

# Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd XXV No. 359, Safar 15, 1446 AH Wednesday August 21, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

## Three BLA terrorists involved in killing of DC Panjgur killed in Mastung IBO

President, PM laud security forces for eliminating killers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces on Tuesday killed three Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) terrorists and killed as many during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted on the night of August 18th and 19th in Mastung District. During conduct of the operation, after an intense fire exchange, the three BLA terrorists were killed while three of them got injured, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. These terrorists were involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area and were also responsible for shahadat (martyrdom) of Deputy Commissioner of Panjgur, Zakir Ali, on August 12th. "Today's operation has avenged the heinous act and has brought the perpetrators to justice. Security forces of Pakistan in step with the Nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan," the ISPR said. Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out a successful intelligence-based operation in Mastung to eliminate the killers of Deputy Commissioner of Panjgur Zakir Ali. The president appreciated the professional expertise of the Pakistan Army for carrying out an effective anti-terror operation. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday lauded the security forces for eliminating the terrorists involved in the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner of Panjgur Zakir Ali. "The elements involved in spreading terrorism in the country should learn a lesson from the fate of the killers of Panjgur DC. Terrorism will be given no chance to flourish in the country," the prime minister said.

## Security institutions endeavours commendable: CM satisfied with successful IBO in Mastung; describes important breakthrough

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has expressed satisfaction over the successful intelligence-based operation conducted against terrorists in Mastung. In an official statement issued here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said that an important breakthrough was achieved in the operation conducted against the elements involved in killing of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Baloch. He said that the state is always stood by the oppressed. He also said that the endeavours made for establishing peace by the security institutions are commendable. He said that our security jawans are ready for protection of every single inch land of the homeland. The Chief Minister also said that all resources are being mobilized for protection of the life and property of the people. It may be mentioned here that three terrorists were killed and even number injured in an intelligence based operation conducted in Mastung, stated in a press release of ISPR. According to the press release, terrorists killed in operation were involved in the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Baloch.

## Punjab's electricity relief not funded by Centre, clarifies PM Shehbaz Instead of politicking, provinces should copy Punjab's electricity bills' relief, says PM Shahbaz

Federal Cabinet greenlights skills development initiative for enhanced training

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that instead of politicking, the provincial governments should follow the Punjab government's course of providing relief to electricity consumers, scrapping a chunk from the trillions of rupees transferred to them under the National Finance Commission. The prime minister, chairing the meeting of the federal cabinet, said that the Punjab government had spared Rs 45 billion out of its own development budget to provide Rs14 per unit relief to the electricity consumers utilising 200 to 500 units for a two-month period. "This is the right of the people. The federal government has zero contribution to this relief package... Other provinces should also do the same. If the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government wants to give such relief to the people, we will be happy. But politicking should be avoided and facts should not be distorted," the prime minister commented. Rubbishing the criticism by a KP government representative alleging any discrimination by the federal government, he explained that the federal government had nothing to do with that package. He told the cabinet members that almost 60% of the NFC funds went to the provinces. The federal government had to face immense challenges in the form of the payment of loans and interests on foreign-funded projects that benefited the whole of the country. He told the meeting that the federal government had also allocated Rs50 billion to provide a three-month relief to domestic consumers using up to 200 units of electricity which constituted around 86% of the total domestic consumers. Besides, he said, in partnership with the Balochistan government, 28,000 tube wells would be

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Asim Kurd Gailo, Mir Shoaib Naushwerwani and Parliamentary Secretary Barkat Ali Rind meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

## Gold medalist Arshad Nadeem calls on CJJSC

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: Arshad Nadeem, record-holder Olympian, called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee



(CJCS), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza here on Tuesday at Joint Staff Headquarters.

The Chairman JCSC lauded Arshad Nadeem's efforts for securing Pakistan's first-ever Gold Medal in a singles' event and setting up of a new Olympic record, an Inter Services Public Relations news release said.

General Sahir Shamshad Mirza also appreciated the diligence and devotion of Arshad Nadeem in achieving a momentous milestone in Pakistan's sport history and wished him the very best for his future endeavours.

## Pakistan, Netherlands strengthen ties with focus on human trafficking, cricket cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi welcomed the Ambassador of the Netherlands, Henny de Vries, on Tuesday at the Ministry of Interior to discuss issues of mutual interest.



The meeting focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation across various sectors, with a special emphasis on combating human trafficking and strengthening cricket ties between the two nations.

Naqvi emphasized Pakistan's commitment to deepening relations with the Netherlands, particularly in areas such as human trafficking prevention, where he highlighted the importance of collective international action.

## Provincial Minister Home seeks report of terrorism & other crimes in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove has sought report of terrorism and other crimes in the province.

In this regard, an official letter has been written to the Additional Chief Secretary Home for seeking report from the Inspector General of Police Balochistan.

In the letter, it was directed to present report of the heinous crimes including killings and terrorism occurred during August 10-15, 2024. It was mentioned in the letter that the government of Balochistan is releasing billions of rupees on account of the safe city project. The Provincial Minister has also sought detail of the miscreants and criminals apprehended so far with help of the CCTV cameras installed under the safe city project.

## NAB files new toshakhana reference against PTI founder, Bushra Bibi

ISLAMABAD (APP):

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday filed another toshakhana reference to accountability court against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and Bushra Bibi. The NAB has conducted a series of investigation after arrested PTI founder and Bushra Bibi. The bureau has given questionnaire to the accused who submitted the answers.

After completion of the investigation, the trial court approved the judicial custody of the two accused.

The registrar office would scrutinize the new reference and it would be sent to the administrative judge to decide the court for hearing the reference.

## Three terrorists killed in exchange of fire with security forces

DERA ISMAEL KHAN (INP):

Three terrorists were killed in an exchange of fire between security forces and militants here at Saggi Bridge in the limits of Daraban Police station. According to police, the CTD along with other law enforcement agencies received information about the presence of some terrorists at Saggi Bridge in Daraban Tehsil, who were looting the citizens.

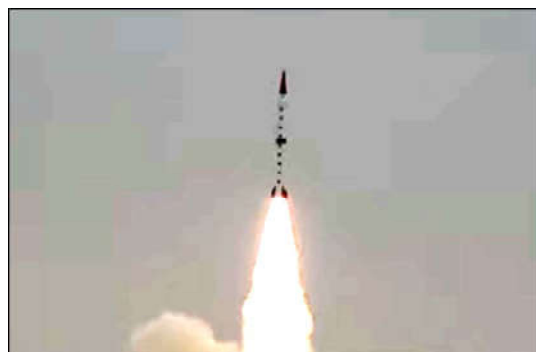
The teams of CTD and other law enforcement agencies immediately reached the spot where an exchange of fire was held between the security forces and the terrorists. Resultantly, three terrorists were killed. The identity of the terrorists could not be ascertained yet.

## Pakistan conducts training launch of ballistic missile Shaheen-II: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan on Tuesday conducted successful training launch of surface-to-surface ballistic missile Shaheen-II.

The training launch was aimed at training of troops, validating various technical parameters and performance evaluation of different sub-systems incorporated for improved accuracy and enhanced survivability, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

"Today's training launch was witnessed by senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, Army Strategic Forces Command, scientists and engineers of strategic organizations," it said.



Director General Strategic Plans Division appreciated the technical prowess, dedication and commitment of scientists who contributed towards this landmark achievement. President, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Services Chiefs congratulated the scientists and engineers on this achievement.

## JUI-F chief rules out any alliance to oust government

DERA ISMAEL KHAN (INP):

Regretting that the party's experience of entering into alliances with other parties in the recent past was not a good one, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief and veteran politician Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Tuesday that the party would launch an anti-government movement on its own. Talking to newsmen at his residence in Dera Ismael Khan, he said that neither the party wanted to embarrass others nor get embarrassed itself. "However, there could be alliances with other parties on any issue," Fazl explained. "Not only will we play the role of an opposition inside the parliament but also outside the parliament," he said, and added, "This is for the first time in the country's history that the establishment has taken its internal matters seriously."

However, he added, the JUI-F was not a party to any such move by the establishment. The veteran politician was of the view that the parliament had lost its importance following the 2018 general elections. "It is democracy that is at the receiving end in today's politics," he opined. Fazl said that ever since the 2018 elections, political engineering had been going on. "In the general elections of 2024, however, the results were completely changed," he said, adding, "Now tell me who would do politics in this situation."

He said that political instability impacted the country's economic development. "If the state is weakened, we have a situation like it was in Bangladesh where the government was sent home within 20 days since it did not enjoy the people's mandate," the JUI-F chief said.

## Polio cases continue to rise in Balochistan as 12th case of 2024 reported from Kharan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The cases of polio virus continued to rise in Balochistan as a fresh case of the crippling disease has been reported from Kharan district on Tuesday.

The Health department sources said that the polio virus has been detected in a two-year old girl child in Kharan.

It may be mentioned here that it is the first ever polio case reported from Kharan district of Balochistan. This is the 12th polio case of the current year 2024 reported from Balochistan, the sources informed.

The sources said that the sample of the suspected polio girl child had been taken on July 25, 2024.

## Tarar doubts PTI to get approval for Islamabad rally on August 22

ISLAMABAD (INP):

In response to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) announcement to hold a powershow in Islamabad, Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said that he did not believe the party would be given permission.

Speaking to a private TV channel, the federal minister said, "Considering their track record, I don't think they will be allowed to rally in the federal capital." Meanwhile, PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat has expressed determination of his party in this regard, saying they would hold rally on Thursday, rain or shine.

Adviser to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CM Muhammad Ali Saifon Sunday said PTI founding chairman Imran Khan had "decided" to hold a powershow in Islamabad on August 22, after a protracted struggle to hold a rally in the city.

## Taaleem Foundation delegation calls on him Education key to bright future and provides strong base to every kind of development, states Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that education is not only the key to our bright future but it also provides strong base to every kind of development.

The Governor said that time arises to bring revolution in getting access to the education in our perspective and move towards the scientific thinking and approach from existing education and make it compatible with the modern professional training and digital technology. The Governor was speaking to the delegation of Taaleem Foundation who called on him under leadership of its Chief Executive, Ms Shagufta Noreen here at the Governor House on Tuesday.

The Governor said that we appreciate the endeavours of whole team to decoratng new generation with the ornament of education in different districts of the province.

He said that it is his personal desire and endeavour that our all public sector universities do work for imparting education and modern skills to the women in the orphanages and darul amaans besides the universities. By doing so, we can break the chains of severe poverty, major crimes and inequality, and can make a more prosperous future for all, he added.

He urged the media persons to join hands for promotion of modern skills, education and consciousness among the otherwise neglected sectors and aspects of the society.

He said that we are determined to promote education and make the communities economically empowered.

## Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman addressing a press conference.

There should be supremacy of constitution in country:

## Ameer JI announces to launch "Give rights to people, give rights to Balochistan" Tehreek from Sept. 1

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman reiterates call for country-wide strike against increase in electricity tariffs

Independent Report

QUETTA: The central Ameer of Jama'at-e-Islami, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has announced to launch "Haq Do to Awam and Haq Do Balochistan" (Give rights to people and give rights to Balochistan) movement from September 1, 2024. He said that the Jama'at would start the public movement against the major public issues in the country.

The Ameer of Jama'at-e-Islami also reiterated call for country-wide strike against the increase in power tariffs on August 28. He said that we would run our movement at our own, and would not provide base to anyone. He demanded of the government to reign in the IPPs and give relief to the general public. He said that the government people have also been included in the agreements made with the IPPs.

He said that there should be supremacy of constitution in the country. The issue of missing persons is one of the biggest issue of Balochistan, as such it must be resolved.

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding Google Tech Valley

# Pakistan's Test cricket season kicks off today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan men's cricket team will take on Bangladesh in the first of the two-match Test series commencing at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from Wednesday.

The second Test match will be played at the same venue from August 30 to September 3.

Pakistan are currently ranked sixth in the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25. They have played two away series in the championship, winning 2-0 against Sri Lanka and losing 3-0 to Australia.

Pakistan are scheduled to play nine Test matches this season, their busiest Test season since 1998-99. Seven of these Test matches will be played at home, including two against Bangladesh, three against England in October and two against West Indies in January next year. The two



away Test matches are against South Africa, which will be played in December/January.

The first Test match against Bangladesh marks Pakistan red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie's first international assignment since his appointment in April this year. It will also be Shan Masood's first Test match as captain on home soil, embarking on a new era in red-ball cricket for the team.

Previewing the Test series, Pakistan captain Shan

form well. We had some good training sessions leading up to the series, and the coaching staff has worked hard with the players.

"It is an honour and a privilege to lead the side at home.

