysians from all walks of life—regardless of race, religion, or political belief—unite to celebrate the National Day, marking the moment when our beloved nation gained independence on this very day in 1957.

He said that it was a day for us to honor their legacy by continuing to uphold the values of unity, tolerance, and respect that they envisioned for Malaysia.

He said the evening before that historic day, Malaysians stood united at the Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur, witnessing the lowering of the British Union Jack and the hoisting of our flag,

Jalur Gemilang. "The following morning, in a moment that has been etched in the annals of history, thousands gathered at Merdeka Stadium, where the Duke of Gloucester, representing Her Majesty the Queen, handed a symbol of independence to our first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman", he added.

"Tunku Abdul Rahman, with the strength of timbre accompanied by the people's spirit, declared 'Merdeka' seven times, marking the dawn of a new era for Malaya," he said.

He said, "In moving forward, let us renew our commitment to building better Malaysia for future generations. Let us embrace our diversity as our strength and work together to achieve greater heights.



2600 carats of emeralds sold

PANJSHIR (BNA): Officials from the Panjshir Directorate of Mines and Petroleum have announced the recent sale of emeralds freshly extracted from the province's mines, emphasizing the transparency of the process. According to Mawlawi Mohammad Qasim Amiri, Head of the Panjshir Directorate of Mines and Petroleum, a total of 2,604 carats of emeralds were sold to national traders through a bidding process for \$335,500.

Thursday, September 05, 2024

Special committee formed

KABUL (BNA): A special committee has been established by the order of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, to improve the process and facilitate the distribution of electronic identity cards across the country. According to a statement released by ARG, the committee led by Deputy Head of the General Directorate of the Prime Minister's Office, Mufti Sayed Ahmad Mustaqim.

ARCS, IFRC collaborate to enhance psychiatric care



KABUL (BNA): Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), recently met with Nisifor Mghendi, a representative of the International

Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to discuss vital support for the provision of drinking water at a psychiatric care facility.

During the meeting,

Delawar expressed his gratitude for the financial assistance previously provided by the IFRC and emphasized the ongoing need for support in caring for psychiatric patients in

Afghanistan. Mghendi noted the IFRC's commitment to enhancing mental health services in the region. He referenced a recent visit by local IFRC head Alexandre Matheiu to the psychiatric care facility, which resulted in an allocation of \$50,000 to support these critical services.

In addition to financial support, Mghendi pledged the IFRC's continued cooperation in expanding the ARCS's reach and capacity, including initiatives for first aid training across Afghanistan.

The partnership between ARCS and IFRC highlights a shared commitment to enhancing mental health services and providing essential care to those in need in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's internal affairs demand respect

KABUL (BNA): Over the past three years, certain countries have sought to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs, seemingly unaware that this nation belongs to its people. The Afghan people have chosen leaders who were born, raised, and have lived among them, sharing their joys and sorrows.

Just as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has no right to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations, foreign entities must also refrain from meddling in Afghanistan's governance, society, and domestic matters—or even from imposing their opinions.

The international community's role should be limited to issues that have global implications, where the benefits and harms extend beyond national borders. When matters are confined to a particular country, there is no justification for external interference.

If the topic of interference arises, it is worth noting that the values of Muslims worldwide, particularly in Afghanistan, do not align with certain practices in other countries. For instance, the idea of mixed-gender education in American universities, compelling women to work for their sustenance, or sending elderly parents to nursing homes is deeply opposed by many Muslims. Despite this, Muslims do not interfere in these practices abroad.

Similarly, Afghans have their own religious, cultural, and social values that must be respected by the international community. Attempts to interfere in these internal matters undermine the sovereignty of the Afghan people and their right to self-determination.

However, when an issue in Afghanistan has wider global implications, the international community is welcome to voice its concerns through legitimate channels and engage constructively in dialogue.

Exports least compared to imports

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has stated that trade with Russia over the past eight months has amounted to \$227 million, with exports accounting for only \$3 million.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, mentioned that during the same period, the country imported goods worth \$224 million from Russia.