With captaincy comes great responsibility, and I will do my best to take this team forward."

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said, "We are grateful to the PCB for helping us get some practice here in Lahore. We had a couple of sessions there and I am hopeful the players will do well in the series.



QUETTA: A delegation of Dera Ismail Khan led by Nawabzada Muhammad Shafiqullah Khan meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

## Inquiry reveals embezzlement of 25.6 million rupees in Kolhu district

Independent Report

QUETTA: An inquiry was conducted by the Anti-Corruption Director General, Abdul Wahid Kakar, on the complaint of the Chairman of the Municipal Committee of Kolhu District, which revealed embezzlement of 25.6 million rupees from development funds.

During the inquiry, it was discovered that 9.6 million rupees were recovered, and forensic reports confirmed that fake signatures were used to withdraw government funds from the Municipal Committee of Kolhu District between 2020 and 2024.

A case has been registered against the accused, including former Chief Officer Muhammad Yusuf, Cashier Jalal Muri, Sweeper Bangar Khan, and Contractor Muhammad Akhtar. All accused, except Muhammad Akhtar, have been arrested. The accused have revealed the involvement of other suspects, whose arrests are expected.

The accused have caused a loss of 15.9 million rupees to the government treasury. Further investigations are underway.

## DG GDA visits ABAD Headquarters

Independent Report

KARACHI/GWADAR: Director General Gwadar Development Authority, Shafiq Anwar Shahwani, visited the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) headquarters in Karachi and held a meeting with ABAD Chairman Asif Sumsum and other members to discuss residential projects in Gwadar.

During the meeting, the Director General emphasized the need to accelerate development work on residential projects in Gwadar and assured that GDA would take all possible measures to facilitate investors.

He mentioned that the

Special Economic District and Central Business District are the backbone of Gwadar's economic development, and these projects are under consideration by provincial and federal governments for approval and implementation.

He also mentioned that the New Gwadar International Airport is in its final stages of completion, which will make Gwadar an easily accessible destination for economic and tourism purposes at regional and global levels.

During the meeting, the Director General assured ABAD members that their concerns would be addressed.

## Govt. committed to empower youth for bright future: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, on Tuesday said that the youth are valuable assets, and the government is committed to empowering them for the bright future of the country.

Addressing the National Youth Convocation, she said, "One of the biggest resources and assets of our nation is its youth, with 68% of Pakistan's population under the age of 35."

She added that by empowering the youth, the country can progress toward prosperity and development. "The youth are the present of Pakistan. You must take the lead and come forward, but with great responsibility, and the government stands firmly behind you," she added.

She assured the youth of the government's full support. She also mentioned ongoing discussions with China and the Commonwealth to provide AI training to the country's youth.

Shaza Fatima highlighted the government's efforts to partner with tech giants like Google and Meta to provide certifications for children and mentioned the launch of the Bridge Start Programme, with a budget of Rs. 1 billion to support innovative projects.

She also announced plans to build IT parks in Islamabad and Karachi. The

Islamabad IT Park, being developed with assistance from Korea, is expected to be completed by March 2025 and create 10,000 jobs.

The minister further said that the government has announced the establishment of over 250 E-Rozgar centers across the country, in collaboration with provincial governments and private institutions. These centers are aimed at providing essential facilities to hardworking and skilled youth in smaller cities, helping them access digital opportunities, according to an official from the Ministry of IT.

The E-Rozgar centers will be established in every district of the country, with distribution based on the

population of each province, as well as data from 1.2 million freelancers registered with Ignite. Punjab leads the initiative with 149 centers, followed by Sindh with 51, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 28, Islamabad with 11, Balochistan with 6, Azad Kashmir with 3, and Gilgit-Baltistan with 2.

Originally launched by Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Punjab, the E-Rozgar centers have proven highly valuable, benefiting millions of young people.

These centers are particularly designed for those who cannot afford expensive office spaces, offering them a chance to leverage IT skills and enter the digital workforce.



MUZAFFRABAD: Acting President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Latif Akbar addressing a press conference at President House in the city.

## NAB withdraws Narowal sports city complex corruption reference against Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (Online): NAB has withdrawn reference filed against federal minister Ahsan Iqbal and others in connection with alleged corruption in Narowal Sports Complex.

Judge Nasir Javed Rana of Accountability Court (AC) No 1 announced decision on the plea regarding withdrawal of NAB reference.

NAB had nominated 3 persons including federal minister Ahsan Iqbal. Islamabad High Court (IHC) has already acquitted Ahsan Iqbal from NAB

reference. Judge Nasir Javed AC accepted NAB plea. NAB arrested Ahsan Iqbal on December 23, 2019 in Narowal sports city scandal.

High court granted him bail on February, 25, 2020 after his over two months detention.

NAB filed Narowal Sports city reference in 2020 and high court bench presided over by the then Chief justice of high court Athar Minallah acquitted Ahsan Iqbal in 2022.

## Ameer JI announces to launch...

Continued from page 1

Balochistan over the issue of missing persons. He said that the issue of missing persons is the biggest issue of Balochistan. He said that there economic problems are too much and it has not been possible for the general public to pay their bills.

He said that we came to know now that payment was received for not generating electricity in the country. He remarked that those running country's economy are weaker while those looting the country are stronger.

He said that no satisfactory system has been run in the country for last 77 years. He said that people of Balochistan have the right to get gas first which is produced from the province.

He emphasized that the solar park should be set up in the province like Bahawalpur. Besides factory should also be set up for the raw material produced from Saindak, he maintained. He on an occasion questioned as it should be told that who is stopping the Pak-Iran gas pipeline project.

These and similar other views were expressed by the Ameer JI while speaking in the "meet the press" programme of Quetta press club on Tuesday.

Hafiz Naemur Rehman maintained that we are not opponent of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), but at the same time we demand of the rulers to promote border trade.

He said that the people are lodging protest in



Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, in Islamabad.

## Instead of politicking, provinces should copy ...

Continued from page 1

solarised in the province costing Rs 70 billion, out of which Rs55 billion would be borne by the federal government. This would benefit 28,000 farmers besides addressing the issue of power theft, he added.

The prime minister said that the federal government, in consultation with the provincial governments, was working on long-term measures to stabilise the economy and boost the country's trade and exports.

He said the federal government would take all such measures after taking the IMF on board, unlike the PTI's "irrational" step of violating the agreement which had taken the country to the brink of default.

Highlighting the outcome of the government's economic policies, Prime Minister Shehbaz told the meeting that inflation was reduced from 38% to 11.5% but more efforts were yet needed to improve the situation further. He also emphasised the efforts to meet the revenue target of Rs13.5 trillion and overcome the losses of the power sector. The prime minister drew the cabinet's attention to the deaths and destruction caused by the heavy rains and consequent flash floods in parts of the country and lauded the efforts of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with the provinces and PDMA.

The cabinet also offered Fateha for the people who lost their lives in the rain and flood-related incidents and also the soldiers

who sacrificed their lives in different incidents of terrorism.

Meanwhile the Federal Cabinet, on Tuesday, approved the establishment of the "Prime Minister's Skills Development Company" to generate and manage funds for technical and vocational training and to implement various training programs.

The Federal Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, approved the establishment of the company under the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission, as per Section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017. This decision followed a recommendation from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.

In accordance with the prime minister's directive, the company was established to delineate the operational and regulatory responsibilities of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission. After this, the Prime Minister's Skill Development Company will look after the operational issues of technical and vocational training while the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission will look after the regulatory issues.

The federal cabinet authorized the transfer of operations for the King Hamad University of Nursing and Associated Medical Sciences to the National University of Medical Sciences. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed between the Ministry of National Health Services and the Ministry of Defense to formalize this

agreement.

The Federal Cabinet ratified the decisions from the Cabinet Committee on Government-Owned Institutions meeting held on August 12, 2024. Additionally, the Cabinet has endorsed the decisions from the Economic Coordination Committee meeting on August 15, 2024.

The Cabinet was updated on the Supreme Court's recent ruling in the Mubarak Sani case. It was informed that, following the prime minister's directive, an additional petition related to the Mubarak Sani case was filed with the Supreme Court of Pakistan on August 17, 2024.

The Cabinet was also informed that the National Assembly held an in-depth discussion on this case, and it has been referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Justice for further consideration.

In the meeting of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice of the National Assembly, the government and the opposition parties unanimously decided that the National Assembly would inform the federal government about the factual and legal aspects of the case, along with the scholars' opinions. It was also agreed that an application should be submitted on behalf of the government.

In this context, there was a telephonic conversation between the prime minister and the Speaker of the National Assembly. Following this discussion, an additional petition was filed with the Supreme Court on behalf of the government, in accordance with the prime minister's instructions.



OTTAWA: Acting High Commissioner Shah Faisal Kakar cutting cake with Canada-Pakistan Association in connection with Independence Day celebration held at Ottawa.

## Ottawa's Parliament Hill hosts vibrant Pakistan Independence Day event

OTTAWA (APP): The Pakistan High Commission, Canada-Pakistan Association (CPA), and MP Yasir Naqvi hosted a Pakistan Independence Day celebration at Parliament Hill Ottawa uniting the Pakistani diaspora and Canadian nationals of Pakistani origin in shared pride and joy.

This event marked a significant moment as it brought together a large gathering of the Pakistani diaspora and Canadian nationals of Pakistani origin, united in their shared pride and joy for their homeland.

In his address, Acting High Commissioner Faisal Kakar extended heartfelt congratulations to the Pakistani community in Canada on the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan.

He reflected on the monumental Pakistan Movement, led by the visionary Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which culminated in the creation of a sovereign nation where we could live with dignity, freedom, and equality.

Kakar lauded the Pakistani diaspora in Canada for their unwavering dedication and contributions, which have played a pivotal role in strengthening the bonds between Pakistan and Canada. He emphasized that the Pakistani community has not only fostered greater understanding and cooperation between the two nations but has also been instrumental in showcasing Pakistan's positive image on the global stage.

## Rivers Indus, Kabul still flow in medium, low flood: FFC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that River Indus is flowing in "Medium Flood" in Taunsa-Sukkur reach. It is in "Low Flood" in Tarbela-Chashma reach.

Similarly, River Kabul (a tributary of River Indus) is flowing in "Low Flood" at Nowshera while rest of the major Rivers (Jhelum, Chenab Ravi & Sutlej) is flowing normal,

said a daily FFC report issued on Tuesday.

Tarbela Dam has maintained its Maximum Conservation Level (MCL) of 1550 feet since yesterday, while Mangla Reservoir still has 29.88% capacity available to absorb potential flood peaks. He combined live storage of Tarbela, Chashma & Mangla reservoirs is 11.061 MAF (82.83 % of Total Live Storage Capacity of 13.354 MAF).

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Deputy Director, Agriculture (On Farm Water Management) Mastung, invites sealed Tender/Bid for execution of various development schemes under the following project of **PSDP 2024-25 under CSR-2023** from interested contractors/firm with the Bid Security @ 2% of estimated cost/offered rate in shape of Call Deposit (Refundable). The non-refundable Tender Form Fee Rs.1500/-to be deposited in any National Bank of Pakistan Branch situated in Balochistan Province through Green Bank Challan in a head of account (C03136) (verified by the District Accounts Officer).  
TSE No. 242508518783 Bid Security 2%

S#	Name of Works	Total E/Cost
1	DRILLING & DEVELOPMENT OF BORE, INST. OF SOLAR SYSTEM UNDER THE PROJECT PSDP 2024-25 18 (2023.0101).	9.938 M

**Procurements shall be made under BPP Rules 2014. Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work Turnover of at least 6,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (Up to 25 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE09(ii) (Water Supply), CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works), EE11(i) (Solar). Income Tax Registration certificate is required The bidding firm must submit Income Tax Return of Taxation Year 2023 The Bidding Firm must submit Audit Report / Audit Balance Sheet of FY 2020-21, 2021-22 & 2022-23. The bidding firm must submit Company's latest Bank Account Statement or Bank Credit Line Certificate. The bidding firm must submit tender fee on green challan. **Method of Procurement:** Single Stage-Two Envelope Procedure. **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security (2%) in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee (Bank's certificate is mandatory) in the name of the undersigned from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be downloaded from BPPRA website. **Bid Validity Period:** 60 days **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication, during office hours of any working day. **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders should be submitted on **04 September, 2024 till 09:30 AM Sharp** at the office of the undersigned. **Tender opening:** The Technical Proposals will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at **10:30 AM. Stamp Duty:** The successful bidder must submit the Stamp Duty in shape of Judicial Stamp Paper or Special Adhesive Stamps as per policy. **Address:** Office the Deputy Director Agriculture On Farm Water Management, Mastung **Contact No.** 3333992029

Deputy Director  
Agriculture On Farm Water Management Mastung

PRO No.611/20-08-2024  
www.dpr.gob.pk @dpr\_gob dpr.gob @dpr.balochistan



QUETTA: Government Teachers Association activates hold protest outside QPC.

## Ishaq Day says United efforts, youth's hard work inevitable to make Pakistan an economic power

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said that the nation's united efforts and youth's excellence in education and innovation were inevitable to develop Pakistan as an economic power.

"I believe that Pakistan was created in the name of Allah. This can never fail. It has to prosper. It has to develop and lead Muslim Ummah one day. You have the potential... If we put in our efforts, we can become an economic power. Once we become an economic power, we will lead Muslim Ummah," he said addressing the Youth Convention held here.

Advising the youth to avail education opportunities in classrooms as well as outside, opt for new technologies, and explore new avenues, he also asked the youth to beware of the enemies within which were

poised to destroy the country.

"The world knows that being a missile power, you can lead the 57-state Muslim world. Pakistan as a nuclear power is not acceptable to some global powers. They can't defeat Pakistan through conventional methods but they can patronise and promote their stooges to destroy Pakistan," he commented.

He told the gathering of vice-chancellors, students and educationists that during the 2013-2018 PML-N government, Pakistan was projected to become a member of G-20 nations as the country was taking off that time with 2% food inflation, 3.7% consumer price index, 6% growth and the most stable currency in South Asia.

He said the PDM government was aimed at saving Pakistan as its enemies desired to see it default.

Ishaq Dar said

Pakistan's youth had the potential to become change makers but it required unity, a continuous learning process and setting aside hatred, extremism, and personal biases.

The deputy prime minister said during his visit to Balochistan on Independence Day, he was told that some disgruntled Baloch youth were involved in terrorism activities.

"I believe, no one can be disgruntled with his own motherland. We should resolve the issues amicably. There is no room for terrorism in the name of disgruntlement. This is not acceptable," he remarked.

The deputy prime minister said that the government was extending facilities to the youth and Special Investment Facilitation Council was also focusing on their empowerment as they could become a source of investment in education, skill development and technology.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar delivering remarks as Chief Guest at the Inaugural session of National Youth Convention.

## PM reiterates Pakistan's support for Palestinians' right to self-determination

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination and strongly condemned Israel's barbaric actions against innocent Palestinians in Gaza.

The prime minister, in a meeting with outgoing Ambassador of Palestine Ambassador Ahmed Jawad A.A. Rabei who called on him here, said Israel's barbarism since October 7, 2023, led to the heart-wrenching killing of over 40,000 innocent Palestin-

ians, including women and children, and more than 90,000 injured.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment and support for efforts to find a just and lasting resolution to the Palestine issue through a two-state solution with the creation of an independent state of Palestine with pre-1967 borders and Al Quds as its capital, in accordance with relevant UN resolutions.

Ambassador Jawad thanked the prime minister for his support for the Palestinian cause as well as for the hospitality extended to

him during his five-year tenure.

He lauded Pakistan's historic and consistent stance on Palestine and its contribution to the international efforts for peace and stability in the region.

The ambassador thanked the Government of Pakistan for providing much-needed humanitarian assistance and offering scholarships to Palestinian medical students to complete their studies in Pakistan.

The prime minister wished the Palestinian ambassador success in his future endeavors.



Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), met with the delegation of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation at BISP headquarters Islamabad

## Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi says International Symposium on Ombudsmanship, Citizen's Rights to be held in I'abad

New offices at AJ&K and Gilgit Baltistan to be opened; A record number of 127,000 complaints have been resolved

ISLAMABAD: Independent Report



ganizing soon an international symposium on the Citizen's Rights at regional and international Ombuds bodies. The UN Secretary General and the President of the General Assembly have also been invited to this symposium.

The theme of the symposium involves meaningful discussion on measures to enhance the capacity of the Ombuds institutions worldwide and shall highlight the role of Ombudsmanship in realising the goals and targets of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. This will also be an opportunity to showcase Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and touristic attractions to the international participants.

gional and international Ombuds bodies. The UN Secretary General and the President of the General Assembly have also been invited to this symposium.

The theme of the symposium involves meaningful discussion on measures to enhance the capacity of the Ombuds institutions worldwide and shall highlight the role of Ombudsmanship in realising the goals and targets of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. This will also be an opportunity to showcase Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and touristic attractions to the international participants.

## ICT admin moves to digitize public payments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration is set to introduce a new digital payment system, making it easier for residents to pay fees and fines through mobile apps.

The initiative, launched in collaboration with a private bank, marks a significant step towards streamlining transactions, said the spokesman of ICT administration. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, chaired a meeting to discuss the digitization of public payments in the capital. The meeting was attended by officials from the Food

Authority and the Excise Department, along with representatives from private sector bank. The new system will enable residents to pay all fees and fines related to the Excise Office through a mobile application. This includes fines and license fees imposed by the Food Authority, which will also be handled digitally. Additionally, permit fees and fines under the Transport Authority will now be easier to pay, as they too will move to the digital platform. Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz highlighted that Price Control Magistrates would also benefit from a digital solution for managing fines.

## Edu ministry announces "Anemia-free Schools" drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training under PM's Educational Reforms Programme, has announced the launch of "Anemia-Free Schools" campaign in Islamabad, starting with higher secondary schools.

According to the Official sources from the Education Ministry, this initiative in collaboration with Allah wala Trust aims to combat anemia among students, ensuring they receive the necessary nutrients for optimal health and academic performance.



ISLAMABAD: In a significant step towards advancing education and skill development in the fields of design, the Pakistan Institute of Fashion & Design (PIFD) and the National Book Foundation (NBF) have signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) to establish a new PIFD campus in Karachi in the presence of honourable Federal Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

## ISSI hosts launch of Naz Parveen's book "Xinjiang ke Khushal Uyghur"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a book launch for "Xinjiang ke Khushal Uyghur," authored by renowned columnist and author Naz Parveen.

The event was graced by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed as the chief guest. Distinguished speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, Prof. Zamir Ahmed Awan, founding chairperson of the Global Silk Route Research Alliance, Professor Dr. Azhar Ahmed, Independent Analyst, and Nabila Jaffer, Research Analyst and Lead of the China Program at the Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad, a news release said.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood expressed gratitude to the guests for attending the book launch. He highlighted three key aspects: Firstly, the unique

and cherished relationship between Pakistan and China — marked by strategic mutual trust and mutual support, nurtured by successive generations, and strengthened by transformational initiatives like CPEC.

Secondly, Naz Parveen, the author and director of China Window, has made notable contributions through her writings and facilitated deeper understanding of China's culture and traditions. Thirdly, this book contains her detailed account based on observations and experiences particularly in Kashgar and Urumqi, and debunks many of the motivated narratives emanating from the West regarding the treatment of Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang Region.

Prof. Zamir Ahmed Awan, emphasized the significance of cultural diplomacy in understanding China and lauded the author for her accessible and engaging writing style. He elaborated on the rich his-

## Religious Affairs ministry finalizes results of National Seerat, Naat Competition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Apex Committee of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has finalized the results of the National Seerat, Naat, and Articles Competition. The distinguished contributors in the field of Seerat writing will be honored with awards on the occasion of 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal next month.

The Apex Committee, comprising educationists and Islamic scholars, convened at the Ministry under the chairmanship of former Council of Islamic Ideology Chairman, Dr. Qibla Ayaz. The meeting was attended by other committee members, including Dr. Jamila Shoukat, Dr. Riaz Majeed, Dr. Yousuf Farooqi, Dr. Muhammad Baqir Khan Khakwani, Dr. Muhammad Sajjad, Dr. Ikram-ul-Haq Yasin, Dr. Mohiuddin Hashmi, Dr. Sahibzada Sajid-ur-Rehman, Dr. Munazza Batool, and Dr. Ayesha Qurat-ul-Ain.

During the meeting, the initial results of the competition were presented to the committee. A

total of 169 books were received in various categories, including those written in the national language Urdu, regional and foreign languages. In addition, 117 articles were submitted on the topic "The Education System of the State in the Light of Seerat-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him)."

After a thorough review of the scores and recommendations provided by the judges' committee, the Apex Committee finalized the results. The distinguished works would be recognized in a special ceremony next month.

Dr. Syed Ata-ur-Rehman, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, attended the meeting as a special guest and expressed gratitude to the Islamic scholars for their support. The committee members appreciated the ministry's efforts to promote the Seerat-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) and suggested that next year's essay topic should focus on climate change and environmental protection in light of the Seerat-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him).



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Palestine Ahmad Jawad A.A. Rabei called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## PML-N leads country towards economic prosperity: Aqeel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Barrister Aqeel Malik, the government's spokesperson on legal affairs, said on Tuesday that the as a well-established and experienced political party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has the capability to lead the country out of economic challenges. Talking to a private news channel, he said that when PML-N took charge, the country was facing the toughest economic challenges.

chalked out the best economic policies, he said, while adding that the continuation of these policies will lead the country towards stability.

The first and foremost priority of the government was to reduce the inflation and give relief to the commoner, he added.

The Chief Minister of Punjab announced an electricity relief package offering a subsidy of Rs 14 per unit for customers using up to 500 units in August and September.

## Speakers say iTFAs caused cardiovascular diseases, diabetes & stroke major killers of Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a media dialogue on Tuesday underscored that the industrially produced trans fatty acids (iTFAs) caused cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and stroke were the major killers of Pakistanis.

The leading civil society organizations of Pakistan have urged government to taking urgent policy measures to eliminate deadly industrially produced trans fatty acids (iTFAs) from all sources of food supply chain, during the media session hosted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) that provided journalists and media pro-

fessionals with comprehensive insights into the challenges associated with the presence of iTFAs in the diet, a news release said.

"Every single day delay in adopting WHO recommended best practice policy in eliminating iTFA from the diet means more people are dying due to this deadly substance lurking in our food supply," said Mukhtar Ahmed Ali, Executive Director, CPDI. "Pakistan is among the top consumer of iTFAs in the region due to absence of a comprehensive policy unlike other countries in the region" he added.

## IGP reviews overall crime Situation, crime prevention efforts in federal capital

ISLAMABAD: Independent Report



IGP also issued orders to senior police officers to pay special attention to serious crimes, street crime, and crime hotspots. He emphasized that protecting the lives, property, and honor of citizens in Islamabad is the highest priority for the Islamabad Police.

All police officers should ensure effective patrolling of the city and counter criminal elements, he added.

## HEC announces scholarships for GB students

ISLAMABAD (APP): (Batch-IV). The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited applications from the students of Gilgit-Baltistan who intend to pursue undergraduate studies (4/5 years BS Programmes) from HEC-recognized public sector Universities/Degree Awarding Institutions.

According to the official sources, these scholarships are being offered for the academic year 2024-25 in all areas of study/disciplines under the project titled, "Undergraduate Scholarship Programme for the students of Gilgit-Baltistan in top Pakistani Universities/ Institutions

As per eligibility criteria, the applicants must have domicile/local certificate of Gilgit-Baltistan. However, he/she must have completed Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC)/Equivalent. Furthermore, the applicants who are already availing any other scholarship are not eligible to apply. The maximum age limit is 22 years as on closing date of application submission, while the candidates will have to scholarship coverage i.e tuition fee, hostel fee and other charges—maximum Rs. 240,000 per year, stipend of Rs. 15,000 per month.

## Major crackdown on commission agents in ICT's govt offices

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a decisive move against commission agents exploiting citizens outside government offices, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration raided near the Regional Passport Office in G-10 area and arrested nine agents.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the district administration teams have intensified their efforts to tackle the growing issue of commission agents operating outside government offices.

On the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, nine agents

were arrested outside the Regional Passport Office in the G-10 area. The arrested individuals have been transferred to Ramna police station for further legal action.

DC Memon emphasized the importance of eliminating these agents, who have been taking money from citizens under the guise of commissions.

He stated that operations against such elements should be conducted outside all government offices, including NADRA, Passport, and Excise departments.

Following the crackdown at the passport office, similar actions are being taken at other locations.

## AIOU extends admission deadline for autumn 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), on Tuesday announced an extension for admissions into the Autumn 2024 semester programs.

According to the AIOU, the new deadline for applications for BS (Face-to-Face), PGD programs and certificate courses is now September 5, 2024, with no late fees applied. Admissions for Matric, FA, and I. Com programs will also continue until this date.

However, no extension is available for MS, MPhil, and PhD programs due to the already scheduled admission tests from August 22 to 24.

## IRSA releases 398,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 398,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 406,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1550.00 feet (maximum conservation level) and was 152.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 257,100 cusecs and 256,600 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1214.00 feet, which was 166.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.