The spokesperson added: "Afghanistan's trade with Russia in the first eight months of 2024 reached \$227 million, including \$3 million in exports and \$224 million in imports, showing an 18% increase compared to the previous year."

Meanwhile, a delegation from the Chamber of Commerce and Investment traveled to Russia and held talks with officials from the Russian Chamber of Commerce to discuss expanding trade and resolving business issues between Kabul and Moscow.

Mohammad Yunus Momand, the First Vice Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, stated: "We are working on how to initiate the export of fresh and dried fruits to Russia. Russia is a good market for our fresh fruits and has significant demand."

Some economic experts suggest that expanding trade relations with Russia also impacts the country's economic growth.

Mir Shakir Yaqubi, an economic expert, told TOLONews: "There is a clear need for Russian investment in energy and natural resources. Additionally, given the international sanctions, Afghanistan's trade with Russia holds special importance, as Russia can act as an alternative market. Moreover, Afghanistan's geographical position allows it to serve as a bridge between Central Asia and South Asia."

1000 work permits issued to foreigners

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs reports that it has issued nearly one thousand work permits to foreign nationals since the beginning of the current solar year.

Recently, officials from the ministry have established a work permit distribution office for foreign nationals at the Torkham crossing.

Samiullah Ibrahim, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, stated, "The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is setting up work permit distribution centers for foreign nationals at both land and air ports. Recently, a center was inaugurated in

Torkham township for this purpose."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment considers the issuance of work permits to foreign employees in sectors where the country has a need to be effective but emphasizes the importance of creating job opportunities for the youth of the country.

Jan Aqa Nawid, the spokesperson for the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said, "We suggest focusing more on Afghan professionals, especially those young people who have graduated from universities and are specialists, by providing them with suitable job opportunities."

Some experts also view the presence of foreign labor as valuable for transferring experience to local citizens in Afghanistan's job market.

Abdul Zahoor Madbar, an economic expert, said, "Foreign labor can bring better experience, and Afghan workers can benefit from their expertise."

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs announced that in the near future, it plans to establish work permit distribution offices at border crossings and airports to facilitate foreign nationals coming to work in Afghanistan through institutions and the private sector.

Remaining Hajj funds for 2024: Ministry announces to start distribution



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Guidance, Hajj and Religious Affairs has announced the start of the process for distributing the remaining funds to the Hajj pilgrims of the solar year 1403 (2024). This process is set to begin today (Wednesday) in the capital and provinces.

Noor Mohammad Saqib, the Acting Minister of the Ministry, stated that more than 113 million dollars were collected from the pilgrims, of which over 112 million dollars were spent, and the remaining money will be distributed to the pilgrims.

Regarding this, Saqib said: "After a precise calculation of the Hajj expenses,

a total of 112 million, 347 thousand, 800 dollars, and 82 cents were spent for all the pilgrims."

The Acting Minister of Guidance, Hajj, and Religious Affairs added that after the Hajj ceremony, 1,111,010 dollars and 14 cents remain with the ministry, and each individual will be paid 37 dollars and 61 Afghani.

Noor Mohammad Saqib further stated: "Pilgrims should come to collect their money at a specified time, but these funds are kept in trust in the banks as their rightful property and can be claimed whenever the pilgrims come forward."

The Acting Minister also mentioned that Afghanistan's Hajj quota for the solar year 1404 (2025) will also be 30,000 people. However, the ministry is striving to increase the quota based on the country's population, which reaches 45 million.

Saqib said: "We are now trying through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other means to ensure our population is recognized by the international community and reported to Saudi Arabia so that our quota can be increased."

It is worth noting that in the solar year 1403 (2024), the quota for the country's pilgrims was 30,000 people.

Child laborers in Bamyan seek government help

BAMYAN (TOLONews): Several child laborers who are engaged in hard work in various parts of Bamyan city complain of poverty.

These children are asking the government authorities to address their economic challenges.

Ali Jan, a child laborer, said: "My father is ill and cannot work. I am forced to work to cover my family's living expenses."