ISLAMABAD: A view of heavy tree fell on a school children pick and drop vehicle at super market due to heavy storm in morning hours in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Wednesday August 21, 2024

## Digital doublespeak

The state minister for IT continues to waffle. On Sunday, Shaza Fatima Khawaja was back on TV screens, categorically denying her government's responsibility for the anaemic internet speeds being experienced by millions of users across the country.

The frequent, unannounced degradations in internet connectivity, widely suspected to be a consequence of the opaque firewall technology being secretly implemented by the state, was, in fact, due to more people using VPNs to access the internet, the minister claimed.

"I can say under oath that the government neither shut down nor slowed down the internet," Ms Khawaja insisted. Claiming that the issue has now been resolved, the minister then said a meeting had been set up with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority this week to "ensure that users in the country do not face similar problems again". But if the issue was simply more people using VPNs, why was there a need to get the PTA involved?

It is precisely because of this opacity around the new system that is being rolled out that the masses have remained deeply suspicious of the government's words and actions. Despite the significant disruptions that have already been caused, there is still very little that is known about what exactly the authorities are hoping to achieve, what the timeline for its rollout will be, and what ordinary users can expect once the new 'web management' system has been implemented in full.

Consider X, which has remained inaccessible in Pakistan for the better part of this year despite no good reason being provided by the authorities. In fact, the government itself does not seem to believe in the ban on X, as everyone from the prime minister to state ministries has apparently been using VPNs to continue to access and post on the platform. When the state itself has double standards about these restrictions, how does it expect the people to respect them?

This is the main reason why VPNs have suddenly become so mainstream. Once the purview of those attempting to bypass censorship or access morally repugnant services, they are now being adopted by ordinary users as well. Now, even those who simply want to share a multimedia message on WhatsApp or would like to find out what the world is talking about on popular social media platforms must use a VPN to tunnel through to the global internet.

Therefore, while the government may blame VPNs for slowing down the internet, it should acknowledge that its own policies have pushed people down this path. The people deserve more than clueless representatives gaslighting them for suffering poor internet connectivity. At the very least, there needs to be much greater transparency about what is being done to the internet, especially since it is being done without the public's input.

Arifa Noor

When the news first came of Aun Ali Khosa having been picked up, the name didn't strike a bell. Then his pictures began to be shared on social media, and it turned out the face was very familiar. Many of his videos had made their way to my phone screen through myriad ways. Chances are that far more people recognise him than they realise. His satirical videos, which highlight political and social issues, do the rounds quite widely.

He is funny, irreverent and, yes, he has a political bias. But his content is far from boring or forgettable.

Recently, someone even compared his work to PTV's iconic show 50-50 that we grew up with. But that show, brilliant and funny as it was, was produced by a team which was backed by an institution — from a time when Pakistan boasted more than one institution and PTV was called one too. Khosa appears to be a one-man content creator.

And perhaps that is why he had irked some-

one, somewhere.

As a journalist who has been slogging at it for decades, the talent and creativity of those who are using social media never ceases to amaze me. Aun Ali Khosa is one of them. There is also other work — for instance, a video by the digital media platform, Raftaar, where a young man, to illustrate the size of indirect taxation, spends Rs1,000 on charging his phone, filling up his bike, and so on, to show how much of what people spend ends up with the government. The two-minute video made its point far more effectively than entire newspapers and hours of talk shows.

Then there were the light interviews of politicians by The Current, another digital website, started by two young women journalists and podcasts on Pakistan Experience. A young man who doesn't seem to have any journalistic experience has perhaps done hundreds of excellent interviews that any working hack would be proud of having in their portfolio.

In contrast to these young creators, the main-

stream media in Pakistan has spread its tentacles to nearly every new platform on social media, without actually creating any new, path-breaking content. The same stories, the same conversations and the same formats — the only difference is that multiple platforms are being used to spread it. But the real change is the technology itself and the young, dynamic individuals who are using it in new ways.

The word in mode for it is 'disruption'.

It is not just being caused by these technologies but also the people using it. People such as Khosa, or Pakistan Experience's Shahzad Ghias. In politics too, the change is evident, be it the PTI's social media team or how the young Baloch use it to mobilise and reach out. Even human rights activism has changed; the way Imaan Haazir uses her X account to reach out or highlight issues runs parallel to her court appearances.

Disruption or rather the way in which it is caused is new but perhaps one can just call it change.

And change is never easy for those in charge.

The natural reaction is to try and stop it. This is perhaps the simplest explanation for many of the recent arrests and disappearances. What else can those scared of change do? It is like asking why the Pope imprisoned Galileo.

Because social media cannot be put in a cell, the other choice is to curtail it. It is noisy, uncontrollable and irreverent so it has to be controlled, even shut down. But the problem is that by the time the change is large enough to cause discomfort to those in charge, it is perhaps too late to stop it altogether.

In a way, it is similar to the government's recent reaction to solar power installation. Struggling with capacity payments, circular debt and skyrocketing electricity prices, it considered the option of discouraging solar installation. But it couldn't because the disruption had created an ecosystem of its own, forcing the government to back down.

A similar pushback is in process since the rumoured installation of a firewall has slowed down

the internet and disrupted platforms because too many livelihoods depend on it: the young freelancers, local industries such as delivery platforms that use young riders and even perhaps the young women who use Skype or other platforms to teach from the comfort of their homes and earn a living.

It is the pushback which has forced the government to defend this decision — that everyone knows is being made elsewhere — offering explanation after explanation. First had come the denial that the government had not issued a ban on X; then the famous statement from the information minister, Atta Tarar, who said the only wall he knew of was the Great Wall of China while his counterpart in Punjab, Azma Bokhari, mentioned a 'fibre' wall being installed.

But once the internet disruptions became too big to pass unnoticed, the denials were replaced by vague explanations. Last week, the IT minister for state, Shaza Fatima, mentioned the web management system was being

upgraded (which some media outlets took to be an acknowledgement of some problem or intervention which caused the internet slowdown) and on Sunday she held a press conference to blame the use of VPNs for the slowing down of the internet, without explaining why VPNs were being used.

But how long will vague statements suffice when an entire industry, from big firms to individuals doing deliveries to earn a small income, continue to suffer. Sooner rather than later, the government and the establishment will have to decide if it is going to tolerate criticism directed its way or let a large part of the economy crash and burn, as they find solutions to imagined problems. However, if the right decision is made, the only option to deal with the likes of Khosa (who is said to have returned while this piece was being written) will be disappearances, arrests, threats. Still, the change or disruption will not stop. These young people are here to stay — the present and future of this country. -- Courtesy Dawn

# Galileo and the Pope

## Little a judge can do about rape

Jawed Naqvi

A 31-year-old doctor was raped and murdered in a most gruesome way when she was on her night duty at a Kolkata hospital on Aug 9. She spoke to her parents shortly before midnight, and a key question being asked is why she was not missed or called for duty between 3am and 10am when her bloodied body was found on the floor of the hospital's seminar room. Doctors around the country have staged protests at the crime. The media have given saturated coverage to the incident.

The Calcutta High Court has ticked off the state police and handed the case over to the federal investigating agency, the CBI. The chief justice of India has taken suo motu notice of the crime and is expected to pass his observations or an order in the matter.

The catch here is that the CBI works directly under Home Minister Amit Shah. Having been used to harass political rivals and intellectual dissenters in recent years, it has

lost credibility as a neutral agency. The state governor, who represents the president of India, and thus follows the orders of the government of the day, has been accusing the opposition-run government of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal, of assorted acts of commission and omission in the crime. BJP governors have been accused by several opposition-run state governments of acting as adjuncts of the party.

A truer problem for Ms Banerjee, however, is that she holds the health portfolio and that of law and order of West Bengal. Therefore, when she took out her own rally fiercely slamming the crime that took place under her watch, it didn't wash. A most grievous crime has been effectively turned into a political slugfest. The BJP by force of habit is eyeing its chance to destabilise a chief minister who in no small way contributed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi needing crutches after his party's loss of majority in the recent parliamentary

polls. The communists who had a glorious run of governing the state for a record four decades seem clueless about how to get into the frame and have joined the campaign against Ms Banerjee perhaps unthinkingly that it benefits the BJP, not them.

One suspect has been arrested and reports speak of the likelihood of a gang rape having occurred. The father of the victim says he expects the culprits to be given the severest punishment. This is where the mother of the victim of the 2012 rape horror steps in.

Asha Devi's 22-year-old physiotherapist daughter, commonly identified in the media as Nirbhaya, or 'fearless', was gang-raped on Dec 16, 2012, in a bus as it drove through busy streets of Delhi. Its six drunken occupants, including the driver, took turns to assault her. Giving her up for dead they threw the naked body under a busy flyover. The girl was found still breathing by a police patrol and was sent to a Singapore hospital with indescrib-

able injuries. But she couldn't be saved. Four men were hanged and one committed suicide. The most vicious of the lot was a minor. He was freed in 2015 from a delinquent's home.

Nirbhaya's mother, Asha Devi was asked to comment on the Kolkata rape. She bluntly said nothing had really changed even after her daughter's killers were hanged. What then can a judge do about the scourge so deep-rooted and so widespread?

Rape in India is pervasive, and not unexpectedly, the victims are mostly from the lower strata of society. What rarely interests the mostly upper-crust media is the widespread prevalence of the sickness beyond their field of vision. According to the National Crime Records Bureau's data of 2022, there was a 45 per cent increase in reported rapes of Dalit women between 2015 and 2020. Reported rapes, mind you. The data said 10 rapes of Dalit women and girls were reported every day in India, on average.

When the Kolkata horror was unfolding assaults were taking place elsewhere, but would likely remain unreported.

According to the National Family Health Survey 2015-2016, sexual violence rates were highest among women from Scheduled Tribes (Adivasi or indigenous Indians) at 7.8pc, followed by Scheduled Castes (Dalits) at 7.3pc, and Other Backward Classes at 5.4pc. For comparison's sake, the rate was 4.5pc for women who were not marginalised by caste or tribe.

If the judges have to intervene, they need to look within the judiciary. The highest judiciary could stop the business of giving parole to convicted rapists, for example, those close to the rulers. But what could any well-meaning judge do when a former chief justice of India, heading a three-judge bench, asks a 23-year-old man accused of raping a girl whether he would marry her? "If you want to marry [her] we can help you. If not, you lose your job and go to jail," he said.

According to a letter from 5,000 outraged women activists to Justice Sharad Bobde, the man "is accused of stalking, tying up, gagging, repeatedly raping a minor school-going girl, and threatening to douse her in petrol and set her alight, to hurl acid at her, and to have her brother killed... The rape came to light when the minor school-going victim attempted suicide".

There is something else the judges can do. They can cancel the furloughs convicted rapists with political clout get. Two godmen were given paroles in the wake of the Kolkata horror. And the supreme court has done so in the past. Bilkis Bano's rapists were sent back to jail after a curious premature release. And what can the judges do about culturally supported crimes against women? A Dalit woman was retrieved from her rapists by her husband who then asked her to prove her purity by picking up a coin from boiling water. India needs a social upheaval, not grotesque laws to protect its women from an intractable evil.

## Street protests

Dr Niaz Murtaza

The amazing ease with which street protests in Bangladesh and earlier Sri Lanka toppled hated regimes has left many Pakistanis envious as to why we can't do the same. But we were perhaps the first regional state to do so twice — angry protests in 1969, oddly most intense in the very cities that gained most from his elitist progress, toppled Ayub Khan's regime and in 1977 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's. Protests weakened Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf to cause their fall later.

The Carnegie Global Protest Tracker lists over 700 street protests in 147 states since 2017. Street protests now rival armed struggles as the main way of opposing and toppling regimes. These global and our own events raise the issue of what street protests achieve. Nearly two-thirds of the 700-plus protests led to no policy or regime change; about half lasted a week or less and attracted less than 10,000 people. Those that led to some policy changes were usually spearheaded by organised entities with a clear agenda. Spontaneous protests led by unorganised groups fizzle out, without lasting change.

Less than 10 toppled regimes — and the media labels them as revolutions. But the iconic revolutions in Russia, France and China had three outcomes: people's power (armed or street) toppled long-ruling, autocratic regimes; more crucially there was a change in the political or economic ideological system from an elitist to a pro-masses one, for example, from capitalism to communism or monarchy to one-party rule/ democracy; the old order of the army under-

pinning autocracy too collapsed.

However, even those street protests that topple regimes usually don't lead to the other two outcomes. Iran's revolution didn't lead to a pro-masses system. Some states, such as those that witnessed the Arab Spring, fell into chaos (Libya and Yemen) while Egypt soon reverted to autocracy. Thus, street protests can at best topple autocrats but don't ensure good governance. That only emerges if those leading the protests can convert themselves into sustainable social or political movements with strong egalitarian agendas and management capacities. Revolutions or protests may act as the sledgehammer that breaks the mighty rock of autocracy. But to craft the good pieces into refined good governance structures, societies need the chisels of social movements.

This will also be the challenge for students in Bangladesh, which had sustained economic stability and growth but not equity under Hasina Wajed. Do they have a clear agenda to do better than her? It is instructive to note that they initially started with the single-point agenda of job quotas, which Hasina had scrapped but the courts reinstated. So, in starting to protest, they oddly had little focus on her autocratic actions, including rigging in polls and a crackdown on the media and opposition. Gradually, they expanded their agenda but their future vision is still unclear.

So, while Hasina met her rightful end, the country faces future risks. The Awami League was the centre-left grassroots party, which became autocratic over time while Khaleda Zia's party is a right-wing en-

ty sans a grassroots presence and was created by an army general. With the Awami League in disarray, more right-wing politics could surge, unless the students quickly provide a liberal alternative, which is a tough ask.

Why do street protests no longer emerge to topple our inept regimes even though they are worse than the Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan ones? There are many reasons. The earlier toppling of multiple autocrats via protests didn't deliver a rule. So, there is fatigue and dejection. Also, the state crushes pro-r-essive social movement ideas and encourages reactionary ideas and groups that divert focus from egalitarian ideas. Finally, there is the veiled and evo-lving nature of our autocracy which doesn't let anger build against one regime or face. Our civilians last four to five years; even the real establishment autocrats retire after three to six years at the top. This allows them to pin blame on past villains. So, the case against retired Lt-Gen Faiz Hameed is being depicted as a one-off, while the reality is that he had the backing of top individuals.

Such autocracy is the root cause of our key problems. But one-off street protests will not help demolish such shadowy, shifting autocracy. We need strong and sustained social movements that use protests as just one tool. The rise of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee under the brave lead of Mahrang Baloch is progress in this regard as it has emerged from and addresses the survival issues of most marginalised groups. Similar grassroots groups in other regions coordinating with each other are our best hope for egalitarian rule. -- Courtesy Dawn

## The Taliban concern

Touqir Hussain

Regardless of who has ruled Afghanistan, it has always been a problem neighbour. The Pakistani establishment may have thought the problem would be solved with the Afghan Taliban's return to power but it has worsened. Afghanistan has become both a critical foreign policy challenge and a serious domestic policy concern.

There are many issues between the Taliban's Afghanistan and Pakistan but the main point of contention is Kabul's harbouring of the TTP, whose acts of terrorism against Chinese nationals and projects are hurting Pakistan's most important relationship. Their alleged nexus with Baloch insurgents and extremist groups in former Fata threaten Pakistan's internal security and its already fragile development prospects.

Diplomacy, economic pressure, military action, and threats of isolation have not moved the Taliban to act against the TTP. Their advice to Pakistan to talk to the TTP is an attempt to deflect pressure from themselves. They know from their own experience that such groups do not believe in talks, unless held on their terms.

There are complex reasons for their lack of action. There are ideological links between the Taliban and TTP as well as historical reasons. Even during the Raj, Afghanistan offered protection to any Pakhtun fleeing Pakhtun-majority areas in the subcontinent.

The Taliban lack both the political will and capacity to act against the TTP. They are worried about domestic threats and fissures within their own ranks. The TTP reportedly enjoy strategic

affinity with the Islamic State-Khorasan and could merge with it if threatened by the Taliban, taking disaffected Taliban members with them.

The Taliban may even benefit from the TTP's presence in Afghanistan. They treat them and other militant groups operating from Afghan soil as allies to meet potential external aggression and obtain concessions — recognition, commercial ties, etc — from regional countries. The group is the Taliban's leverage against Pakistan and Washington.

Did our security establishment miss something? They failed to see how much Afghanistan, and indeed Pakistan, changed — following the overthrow of the monarchy in 1973 — because of the Soviet invasion, America's two Afghan wars and the war on terrorism, and Pakistan's strategic ambitions. And how Pakistan's jihadist currents mingled with the militant groups and transnational terrorist networks produced by these wars and the global Islamist revival. All this led to the creation of the Taliban who, in time, became the flagship of the extremist network in the region.

As an insurgent group, the Taliban's dependency on Pakistan gave Islamabad false hope that they would remain compliant even as a government. It may have worked the first time but Pakistan incurred reputational and diplomatic damage for questionable benefits. Much has changed since.

The Afghanistan of 2021 was not the same as when the Taliban first came to power. The Taliban have greater internal challenges now and more international acceptance, and thus different priorities. Nor is it the same Pakistan, which is

struggling on multiple fronts. This has necessitated a different approach by the Taliban towards Pakistan and the region. Thanks to their shrewd diplomacy, countries, including India and Iran who opposed the Taliban the first time, have been anxious to connect with them this time. The Taliban have been successfully cultivating a network of allies including China.

The Taliban won't act against the TTP. Pakistan itself will have to do it. Kinetic measures are necessary but not enough. They should be an adjunct to political action that must be taken to address the grievances of disaffected groups among the Pakhtun and Baloch communities. The TTP needs to be politically isolated from these communities, which can only be done by addressing their grievances via increased socioeconomic opportunities, reduced political marginalisation, and better governance.

Pakistan's body politic has been hollowed out by decades of authoritarian rule and deformed democracy, leading to a weakened institutional architecture. With institutions crumbling, the rule of law and social stability have been degraded and are preyed upon by extremist forces. But the state is lacking in political will, moral authority, and effective instruments of law and order, resulting in the strengthening of the extremist infrastructure.

A weakened Pakistan will enhance the Taliban's leverage by exposing the country to instability and extremist influences. Pakistan's struggle with the Taliban's Afghanistan must begin at home. Pakistan has been fighting terrorism but not the groups or extremist societal attitudes that inspire it. That must change. -- Courtesy Dawn

## CM Murad reacts to Punjab govt's 'bizarre' power relief package

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah reacted to the Punjab government's decision to reduce electricity tariff for two months, terming it a 'bizarre' announcement. Addressing a ceremony in Karachi, CM Murad Ali Shah said that such "strange" announcements put them in a quandary. "We (Sindh government) find it difficult how to respond to these foolish statements. But I don't want to go into politics," he added. The chief minister wondered how people find time to appear on TV. "My party chairman and Sindh information minister often get unhappy with me as I don't appear on television to project the works being done in the province," CM Murad Ali Shah added.

The chief minister asked if speaks on TV all the time, when would he get the time to work. Earlier, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab also responded to the Punjab government's decision and said that there is a need for long-term relief measures for the people. "When we (PPP's Sindh government) think of relief, we also think of many options. What will happen after two months of relief to the people of Punjab?" he asked.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab also criticised the Punjab government's approach, saying that rulers should make long-term decisions, not 'short-term'.

On Friday, former Prime Minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has announced a major relief for electricity

consumers in Punjab, with focus on providing relief to low-income households. Addressing a press conference, the PML-N supremo stated that consumers using up to 500 units of electricity will receive a relief of Rs 14 per unit.

Sharif praised Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz for her efforts in providing relief to the people and announced that she will be launching a solar panel scheme to provide further relief.

He added that the Punjab government has allocated Rs 700 billion for the solar panel scheme, which will help further reduce electricity bills in the future. The relief package includes a relief of Rs 14 per unit for consumers using up to 500 units, which will cost the Punjab government Rs 45 billion.



LARKANA: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah being briefed by Secretary Irrigation Department of Sindh during his visits to Moria Loop Bund in Larkana.

## Country's future linked with youth: Punjab CM

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has stated that future of the country is linked with the youth.

Addressing prize distribution ceremony in honor of the position-holding students from all over Punjab in Lahore, she said these position holders students are the pride of the nation.

Maryam Nawaz said a scholarship program worth twenty five billion rupees is starting. She said education system in Punjab will be transformed within next

five years. She said an electric bike scheme has been launched and 30,000 electric bikes are being distributed to students.

Meanwhile amid rain

and flooding, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has reached Rajanpur district to review the relief activities for flood victims.

CM Maryam conducted an aerial inspection of the flood-affected areas on a helicopter. She also visited Haji Pura Village in Tehsil Fazilpur and met with affected families and children. In an interaction with old women of the village, Maryam Nawaz inquired about the problem being faced by the people of the area and relief activities started by the district administration.

Chief Minister Punjab reviewed the food and water, medicine and other relevant arrangements for the flood

victims. Chief Minister Punjab was briefed by the officials of the Deputy Commissioner office, Irrigation Department and Disaster Committee. She was briefed about relief and rehabilitation measures in flood affected areas.

Punjab CM on the occasion directed the district administration that the flood victims should be facilitated in a best possible way and in this respect negligence will be tolerated.

Chief Minister said she was personally monitoring the relief and rehabilitation of the flood victims. She directed that arrangements should be ensured to protect against epidemics and rain related diseases.

## Sindh Governor Tessori writes to CM Murad for Punjab-like relief in electricity bills

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori has asked the provincial government to provide relief to the people in the electricity bills just like what the Punjab government has done.

In a letter to Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, the governor has asked him to cut down the provincial government's expenditures so that the people could be provided relief. "At least slash the power tariff by Rs14 per unit for the households consuming up to 500 units of electricity for August and September," he has said, adding, "This will certainly

be a good step, and would not only reduce burden on the people's purse, who are already grappling with inflation, but will also enhance the prestige of the Sindh government."

Otherwise, Tessori has said, a sense of deprivation will increase in the people of the province, and they will feel neglected.

In the end, the governor writes that he is optimistic that the provincial government will take this step to rescue the people during these tough times. "I am looking forward to a positive response from you," he has written to the CM.



BHITT SHAH: Governor Sindh, Kamran Tessori talking to media persons during his visit to the grave of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai during 281st Annual Urs of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai festival held in Bhitt Shah.

## Sharjeel Inam takes a swipe at Punjab govt's power subsidy plan

KARACHI (INP): PPP leader and Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon expressing disappointment over the statements of Punjab chief minister, said that PML-N led government in Center was increasing power prices while PML-N government in Punjab was giving subsidy in Punjab for two months.

Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Sharjeel Inam asked the Punjab government to tell the nation what next after two months. PPP leader said country was getting cheap electricity from Tharparkar coal, from where the power is going to national grid.

He said, "The federal government increased electricity rates all over Pakistan and you made electricity cheap only in Punjab".

He said that the younger brother (PM Shehbaz Sharif) increased the electricity bills across the country and the elder brother (Nawaz Sharif) announced relief for 2 months only in Punjab. He questioned what will happen in the third month?

Sharjeel Memon said visionary leadership gives long-term planning as a leader has vision, mind, intellect and understanding. He said Shaheed Benazir Bhutto had a vision and President Zardari was working on her vision.

He said Sindh government was working on such a project that the whole of Pakistan will get cheap electricity. He said the government can export Thar coal for more than two hundred years.

He said that the younger brother (PM Shehbaz Sharif) increased the electricity bills across the country and the elder brother (Nawaz Sharif) announced relief for 2 months only in Punjab. He questioned what will happen in the third month?

Sharjeel Memon said visionary leadership gives long-term planning as a leader has vision, mind, intellect and understanding. He said Shaheed Benazir Bhutto had a vision and President Zardari was working on her vision.

He said Sindh government was working on such a project that the whole of Pakistan will get cheap electricity. He said the government can export Thar coal for more than two hundred years.

## Punjab drafts cybercrime act with severe penalties

LAHORE (INP): Punjab has drafted a new 'Punjab Cybercrime Control Act 2024,' proposing severe penalties ranging from 3 months to 14 years for various cybercrimes. This landmark legislation aims to establish the province's first dedicated cybercrime agency, a significant step in tackling digital offenses.

The draft will be presented to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs of the Punjab Cabinet for initial approval. The proposed Act includes stringent measures against cyber

terrorism, child pornography, and sexual exploitation, classifying these offenses as non-bailable and offering protections for victims and witnesses.

The new legislation will introduce specialized courts for cybercrime cases, complementing the existing federal 'PECA' Act. Under the Act, the provincial government will gain authority to investigate and prosecute a wide range of cybercrimes, including illegal data access, child sexual abuse content, and financial fraud.



PESHAWAR: Members of Women Teachers Welfare Association Hayatabad are holding protest demonstration for their rights, outside KPK Assembly in Peshawar.