Laiq Salehi, a social activist, said: "If employment opportunities are provided for families, they will not be forced to send their children to do hard labor."

Meanwhile, local officials in Bamyan said they have provided educational opportunities for more than 300 orphaned children in the center and Yakawlang District Number One, and efforts

continue to address the situation of other children.

Abdul Saboor Sighani, the spokesman for the Bamyan governor, told TOLONews: "200 orphaned and homeless children who were on the streets have been gathered, and in addition, two other private organizations are also cooperating in the upbringing and education of these children."

Tamana, a student, said: "Here, we are learning religious studies and tailoring, and in the tailoring section, we sew different types of women's clothing, and we also do embroidery and needlework."

Zainab, another student, said: "I don't have a guardian, and it has been a year since I came to this place, and I have learned

good religious and moral teachings."

In this center, free education in various fields, including school subjects, computer skills, English language, tailoring, and religious studies, is provided for more than 60 orphaned children.

Musa Jafari, the head of a private orphanage, said: "After these children return from school, they are given supplementary lessons, and in addition, girls who have been left out of school are taught tailoring."

This comes as many families in Bamyan are unable to meet their expenses due to the cold weather and long winter, and children help their families by doing hard and exhausting work to cover living costs.

Health care challenges: Specialist doctor shortage in Ghor province

GHOR (TOLONews): Local officials in Ghor said that the lack of healthcare services and specialist doctors has created serious challenges for the health sector in this province.

Gul Ahmad Sahel, the head of the Ghor Provincial Hospital, said: "Especially during the winter season, the roads are closed for six months, and we cannot transfer our patients to the hospitals in Herat and Kabul. For this reason, it is essential for this hospital to become specialized."

The Ghor Provincial Hospital is the only hospital in the province that provides healthcare services.

Doctor Eidma Sultani said: "We do not have specialists in the maternity

ward, in pediatrics, or for newborns. If we have two thousand patients, can two doctors attend to them? No."

A lack of space, absence of specialist doctors, and insufficient medical facilities are the main challenges faced by this hospital.

Doctor Mohammad Musa Alfati said, "Every doctor should attend to ten patients, every specialist to twenty patients, and every nurse to five patients. However, unfortunately, we have two doctors in a 250-bed hospital, one on call and the other a specialist. The rights of the patients are not being met."

Furthermore, neurosurgery, eye treatment, and ear, nose, and throat services are not available in the

Ghor Provincial Hospital. Many patients report that healthcare services in Ghor's center and districts are very limited.

Abdul Nasir, a patient, said: "There are many problems, and the road is in poor condition. We get shaken inside the vehicle and become very weak. The vehicles take a whole night to reach the city center."

Another patient, Mohammad Yaqoob, said, "I was brought to the Dowlat Yar District Clinic by car, but there were no special facilities there, and I had to endure a lot to reach the provincial hospital. I underwent surgery here, and I am currently fine."

Ghor's Public Health officials said that due to the

absence of an intensive care unit at the provincial hospital, critical patients are transferred to Kabul or Herat.

Abdul Sattar Mowafiq, the head of Ghor Public Health, said: "The lack of a specialized hospital is one of our main challenges in the health sector in Ghor Province. Because we cannot provide services for patients who need specialized care."

Ghor is a mountainous province where the roads are blocked during the winter, preventing patients from accessing healthcare centers.

According to doctors, many patients, especially pregnant women, lose their lives due to the lack of healthcare services.

MoIC hosts coordination meeting with eastern zone spokesmen



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Information and Culture's Directorate of Access to Information has conducted a coordination meeting with spokesmen from the Eastern Zone in Nangarhar province to strengthen communication and enhance information-sharing practices.

The session was attended

by key figures, including Mawlawi Ziaul Haq Haqmal, Acting Deputy Minister of Publications and Head of BNA, Mawlawi Rahmatullah Niazi, Head of Access to Information; Mawlawi Saeed Ahmad Banuri, Deputy Governor of Nangarhar; representatives of the Ulema Council; heads of the Information and Culture depart-

ments of the Eastern Zone; and several spokesmen.

Mawlawi Rahmatullah Niazi began the meeting by reading a decree of the Supreme Leader of IEA and providing insights into the purpose of the gathering.

Additionally, Mawlawi Saeed Ahmad Banuri underscored the critical role of spokesmen as the voices

of their respective institutions, noting that the public places significant trust in their communications. He urged them to ensure the dissemination of accurate information to the media and the public, especially when major projects are launched, and emphasized the importance of presenting such information effectively.

Furthermore, Mawlawi Ziaul Haq Haqmal highlighted the ministry's commitment to tirelessly working to provide high-quality information to the public. He stressed the importance of consultation in the dissemination of news and the collective responsibility of media officials to ensure the publication of reliable and credible news.

At the conclusion of the meeting, spokesmen presented their suggestions, questions, and requests, to which Mawlawi Ziaul Haq Haqmal responded with satisfactory and detailed answers.

Longing for jobs, grumble Kabul's educated youth

KABUL (Pajhwok): We hold master's degrees, but are not provided with employment opportunities, a number of youth in Kabul complain. However, government officials talk about various employment programs.

Talking to Pajhwok Afghan News, a number of Kabul youth said had university degrees, but could not find job.

A rickshaw driver in 'Ahmad Shah Baba Mina area of Kabul city, Ehsan, said he had graduated from the law faculty of a private university and had so far knocked at many doors to find a job, but all his efforts went in vain.

After failing to find job, Ehsan bought a rickshaw. He asked the government to provide the youth with jobs and consider ordinary people's needs.

Abdullah, another youth, who sells clothes

on a footpath, said after his hope to land a job shattered, he started selling clothes.

A law graduate, Abdullah, earns only 80 or 100 afghanis daily to meet his family's needs.

Islamiyar Arian, who graduated from the engineering faculty of the University of Nangarhar, said all educated youth must be given their rights.

"If the youth are employed on merit and based on their qualification, it will lead the development of the country," he said.

He also called on the government to pay serious attention to human resources of the country and pave the way for their employment.

Experts believe the government must remove the gap between the government and the nation and create employment oppor-

tunities for the youth within the country.

A lecturer of capacity building Hayatullah Ateed told Pajhwok: "This country has various natural resources. Its climate is also good too, which creates the most suitable environment for employment and business and the youth must take advantage of the available resources."

He said: "The youth need to be hugged." The youth of the country must be given employment in public administration to help in the economy of the country.

He urged the youth not to travel to foreign countries and instead focus on homeland jobs and self-employment.

But the spokesman for the Ministry of Labour and Public Affairs (MoLSA) Abdul Sami Ibrahim told Pajhwok that the sanctions

imposed by western countries on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) and recent natural disasters had negative impacts on the market of employment in the country.

"The IEA is trying to create employment for the youth in different bodies of the government," he said, adding that MoLSA had so far announced many job positions for the youth.

He added: "The MoLSA has other programs for youths who could not finish their studies to complete their education and learn some professional skills."

Earlier and during the national employment conference held in Kabul in July, IEA officials had said efforts were ongoing to reduce the level of unemployment across the country.





ISLAMABAD: Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in a group photo with BISP Chairperson, Rubina Khalid and Aseefa Bhutto Zardari.

## Court issues arrest warrant for KP CM

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A civil judge in Islamabad, Shaista Khan Kundi, has issued non-bailable arrest warrants for the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, in a liquor possession case.

The decision came during a hearing at the District and Sessions Court, where the judge dismissed Gandapur's application for exemption from court appearance on medical grounds. The judge also directed the Station House Officer (SHO) of Bhara Kahu Police Station to arrest and present the Chief Minister in court by tomorrow.

In a related development, the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has postponed the hearing of Gandapur's pre-arrest bail plea in a terrorism case until September 10. The hearing, presided over by Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra, was adjourned without any proceedings.