## 07 dead, 1397 injured in 1292 road traffic crashes in Punjab

LAHORE: The Emergency Services Department (ESD) responded to 1292 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In these RTCs, 07 people died, whereas 1397 were injured. Out of these, 585 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 812 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident

site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

The majority (76%) involved Motorbikes, therefore effective enforcement of traffic laws and lane discipline are essential to reduce the increasing number of road traffic crashes.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 764 drivers, 50 underage drivers, 154 pedestrians, and 486 passengers.



HYDERABAD: Governor KPK Faisal Karim Kundi lays floral wreath on the shrine of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai on the concluding day of 281th urs celebrations.

## KP gets first practicing specialists in diagnosis of Autism

PESHAWAR (APP): In a commendable development, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa got first practicing specialists in diagnosis of Autism, a complex neuro-developmental disorder among children, registering constant surge in the province during the last few years.

Ms. Rutaba Arif and M. Kashif Khan both serving as Speech Language Pathologist and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapist, respectively at Center for Excellence for Special Children with Autism in Peshawar have qualified as 'Practicing ADOS-2 Specialists'. "The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-Second Edition (ADOS-2) is a standardized assessment tool that helps in diagnoses of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in children and adults," appraises Rutaba Arif. Talking with APP,

Rutaba informed that ADOS-2 is designed to obtain information in the areas of communication, reciprocal social interactions, restricted and repetitive behaviors associated with a diagnosis of ASD. "It can only be used by ados-2 certified clinicians," she added. Due to lack of ADOS-2 Specialists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, parents had to take their children to Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore for diagnosis of autism that was very difficult exercise due to physical stress and financial burden as well.

After qualifying as ADOS-2 Specialists, both Rutaba and Kashif can provide diagnosis services to the autism patients in Peshawar. It merits an insertion that Autism is an overlooked neuro developmental disorder among children and is on rise in the country with very scanty cure options.

## ANF seizes over 10 kg drugs; arrests a drug dealer

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation in Sialkot managed to recover over 10 kg drugs, weapons and arrested a drug dealer, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in a joint operation conducted in Tehsil Daska, Sialkot by ANF and Punjab Police, 10.2 kg drugs, two motorcycles and weapons were recovered.

The accused who tried to escape during the operation opened fire on the ANF team with AK-47 and 30 bore pistol. However, the ANF team managed to arrest the drug dealer. This is a major achievement of the ANF team in the fight against drug trafficking, ANF spokesman said.

## To tackle Monkeypox Isolation Ward and PCR Lab established at PHQ Hospital

GILGIT (APP): On the orders of Secretary Health Gilgit-Baltistan, Dildar Malik, an isolation ward and PCR lab have been established at PHQ Hospital Gilgit to tackle the expected cases of monkeypox. According to a statement released by the spokesperson of the Health Department Gilgit-Baltistan, Secretary Health GB visited PHQ Hospital Gilgit on Tuesday. On this occasion, Secretary Health said that such "monkeypox isolation wards" are being established in all RHQ hospitals, Shaheed Syed Rahman Hospital and DHQ hospitals. The task will be completed by tomorrow evening. Secretary Health said that no stone will be left unturned to prevent the spread of monkeypox in Gilgit-Baltistan. Screening centers will also be established at airports and bus stands in Gilgit-Baltistan.

## Reckless female driver crushes man, daughter to death in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): In a horrific incident, two persons, a man and his daughter, were killed while four others were injured after a speeding land cruiser, driven by a young woman, overran a motorcycle and then went on to smash a parked car near Karsaz in Karachi late Monday night.

According to an eyewitness, the young woman, after hitting the motorcycle, got panicky and in an attempt to flee from the spot smashed a standing Honda City car; however, a youth sitting inside it miraculously remained unhurt.

He went on to say that later the land cruiser too overturned. Soon after the accident, a charged mob surrounded the young

woman, who was then taken into custody by the law-enforcement agencies and was shifted to Bahadurabad police station where SHO Muhammad Naeem said the woman's name was Natasha Danish.

The woman was later shifted to Jinnah Hospital for a medical examination. The deceased were identified as Imran Arif and Amina.

Later the woman was produced in a court which granted one-day physical remand to the police.

During the hearing, the woman's lawyer, without presenting a medical certificate, argued that she was mentally ill; so therefore the court was requested to grant her bail.

However, the judge refused to order her release on bail, saying he was not

## Two killed, five injured in road accident

KARACHI (INP): Two people, including a woman, were killed and five others injured in a road accident in Bahadurabad police jurisdiction.

A car driven by a woman rammed into two vehicles and a bike, killing two and injuring five others. The woman driver escaped after the accident, but later police arrested her and registered a case. She also sustained injuries in the crash. Witnesses to the accident were of the view that the accident occurred due to reckless driving. They said the car first hit a bike and then rammed into two vehicles.

On information, rescue teams and police reached the spot and started investigation. A medical examination of the woman was being carried out to ascertain if she was drunk.



MULTAN: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz interacts with flood affected people during her visit to the flood hit areas of Rajanpur, near Multan.

## PFA unearths counterfeit ghee unit, discards 4,800kg hazardous ghee.

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has unearthed a counterfeit ghee manufacturing unit on Jaranwala Road and discarded a huge quantity of unwholesome food including 4,800kg hazardous ghee, 375kg caustic soda, 150 litre loose cooking oil and 125kg bleaching powder. Meanwhile, the PFA enforcement team also seized 1,700 counterfeit cartons of famous edible oil brands, 775kg packing material, four storage tanks and a packing machine during a raid.

This was informed by PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid while talking to the media at PFA Headquarters. He said that acting on the tip-off, the PFA raided a unit and caught the adulteration mafia red-handed while an FIR has been registered against the culprits in the respective police station, leading to the arrest of people from the spot.

He said that ghee was extracted from the filth and fat of animals. He said that

## Earthquake jolts several parts of AJK

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Several areas in Azad Jammu and Kashmir experienced a series of earthquake tremors early on Tuesday morning, causing alarm among residents.

The tremors were felt in Muzaffarabad and extended to nearby regions, including Leepa Valley, Karnah, and Jhelum Valley. The first tremor struck at 6:16am and measured at 5.1 on the Richter Scale, followed by a second tremor just seven minutes later at 6:23am, measuring 5.3 on the Richter Scale, as per the National Seismic Monitoring Centre of the Met Department in Islamabad. Both shocks were powerful enough, striking at a depth of just 20 kilometres each, to be felt across a wide area, leading people to rush out of their homes and buildings in panic. The twin tremors also struck India-held Kashmir's Baramulla and Poonch areas. According to some reports, a woman died in the Odina village in Bandipora district when she was electrocuted by a live wire that fell during the quake.

## Earthquake jolts several parts of AJK

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Several areas in Azad Jammu and Kashmir experienced a series of earthquake tremors early on Tuesday morning, causing alarm among residents.

The tremors were felt in Muzaffarabad and extended to nearby regions, including Leepa Valley, Karnah, and Jhelum Valley. The first tremor struck at 6:16am and measured at 5.1 on the Richter Scale, followed by a second tremor just seven minutes later at 6:23am, measuring 5.3 on the Richter Scale, as per the National Seismic Monitoring Centre of the Met Department in Islamabad. Both shocks were powerful enough, striking at a depth of just 20 kilometres each, to be felt across a wide area, leading people to rush out of their homes and buildings in panic. The twin tremors also struck India-held Kashmir's Baramulla and Poonch areas. According to some reports, a woman died in the Odina village in Bandipora district when she was electrocuted by a live wire that fell during the quake.



MULTAN: DG NADRA Major Tanveer, DG MDA Rana Saleem, DC Multan Waseem Hamed Sindhu and ADC Finance Mubashir Rehman called on the Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani. Former member Provincial Assembly Dr. Javed Siddiqui is also present on this occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan meets with the Sectoral Council, urging comprehensive reforms to boost Pakistan's Gems and Jewelry industry.

## Commerce minister emphasizes reform, growth in Pakistan's gems, Jewelry Sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Tuesday emphasized on reform and growth in Pakistan's gems and jewelry Sector for sustainable growth in country's economy. Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan reaffirmed the government's commitment to revitalizing Pakistan's gems and jewelry industry during a key meeting with the Sectoral Council for

Gems and Jewelry, said a press release issued here. The meeting, which gathered virtually, senior officials from the public and private sectors, focused on enhancing the sector's export potential and aligning with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision to make this billion-dollar industry a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy. Minister Jam Kamal highlighted the Prime Minister's active

engagement with the sector, noting that PM Shehbaz Sharif has personally convened three to four meetings over the past few months to address the industry's challenges and opportunities. The Minister underscored the government's dedication to this sector, emphasizing that the policy-making process must be driven by input from private sector stakeholders to ensure its success. During the meeting, the Chairman of the Council, Salman Hanif, pinpointed regulatory barriers, particularly amendments to SRO 760, as critical hurdles impeding the industry's growth. Hanif argued for the regularization of the sector to unlock its full potential. He stressed that without addressing these regulatory challenges, the industry would struggle to reach its export targets.

## IFAD strengthens partnership with Pakistan for food security

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is reaffirming its commitment to collaborate with Pakistan in reducing rural poverty and improving food security. This comes as the country faces ongoing challenges from climate change, impacting its agricultural sector, said in IFAD press release issued here. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is determined to continue its partnership with Pakistan, focusing on reducing rural poverty and enhancing food security. Fernanda Thomaz Da Rocha, IFAD's new country director for

Pakistan, highlighted this commitment during her recent introduction to Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Ambassador Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi. Da Rocha emphasized that the collaboration between IFAD and Pakistan has been strong for over 40 years, with both parties working together on inclusive rural development. She expressed her intention to maintain this partnership, explore new approaches, and engage with various stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure that women and youth are integrated into the rural economy. Da Rocha's

appointment comes at a crucial time as Pakistan, like many countries, is dealing with the effects of climate change, which have disrupted food production and threatened rural livelihoods. The devastating floods of 2022 highlighted the vulnerability of Pakistan's small-scale farmers, who make up the majority of the agricultural sector. With over 18 years of experience in development finance and poverty alleviation, Da Rocha is well-equipped to address these challenges. Before her current role, she was a Senior Regional Technical Specialist for IFAD in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Ignite – NICAT Pakistan hosts Asia-Pacific's first Meta Llama Pitchathon

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT), in partnership with Meta, the Ministry of IT & Telecommunication, and Ignite National Technology Fund, hosted the first-ever Meta Llama Pitchathon in the Asia-Pacific region. This groundbreaking event highlighted the tremendous potential of artificial intelligence (AI) by applying Meta's cutting-edge Llama 2 and Llama 3 models, said a news release. On the occasion, Minister of State for IT & Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said,

"This Pitchathon is a testament to Pakistan's growing capabilities in AI and technological innovation. The government is dedicated to creating an environment that nurtures talent and encourages the development of cutting-edge solutions that address both local and global challenges. Events like these are crucial in our journey to position Pakistan as a leader in the global digital economy." The competition, which opened on July 19, 2024, attracted 112 submissions, out of which 7 teams were shortlisted by the e27 and Meta officials.



HYDERABAD: Members of Anjuman-e-Tajran Chicken Market are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Tower Market in Hyderabad.

## PR to outsource more trains through transparent bidding process

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has planned to outsource the commercial management of additional trains to private entities under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model through a transparent and competitive bidding process. The department initially invited tenders for this outsourcing initiative, but only three companies participated, offering bids below the benchmarked amount, they added. As a result, they said Pakistan Railways deemed it unfeasible to proceed with these firms under the rules and regulations set by the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA). Consequently, the department plans to re-advertise the tenders soon. They said a committee within Pakistan Railways observed that the bids submitted in the initial tender process were lacking in both technical and financial aspects, which would have resulted in a lack of competitiveness. The sources emphasized that all trains will be outsourced through a transparent tendering process, adhering strictly to PPRA rules, with advertisements placed in leading newspapers. Currently, Pakistan Railways operates 49 passenger trains.

"The basic purpose of outsourcing the trains is to provide better facilities to the passengers and generate more revenue for the department, official sources in the Ministry of Railways told APP. The department initially invited tenders for this outsourcing initiative, but only three companies participated, offering bids below the benchmarked amount, they added. As a result, they said Pakistan Railways deemed it unfeasible to proceed with these firms under the rules and regulations set by the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA). Consequently, the department plans to re-advertise the tenders soon. They said a committee within Pakistan Railways observed that the bids submitted in the initial tender process were lacking in both technical and financial aspects, which would have resulted in a lack of competitiveness. The sources emphasized that all trains will be outsourced through a transparent tendering process, adhering strictly to PPRA rules, with advertisements placed in leading newspapers. Currently, Pakistan Railways operates 49 passenger trains.