Gandapur's legal representative, Raja Zahoor-ul-Hasan, submitted a medical certificate to the ATC, citing the Chief Minister's health issues, including leg pain due to a recent slip during a flood relief tour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The defense requested a postponement, stating that Gandapur was unable to attend court due to his medical condition. The court accepted the request and adjourned the hearing until September 21.

## SHC issues contempt of court notice to Sindh CM

E.P. Report

KARACHI: The circuit bench of the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday issued a contempt of court notice to Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah for not complying with the court orders and directed him to either appear in the court on October 3 in person or file a reply through his counsel.

A divisional bench of the SHC, comprising Justice Arshad Hussain Khan and Justice Sana Akram Minhas, heard the contempt of court petition filed by Zameer Hussain Baladi, a former librarian of Mehran University, Jamshoro, against the CM for not giving an order for the release of his pension in compliance with the SHC orders.

In his petition, Baladi had stated that he had filed a plea against the university administration for not paying his pension. "During the hearing, the court was told that the university administration was not authorized to order the payment of the amount, the petitioner had said, adding, "In fact, the court was informed that in this connection, an application had been forwarded to CM Murad."

Baladi went on to say that the court had ordered the chief minister to give an order on his petition within 60 days. But despite the passage of six months, the matter remained unresolved because the CM had failed to give any such orders.

## Terrorists will face the music: Bugti

E.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan CM Sarfaraz Bugti stressed that terrorists in Balochistan wouldn't get any refugee and would face the music. Talking at the cabinet session, he reiterated that the Balochistan Assembly condemned terrorism fiercely in the wake of a surge in terrorist attacks in the province.

He highlighted that few terrorists made innocent people their soft target and made them victims of targeted killings. Balochistan CM clarified that terrorism had no link with Baloch ethnicity, Baloch always fought wars and followed their traditions.

Sarfaraz Bugti insisted that terrorists killed Pakistanis and any Punjabi and Pashtun was not murdered by any Baloch. He emphasized the on duty presence of provincial government secretaries in every district for better governance.

# Aseefa pledges to lead fight against Tuberculosis

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has reaffirmed her commitment to combating Tuberculosis (TB) in Pakistan and on the global stage.

In a high-level meeting with the leadership of the Dopasi Foundation and a delegation of esteemed parliamentarians, led by Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, the discussion centered on addressing Pakistan's TB burden and identifying solutions for closing persistent gaps in TB care, especially for underprivileged communities.

The delegation from the Dopasi Foundation, led by CEO Ms. Kinz-ul-Eman, included key figures such as Dr. Usman Rasool Lodhi, Program Manager; Dr. Tilal Asif, Director of Programs; Ms. Mishaal Javed, Manager of Communications; along with Dr. Syed Karam Shah, Senior Technical Advisor and head of the Stop TB Partnership Pakistan. Parliamentarians in attendance included Dr. Mehreen Bhutto, Ms. Sehar

Kamran, Mr. Khursheed Junejo, and Ms. Musarat Rafique—prominent voices in the fight against TB.

The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on Pakistan's progress since the United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB in 2023, while exploring new strategies to tackle ongoing challenges in TB notification and treatment.

In a landmark commitment, Ms. Bhutto Zardari announced her role as a champion for TB advocacy, pledging to lead national and international efforts. "I am proud to lend my voice to the fight against TB. The fight against Tuberculosis is not just a health issue, but a matter of dignity and justice for the millions affected by this preventable disease. Together, we can create a future where no one is left behind, and every individual has access to the care and support they deserve," said Ms. Bhutto Zardari.

During the meeting, she was briefed on the upcoming Regional Leaders' Summit 2024 on TB and Climate Change and the TB Survivors Event, where she graciously accepted the role

of chair for the Survivors Event. She vowed to advocate for the rights of TB survivors and push for equitable access to quality healthcare across all provinces.

Ms. Bhutto Zardari also praised the work of the End TB Parliamentary Caucus, led by Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, which is hosted by Dopasi Foundation in partnership with the Stop TB Partnership. The initiative promotes cross-provincial collaboration to strengthen TB advocacy. The First Lady urged broader participation from parliamentarians across the country to create a unified and strong response to TB.

Dopasi Foundation, a leading non-profit organization in Pakistan, continues to be at the forefront of TB control and related health interventions. Through its partnerships with the Ministry of Health and global stakeholders, the Foundation is making significant strides toward achieving Pakistan's TB-related health targets, especially among marginalized populations.

# UN hails progress in Gaza polio drive, calls for truce

CAIRO (Reuters): Good progress is being made in rolling out a polio vaccine to children in Gaza but a permanent ceasefire in the 11-month war is needed to ease humanitarian suffering, the main UN agency for Palestinians said on Wednesday.

UNRWA said that three days into the campaign in areas of central Gaza, around 187,000 children had received the vaccine. The campaign will move to other areas of the Palestinian enclave for the second stage. The campaign was prompted by the discovery of a case of polio in a baby boy last month, the first in the Gaza Strip for 25 years. Israel and Hamas militants agreed to daily pauses of eight hours in the fighting in pre-specified areas to allow the vaccination program. No violations have been reported.

"Great progress! Every day in the Middle Areas of #Gaza, more children are getting vaccines against #Polio," the head of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, said on X on Wednesday. "While these polio 'pauses' are giving people some respite, what is urgently needed is a permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages + the standard

flow of humanitarian supplies including medical and hygiene supplies (into Gaza)," he said.

Palestinians say a big reason for the return of polio is the collapse of Gaza's health system and the destruction of most of its hospitals during the war. Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals for military purposes, something the Islamist group denies. On Tuesday, COGAT, an Israeli defense ministry agency tasked with coordinating aid deliveries into Palestinian territories, said since the onset of the war, it has facilitated the entry of 282,126 vials of the polio vaccine, enough for 2,821,260 people.

It also said in a statement that approximately 554,512 vials of vaccines have entered the Gaza Strip, enough for 4,973,736 individual vaccines for various diseases and potential epidemics in the territory. Gaza has around 2.3 million people and is one of the world's most densely populated places.

Despite the success of the polio campaign, diplomatic efforts to secure a permanent ceasefire, release hostages held in Gaza and return many Palestinians jailed by Israel, have faltered. Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu insisted on Monday that Israeli troops would remain in the Philadelphia corridor on the southern edge of Gaza bordering Egypt, one of the main sticking points in reaching a deal.

Hamas, which wants any agreement ending the war to include a withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza, says such a condition, among some others, would prevent an accord. Netanyahu says the war can only end when Hamas is eradicated. The impasse is frustrating Israel's international allies and the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council.

Slovenia's UN envoy — the council's president for September — said on Tuesday that patience is running out and the global body will probably consider taking action if a ceasefire cannot be brokered soon. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters that the only way a deal could be reached was if Israel agreed to a US proposal on July 2, endorsed by the Security Council, and accepted by the group. Both Israel and Hamas blame failure to clinch a deal on conditions added by each of the two sides.



LAHORE: Participants holding a walk on the occasion of International Hijab Day.

# Poland scrambles planes as Russia strikes Ukraine

MOSCOW (Reuters): NATO-member Poland has scrambled aircraft as Russia launched air strikes on Ukraine's western city of Lviv close to its border.

Polish and "allied" aircraft were scrambled overnight on Tuesday as Russia launched a major attack on Lviv, according to Reuters news agency. It was the third time in eight days that the NATO member's defences had been activated since Russia stepped up its bombardment across Ukraine.

At least seven people are reported to have been killed in Lviv, with many more injured in drone and missile attacks that saw historic buildings destroyed in the heart of the city, according to regional officials. Andriy

Sadovy, the mayor of Lviv city, said three children were among the dead.

In a video posted on the Telegram messaging app that showed the mayor among the debris of a destroyed building, he said more than 50 structures, from schools to homes and clinics, most of them in the heart of the city, had been damaged. The operational command of Poland's armed forces said on X platform that "Polish and allied aircraft" had been scrambled due to the Russian attack in western Ukraine.