## Saudi airline offers up to 50pc discount for Pakistanis

RIYADH (INP): Saudi Arabia's national flag carrier, Saudia introduced an 'exceptional' promotional offer with discounts of up to 50 percent for Pakistanis and other nationals coming to Jeddah and Riyadh starting from September 1. Saudia in a statement said that up to 50 percent discounts could be avail on international flights via King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah and King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. "This initiative reflects Saudia's commitment to providing exclusive deals and competitive prices to its guests throughout the year. The offer also connects guests to the Kingdom through the "Your Ticket Your Visa" service, which allows visitors to stay in the Kingdom for up to 96 hours, explore its various regions, and even perform Umrah," the statement read.

Offer validity Saudia guests can take advantage of this promotional offer and book their tickets from August 18 to 31, 2024, for travel between September 1 and November 30, 2024. Discount available on these classes The offer applies to both Business and Guest Classes, allowing guests to craft bespoke journeys across four continents aboard Saudia's fleet.



KARACHI: Managing Director & CEO of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Farrukh H. Khan, addressing a press conference at his office, in the Provincial Capital.

## Pak rupee strengthens against US dollar

KARACHI (INP): Pakistani rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 10 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.34 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.44. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.70 and Rs 280.40 respectively. The price of Euro increased by 89 paisa to close at Rs 308.38 against the last day's closing of Rs 307.49, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.89, whereas an increase of 74 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 361.83 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 361.09. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paisa and 01 paisa to close at Rs 75.78 and Rs 74.18 respectively.

## FPCCI & ICCD to jointly organize international event in collaboration with UN

Independent Report KARACHI: Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has apprised that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) will be organizing the international conference on AgriTech: Feeding the Future – under the Best of Entrepreneurship Asia Series on August 28 at Expo Center, Karachi. Mr. Jam Kamal, federal minister for commerce, will be the chief guest of the event, he added. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is supporting the event through its Investment and Technology Promotion Office, Bahrain; whereas, ITCN Asia will facilitate the conference as well. The main sponsors are Al Baraka Bank and Unity Foods. Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, highlighted that the future aims to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and regional trade & investment in the priority sectors for Pakistan's economy – sustainable agriculture; tourism development and investments into digital economy. Acting FPCCI Chief informed that the first part of the international conference will focus on food security and agricultural development; and, its potential to transform the agriculture sector of Pakistan through emerging technologies.

Independent Report KARACHI: Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has apprised that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) will be organizing the international conference on AgriTech: Feeding the Future – under the Best of Entrepreneurship Asia Series on August 28 at Expo Center, Karachi. Mr. Jam Kamal, federal minister for commerce, will be the chief guest of the event, he added. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is supporting the event through its Investment and Technology Promotion Office, Bahrain; whereas, ITCN Asia will facilitate the conference as well. The main sponsors are Al Baraka Bank and Unity Foods. Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, highlighted that the future aims to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and regional trade & investment in the priority sectors for Pakistan's economy – sustainable agriculture; tourism development and investments into digital economy. Acting FPCCI Chief informed that the first part of the international conference will focus on food security and agricultural development; and, its potential to transform the agriculture sector of Pakistan through emerging technologies.



RAWALPINDI: Workers busy in making wooden items on their workplace at Banni chowk area in the city.

## ICCI President presents Rs 1 m cheque to Arshad Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday presented a cheque of Rs 1 million to Arshad Nadeem, Pakistan's javelin superstar. Addressing the ceremony held at ICCI on Tuesday, Arshad Nadeem attributed his success to hard work and dedication, stating that there was a long journey behind his achievement. He vowed to maintain his performance in upcoming events. Earlier, Arshad Nadeem received a warm welcome upon his arrival at the chamber house. Addressing the ceremony, ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari highlighted the significance of sports in promoting national unity and praised Arshad Nadeem as a national hero who ended Pakistan's 32-year wait for an Olympic medal, lifting the nation's spirits during a challenging time. Bakhtawari emphasized the need to promote sports to attract youth towards healthy activities, foster harmony and promote peace and tranquility. He stressed that winning gold medals is essential in today's world, as it earns nations recognition and respect. He encouraged the creation of more athletes like Arshad Nadeem to bring pride to Pakistan. On behalf of the ICCI he called for increased support for Pakistan's sporting talent, better facilities and nurturing to enable young athletes to excel on the global stage.

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday presented a cheque of Rs 1 million to Arshad Nadeem, Pakistan's javelin superstar. Addressing the ceremony held at ICCI on Tuesday, Arshad Nadeem attributed his success to hard work and dedication, stating that there was a long journey behind his achievement. He vowed to maintain his performance in upcoming events. Earlier, Arshad Nadeem received a warm welcome upon his arrival at the chamber house. Addressing the ceremony, ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari highlighted the significance of sports in promoting national unity and praised Arshad Nadeem as a national hero who ended Pakistan's 32-year wait for an Olympic medal, lifting the nation's spirits during a challenging time. Bakhtawari emphasized the need to promote sports to attract youth towards healthy activities, foster harmony and promote peace and tranquility. He stressed that winning gold medals is essential in today's world, as it earns nations recognition and respect. He encouraged the creation of more athletes like Arshad Nadeem to bring pride to Pakistan. On behalf of the ICCI he called for increased support for Pakistan's sporting talent, better facilities and nurturing to enable young athletes to excel on the global stage.

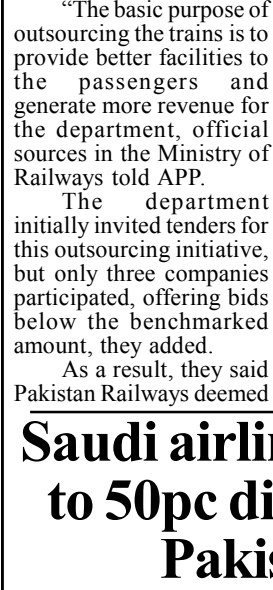
## SCCI chief inaugurates Facilitation Desk for provision of grant to SMEs

PESHAWAR (APP): Fuad Ishaq, president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday inaugurated a Facilitation Desk for provision of a grant to small and medium scale businesses and industries announced by International Organization of Migration. The initiative aims to facilitate business community regarding availing of a cash grant of International Organization of Migration (IOM) for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), said in a statement here. It is mentioned here that the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a UN body, has

announced a cash grant for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through their Enterprise Development Fund (EDF). This grant is for business expansion, boosting productivity and especially creating jobs. President of the WCCI Peshawar Azra Jamsheed, members, women entrepreneurs, members of the business community and others were present on the occasion. Fuad Ishaq, President SCCI in his remarks on the occasion appreciated the IOM and asked small scale businesses and industries to take full benefit from this grant.

## CCP Engages All Stakeholders & Regulators in PTCL-Telenor Merger

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) is currently conducting an in-depth Phase II Merger analysis in response to the proposed merger between Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) and Telenor Pakistan Limited (Telenor). CCP is providing key stakeholders an opportunity to present their concerns of potential impact of the merger on Pakistan's telecom market. CCP is evaluating the potential benefits of the merger, including cost efficiencies and economies of scale that could enhance financial stability.



QUETTA: Members of Muttahida Labour Federation are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Quetta press club

## LCCI, UPTIB sign MoU to boost economic cooperation

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the UK-Pakistan Trade & Investment Board (UPTIB) have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen economic ties between the business communities of Pakistan and the United Kingdom. The agreement marks a significant step towards enhancing trade, investment, and economic collaboration between the two countries. The MoU was signed by LCCI President Kashif Anwar and CEO-Pakistan of UPTIB Tajammel Hussain at the LCCI premises in Lahore. In his address, Kashif Anwar expressed his optimism about the partnership, stating, "This MoU is a significant milestone in our efforts to enhance bilateral trade relations with the United Kingdom. By facilitating

mutual economic cooperation, we are opening doors for business communities to explore new opportunities and strengthen existing ties. The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry is committed to support our members in every possible way to achieve sustainable economic growth." The partnership aims to foster mutual economic cooperation, promote business opportunities and facilitate trade in goods and services among the members of both organizations. Under the terms of the agreement, both parties have committed to exchanging business publications, research reports, market surveys and other relevant materials regularly. Additionally, the MoU outlines plans for organizing B2B meetings, exhibitions, fairs, seminars and conferences to introduce business circles.

## Mobilink Bank revolutionizes financial independence for women

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, has launched an easy-to-use in-app inheritance calculator made accessible through its Dost app. The cutting-edge financial tool is designed to empower individuals, especially women, by providing clear insights into their inheritance share. The calculator's launch is a testament to the Bank's commitment to promoting financial inclusion.



Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House Islamabad.

## Egypt's Sisi, Blinken discuss ways to move forward in Gaza ceasefire negotiations

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met in Cairo on Tuesday to discuss ways to move forward in negotiations on a ceasefire in Gaza, the Egyptian presidency said.

Sisi warned of the risk of the Gaza war expanding regionally in a way "difficult to imagine".

"The ceasefire in Gaza must be the beginning of broader international recognition of the Palestinian state and the implementation of the two-state solution, as this is the basic guarantor of stability in the region," he added.

Blinken was in Cairo pushing for areas of possible progress on a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal in talks planned for later this week, with major areas of dispute left unresolved.

With the unabated strikes by Israeli military killing at least 40 more Palestinians across the Gaza Strip taking the death toll to at least 40,139 and a Palestinian group announcing the resumption of bombings inside Israel after many years, there are few signs of conciliation on the ground.

"In a very constructive meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu today, he confirmed to me that Israel accepts the bridging proposal — that he supports it," Blinken told reporters in Tel Aviv.

"It's now incumbent on Hamas to do the same, and then the parties, with the help of the mediators — the United States, Egypt and Qatar — have to come together and complete the process of reaching clear understandings about how they'll implement the commitments that they've

made under this agreement." Despite US expressions of optimism and Netanyahu's office describing the meeting as positive, both Israel and Hamas have signalled that any deal will be difficult.

Hamas accused Netanyahu of "thwarting the mediators' efforts" and Turkiye said Hamas envoys had told it that US officials were "painting an overly optimistic picture" despite their clear stance of abiding by the earlier understanding and rejection of the new conditions being set by the US.

Ahead of talks in Qatar last week, Hamas had called on mediators, rather than holding more negotiations, to implement a framework outlined in late May by US President Joe Biden. After the Doha meeting, the US submitted what mediators called a "bridging proposal".



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelaty, in El-Alamein, Egypt.

## India, Japan agree to bolster defence and security ties

**Monitoring Desk**

NEW DELHI: India and Japan agreed on Tuesday to bolster defence and security ties and backed a "common strategic vision" of a free and open Indo-Pacific — a region where both countries have troubled relations with China.

Foreign and defence ministers of both countries held talks under the so-called 'India-Japan 2+2' dialogue in New Delhi, the third such bilateral engage-

ment in five years.

The ministers discussed progress on the transfer of battleship communication antennas and related technology from Japan to India, according to a joint statement.

The move would mark Japan's first export of defence equipment and technology transfer to New Delhi under a 2015 pact, as Tokyo seeks to strengthen its defence industry.

## Saudi King Salman chairs cabinet meeting, state news agency says

**Monitoring Desk**

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz chaired a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, state media said, for the first time since a royal decree issued by him on Aug. 8 allowing the cabinet to convene in the absence of the king, crown prince or both.

Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman chaired the Aug. 13 cabinet session. The 88-year-old king of the world's biggest oil exporter, a major US ally in the Middle East, received medical care for lung inflammation in May.

## Russia's FSB detains scientist on suspicion of treason

**Monitoring Desk**

MOSCOW: Russia's FSB security service has detained a scientist in Moscow on suspicion of state treason, the Interfax news agency reported on Tuesday.

The scientist allegedly carried out distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks on critical infrastructure on behalf of Ukrainian security services, it quoted the FSB as saying.

## Biden says 'I gave my best' as he passes torch to Harris

**Monitoring Desk**

WASHINGTON: An emotional US President Joe Biden passed the torch to Democratic nominee Kamala Harris with a hug on Monday, saying he gave everything for his country in a bittersweet farewell speech at the party's convention in Chicago.

"America, America, I gave my best to you," the 81-year-old Biden said, quoting a patriotic hymn during a nearly hour-long address that ran through his achievements while urging voters to back his vice president against Donald Trump in November.

Harris joined him on stage after the speech and the pair embraced, as the crowd gave Biden a rapturous reception following his stunning decision less than a month ago to drop out of the

2024 White House race. In a remarkable turnaround, Harris has reemerged the party and wiped out Republican rival Trump's lead in the polls, but Biden insisted that he was not bitter about stepping aside. Instead, as he contemplates the imminent end of a five-decade political career, he said that he had done what he thought best to ensure that his nemesis Trump does not return to the Oval Office.