"This is another very busy night for the entire air defence system," the post read. Russia also hit Kyiv and several other regions with missiles on Wednesday morning, but no immediate

damage was reported.

Moscow has been pounding Ukraine with hundreds of missiles and drones over the past two weeks. Russian military bloggers claim that the step up in air strikes is a response to Kyiv's incursion into its territory in Kursk. The deadliest single attack this year was seen on Tuesday, as a military institute in the central town of Poltava was hit. The strike, by a pair of ballistic missiles, killed more than 50 and wounded hundreds.

Russia has yet to comment on the attack on Poltava or Wednesday's strikes on Lviv and Kyiv. It has long insisted that its strikes only aim at military, energy and transport infrastructure targets, not civilians.

# PHC forwards writ petitions to Nepra against power rates, taxes

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Shahid Khan forwarded petitions filed against the increase in electricity rates and taxes included in bills to National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), on Wednesday.

During the hearing, Justice Syed Arshad Ali remarked that it is not possible for us to issue orders for the entire country. Regarding taxes, what you demand is NEPRA's job. You should file complaints with NEPRA regarding what you want, and they will hear you. This is all NEPRA's job. Why do you want us to do it? The Lahore High Court's decision in a case was overturned by the Supreme Court and sent to NEPRA, Justice Arshad Ali observes.

The counsel Amin ur Rehman and Bilal advocates, NEPRA's lawyer Farooq Afridi, Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah, and Federal Board of Revenue lawyer Rahman Ullah appeared before the court during the hearing.

The lawyer Amin ur Rehman told the court that people are being overcharged in the name of taxes in electricity bills. The electricity bill is not as much as the taxes included in it.

The counsel added that the slabs made in the bills according to the units used are an excess on the people. Excessive taxes are being collected from the people in the name of electricity bills. Our province generates the most electricity.

However, Justice Syed Arshad Ali addressed the petitioner's lawyer, saying, "You have filed a petition on behalf of all residents, which is not possible. There would be millions of petitions. How can we issue orders for the entire country? You should file a petition on behalf of one or two

people. Regarding taxes, what you demand is NEPRA's job. You should file complaints with NEPRA regarding what you want, and they will hear you. This is all NEPRA's job. Why do you want us to do it? PHC observed.

**Court grants status quo against termination of Attala dam project:** A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Arshad Ali and Justice Shahid Khan has issued status quo against the provincial government's decision to terminate the Attala Dam project in Swabi, which was being constructed at a cost of Rs2200 million, and stopped the banks from releasing guarantees to the contractors, on Wednesday.

The counsel Kashif Naseem advocate informed the court that the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government had initiated the Attala Dam project to provide clean drinking water to the people of Swabi's remote area of Attala, so that the water needs of 50 villages in the area could be met.

Initially, the project was estimated to cost Rs. 1500 million, but due to the increase in prices, the Irrigation Department itself increased the cost of the project to Rs. 2.2 billion, and so far, Rs. 200 million has been spent on the project, the lawyer stated. The lawyer argued that various landowners had filed petitions against the project, which were dismissed. The High Court had ordered the continuation of the project, but after the change of government, obstacles were created to stop the project in various ways.

The contractors were directed to return the mobilization amount spent, otherwise, their guarantees would be en-cashed from the banks. He said that the project was approved by the PDWP, but the current government did not seek approval from the

PDWP for its cancellation. Instead, some engineers were appointed to prepare recommendations to terminate the project, the counsel contends. In this regard, the Peshawar High Court had issued orders to review the project, but the government formed a committee, and the Technical Committee submitted its report to the provincial government, stating that there was no alternative to this project and that 60,000 people faced a severe problem of clean drinking water. However, the government ignored the committee's recommendations and decided to terminate the project in a meeting on 29th July, 2024.

The Director Dam North directed the concerned contractors to pay the remaining amount of mobilization, otherwise, their bank guarantees would be en-cashed. He told the court that on one hand, the provincial government is taking actions that create problems for the people, and on the other hand, it is stopping a project that was already approved, which is not correct.

The lawyer said that this project was approved eight years ago with the approval of the provincial cabinet and the Chief Minister, and now a few bureaucrats cannot terminate this project in any way because cabinet and Chief Minister's approval is required for it. Along with this, the demand for return of mobilization charges is also not correct.

The counsel requested the court to stop the termination of the project by the provincial government and to continue the clean drinking water project for the area with a population of 60,000. PHC stopped the implementation of the provincial government's decisions dated July 29, 2024, and restrained the banks from en-cashing the guarantees of the contractors, and sought a response from the government.

# Mismanmanagement plague Hangu's District Hospital

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: The District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) in Hangu has been left in a state of neglect due to the absence of a Medical Superintendent (MS) and the apparent indifference of the current District Health Officer (DHO), Dr. Ehsan Waheed. Despite holding additional charge as MS, Dr. Ehsan has reportedly been preoccupied with workshops in Abbottabad and Mansehra, leaving the hospital's management to deteriorate.

The hospital has been without a permanent MS for several months, leading to a complete breakdown in its management system. After the previous MS was transferred ten months ago, Dr. Ehsan Waheed was

assigned the additional responsibility, but he is frequently absent, resulting in severe operational issues. Despite numerous complaints and letters from former Deputy Commissioner Haider Hussain and current Deputy Commissioner Gohar Wazir to the provincial government regarding Dr. Ehsan's conduct and inefficiency, no action has been taken to replace him.

Further complicating matters, a five-month-old inquiry initiated by former Health Secretary Mahmood Aslam against Dr. Ehsan Waheed has yet to yield any results. The situation within the hospital has worsened to the point where there is a severe shortage of essential medical supplies, including vaccines for snake and dog

bites. In the absence of an ultrasound specialist, an inexperienced dispenser has been assigned to perform these critical duties, endangering patients' health.

The hospital is also grappling with poor hygiene conditions, with filth and foul odors prevailing throughout the facility. Local residents have expressed their outrage and called on the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Chief Secretary, and the Health Secretary to urgently appoint a qualified MS and ensure the provision of necessary medical facilities. The people of Hangu demand immediate action to restore the hospital's functionality and provide the timely medical care they deserve.

# Court reserves verdict on Bushra Bibi's plea

E.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court on Wednesday reserved verdict on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi's acquittal plea in £190 million settlement case.

The incarcerated former premier and his wife are accused of causing billions of rupees loss to the national exchequer in a case also involving a property tycoon. Accountability Court Judge Nasir Javed Rana will announce the verdict on Bushra's plea tomorrow (Thursday) after the parties in the case concluded their arguments.

The couple was produced at makeshift court room setup in Adiala Jail owing to security reasons in today's hearing, however, cross-examination of the National Accountability

Bureau's (NAB) investigation officer was not conducted due to the absence of the PTI founder's lawyer. Bushra's counsel Usman Riaz Gul gave arguments on her acquittal plea. The anti-corruption watchdog opposed the former first lady's acquittal petition in the case. Subsequently, the judge declared a request to initiate contempt proceedings against the NAB chairman "ineffective" due to the arguments raised by the prosecution and the defence on the acquittal plea.

The couple had secured post-arrest bail from the accountability court in the same case in early July, however, they remained imprisoned due to the iddat case — also known as the un-Islamic nikah case — at that time. Later, the duo was acquitted in the iddat case on July 13 but they got arrested in a new

Toshakhana reference filed by the anti-graft watchdog.

The former first lady was first arrested in January this year and kept under house arrest at her residence in Bani Gala after she along with Khan convicted in the infamous Toshakhana case related to the illegal sale of state gifts. The duo's sentence in the reference was suspended by the IHC in April.

Later, she was shifted to Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail in May after the IHC approved her plea challenging the house arrest. In July, Imran and Bushra were acquitted by a district and sessions court in the iddat case. However, Bushra remains behind bars in other cases including the £190m NCA scandal and a fresh Toshakhana reference pertaining to a jewellery set gifted by the Saudi crown prince.