"I love the job, but I love my country more. I love my country more," said Biden. "And all this talk about how I'm angry at all those people who said I should step down — that's not true." Both Biden and Harris appeared to wipe away a tear as the US leader won a huge four-minute ovation when he first took to the stage.

## India's top court orders medical safety task force after doctor rape protests

**Monitoring Desk**

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered a national task force to examine how to bolster security for healthcare workers after the "horrific" rape and murder of a doctor sparked medical strikes and furious protests.

The discovery of the 31-year-old doctor's bloodied body at a state-run hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata on August 9 has stoked nationwide anger at the chronic issue of violence against women.

Doctors' associations from government-run hospitals in many cities across India have launched multiple strikes that cut non-essential services, with protests in their second week.

Demonstrators marched through Kolkata on Tuesday, holding up signs demanding "justice", while the country's top court issued orders in the capital New Delhi.

"The brutality of the sexual assault and the nature of the crime have shocked the conscience of the nation," the three-judge bench said in its order, calling the details "horrific".

Chief Justice D. Y. Chandrachud read out the order, which called for the formation of a "national task force" of top doctors to prepare a plan to prevent violence in healthcare facilities and draw up an "enforceable national protocol" for safe working conditions.

"The lack of institu-

## Philippines to host a US visa processing center for up to 300 Afghans resettling in America

**Monitoring Desk**

MANILA: The Philippines has agreed to a request by the United States to temporarily host a U.S. immigrant visa processing center for a limited number of Afghan nationals aspiring to resettle in America, the treaty allies announced Tuesday.

The Philippine government's approval of the request, which initially faced local concerns over potential security and legal issues, reflects how relations between Manila and Washington have deepened under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in 2022. The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said the agreement was undergoing final domestic procedures and needs to be finally ratified by Marcos before it takes effect. It did not provide other details, including how many Afghans would be allowed to temporarily stay in the Philippines at any time while their special immigrant visas for resettlement to the U.S. are being completed.

A senior Philippine official, however, told the Associated Press that only 150 to 300 applicants would be accommodated in the Philippines under the "one-time" deal. The official who had knowledge of the negotiations agreed to speak on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to speak publicly.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Assistant Secretary Teresita Daza said Afghan nationals should secure a visa to enter the Philippines and would be subjected to "full security vetting." Each visa applicant can stay not more than 59 days.

The U.S. government will undergo final domestic procedures and needs to be finally ratified by Marcos before it takes effect. It did not provide other details, including how many Afghans would be allowed to temporarily stay in the Philippines at any time while their special immigrant visas for resettlement to the U.S. are being completed.

## DNC's pro-Palestinian protests draw thousands in Chicago

**Monitoring Desk**

CHICAGO: Thousands of mostly peaceful pro-Palestinian protesters marched in Chicago on the opening day of the Democratic National Convention on Monday, in a show of anger against the Biden administration's support for Israel in the Gaza war.

After hours of peaceful demonstrations, dozens of protesters broke through part of the perimeter security fence, drawing riot police to the site, a Reuters witness said.

The DNC's security team confirmed that protesters breached a portion of the fencing on the outer perimeter near the convention arena but said law enforcement personnel acted quickly and there was no threat to attendees.

Reuters witnesses saw four people detained and placed in handcuffs. Chicago police confirmed at a press conference that arrests were made but did not say how many.

Chanting intensified ahead of the fence breach, as protesters reached a neighborhood park on Chicago's West Side and paused to amplify their calls for a ceasefire. Amid

the noise, the crowd turned its frustration toward Vice President Kamala Harris, referring to the Democratic candidate as "Killer Kamala".

Chicago police formed a perimeter around the park on foot to contain protesters, with some police members on bikes. Still, the umbrella group "March on the DNC" drew fewer supporters than expected to a park outside the convention arena, hours before President Joe Biden was to address the gathering.

They started a one-mile march near where Democratic delegates will nominate Harris as their candidate to face Republican Donald Trump in November's presidential election.

Organisers had expected tens of thousands of protesters — enough to fill the park and the march route — Hatem Abudayyeh, a spokesman for March on the DNC, said early Monday. By afternoon though, several thousand protesters had gathered for speeches and the park was only half full.



US President Joe Biden raises US Vice President and 2024 Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris' hand after delivering the keynote address on the first day of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Chicago.

## Pro-Palestinian delegates to Democratic convention to push for Israel arms embargo

**Monitoring Desk**

CHICAGO: Dozens of Muslim delegates and their allies, angry at US support for Israel's offensive in Gaza, are seeking changes in the Democratic platform and plan to press for an arms embargo this week, putting the party on guard for disruptions to high-profile speeches at its national convention in Chicago. Calling itself "Delegates Against Genocide," the pro-Palestinian group says it will exercise its freedom of speech rights during main events at the four-day Democratic National Convention convening on Monday to formally nominate Vice President Kamala Harris for president in the Nov. 5 election against Republican former president Donald Trump.

Group organisers declined to give details, but said they were encouraging supporters to wear Palestinian keffiyehs, or scarves, and to carry Palestinian flags, and would seek changes in the party platform, while urging delegates to speak on the convention floor. On Sunday night, a crowd of roughly 1,000 pro-Palestinian protesters marched through downtown Chicago, chanting "Shut down the DNC."

President Joe Biden is due to speak on Monday and Harris on Thursday. Pro-Palestinian delegates say they deserve a bigger role in the writing of the party platform. The group wants to include language backing enforcement of laws that ban giving military aid to individuals or security forces that commit gross violations of human rights.

## Iran closes centres linked to Germany, which summons ambassador

**Monitoring Desk**

DUBAI: Iran's judiciary has closed two branches of organisations linked to Germany due to "illegal activities and financial fraud", the judiciary's Mizan news agency said, in a move protested by Berlin with the summoning of the Iranian ambassador.

Mizan published pictures on Tuesday of security forces removing the banner of the German Language Institute of Tehran, which is linked to the German embassy.

"Additionally, there have been reports of violations by other Germany-affiliated centres and investigations in this matter are ongoing," Mizan added.

## Senior Hamas official criticises Blinken's Gaza proposal claim

**Monitoring Desk**

CAIRO: Hamas senior official Osama Hamdan criticised US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's statement on Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accepted an updated proposal, saying it "raises many ambiguities" because it is "not what was presented to us nor what we agreed on."

Hamdan told Reuters that Hamas has already confirmed to mediators that "we don't need new Gaza ceasefire negotiations, we need to agree on an implementation mechanism." Earlier in Tel Aviv, Blinken said Netanyahu had accepted a "bridging proposal" presented by Washington to tackle disagreements blocking a ceasefire deal in Gaza.

## Fears for children's health as polio re-emerges in Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**

DEIR EL BALAH: In Gaza, a mother worries that her month-old son, Mohammed, could be infected with polio after the Palestinian health ministry confirmed the first case in the enclave on Friday, ending a 25-year period in which the strip was polio-free. Just three days after his birth, Ghada al Ghandour's son

creams to treat her child. She later brought him to Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el Balah in central Gaza to seek a diagnosis and treatment. The rash fueled his mother's fears that other symptoms and diseases could follow due to a lack of hygiene and medical supplies in Gaza after more than 10 months of conflict.

In a statement, the Palestinian health ministry confirmed the first case of polio in the city of Deir el Balah had been detected in a 10-month-old baby who had not been vaccinated.



Calcutta High Court advocates hold posters during a protest to condemn the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata.

## US and South Korea hold joint air drills to counter North Korea threat

**Monitoring Desk**

SEOUL: More than 200 South Korean and US fighter jets are due to fly around the clock for five days this week in what would mark the largest number of sorties flown in training by the allies, South Korea's air force said on Tuesday.

The drills are part of the annual Uchi Freedom Shield exercises that are designed to boost the joint readiness of the South Korean and US militaries

against threats from North Korea, it said. Aircraft on defensive patrol flights are being diverted to air combat scenarios under simulated drills involving mock enemy aircraft interdiction and cruise missile defence, it said. Aircraft from two US fighter wings based in South Korea are taking part, the air force said. The United States stations 28,500 troops in the South for combined defence against nuclear-armed North Korea.

## New Zealand population growth stalls as Kiwis flee the nest

**Monitoring Desk**

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's population growth has come to a near halt, official statistics showed Monday, as tens of thousands of people exit a spluttering economy for pastures new.

Statistics New Zealand reported that population growth was a modest 0.1 percent in the second quarter, with the population of 5.3 million growing by a meagre 7,000.

Although New Zealand ranks highly in lists of the most desirable places in the world to live and work, in recent years the record numbers of arrivals have been matched by departures.

The kiwi, New Zealand's national bird is famously flightless, but New Zealand's people are anything but.

In the year to June, more than 130,000 people left the country, including about 45,000 to neighbouring Australia alone.

Commentators have blamed slow economic growth, high living costs and a housing crisis that has made it difficult for young New Zealanders to get on the property ladder.

The pandemic may have created a backlog of people wanting to leave for what Kiwis call their "OE" — overseas experience.



Rescue personnel operate on boats on the sea near the scene where a luxury yacht sank, off the coast of Porticello, near the Sicilian city of Palermo, Italy.

## Ahsan urges swift completion of CPEC Phase-II corridor concept papers

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal Tuesday chaired a review meeting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, stressing the urgency of preparing concept papers for five new corridors proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in August 2023.

"The concept papers for all CPEC Phase-II projects should be completed as soon as possible, aligning with these five new corridors," he said while chairing a review meeting on CPEC projects in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Ahsan Manzoor Sumra, secretaries of relevant ministries, heads of institutions, and senior officials.

Ahsan Iqbal reiterated that all Working Groups (WGs) have been directed to expedite the preparation of these concept papers.

Ahsan Iqbal informed the meeting that Pakistan and China have agreed to initiate work on these five

corridors, which were aligned with Pakistan's SEEs framework (Export, Energy, Equity, E-Pakistan and Environment) for its economic development. Elaborating the five new initiatives, he said that under the Livelihood Corridor provision of the best amenities to the people and creating employment opportunities were included.

Under the Innovation Corridor, the minister said new projects would be initiated through modern technology and imparting information technology skills to the youth. "While the CPEC would be used to promote connectivity and establish more friendly relations with Central Asian states under the Open Regional Cooperation."

The Regional Connectivity Corridor will utilize CPEC to foster relations and promote connectivity with Central Asian states under the Open Regional Cooperation framework.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed confidence that comprehensive documents on these five corridors would be finalized by the end of August and presented during the visit of China's Prime Minister to Pakistan.

He instructed relevant stakeholders and ministry officials to collaboratively develop joint plans for these corridors and prepare five-year strategic plans under the CPEC portfolio for submission to the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC).

The Planning minister also directed the ministries concerned to prepare five-year plans under the CPEC portfolio for submission to the Joint Cooperation Committee, stressing to hold regular meetings of joint working groups in September so that the next five-year CPEC strategy could be evolved.

"Our aim should be industrial and commercial development and increase in foreign investment," he said adding long-term projects to be included in the working group with sector-wise breakup.

Ahsan Iqbal gave a 15-day timeline to all the ministries concerned to submit their CPEC-related projects.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan while speaking at the meeting of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Communications.

## Pakistan Education Endowment Fund to support higher education of underprivileged students: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the government had established the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund to support children from low-income families to obtain higher education.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Israr Khan Kakar, the newly elected President of Oxford Union of UK's Oxford University, said that a 20% quota had been allocated for the youth of Balochistan under the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund.

Shehbaz warmly welcomed Israr Kakar at the PM House, appreciated him for bringing fame to Pakistan, and viewed that talented youth like him could guarantee a bright future for Pakistan.

He lauded Kakar for contesting and winning the Oxford Union election as a manifestation of his steadfastness and firm resolve. He expressed the hope that Pakistani youth like Israr Kakar would continue to bring laurels to Pakistan.

"Winning scholarship throughout the academic career and then his election as president of a great body like Oxford Union by a youngster coming from a backward area of Balochistan is a matter of pride," the prime minister remarked.

Inviting him to address the Oxford Union, Israr Kakar appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz for his government's measures for youth empowerment and providing them equal opportunities.

"All of the youth like me, are resolved to offer all-out services for Pakistan's progress and prosperity," Kakar remarked.

## PM to give 'good news' on IPPs within month or two: Awaiz

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister Awaiz Leghari has said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will give good news to people over IPPs within a month or two.

Addressing youth convention in Islamabad energy minister said that the steps being taken to address energy crisis in the country. "Reforms are inevitable in energy sector," he said.

He said the energy bill has been 1100 billion with 400 billion losses in it.

"We silently worked over the issue of the IPPs but all and sundry joined the bandwagon," energy minister said. "It became good for us as it brings pressure over the IPPs," he said.

"We convinced the IPPs within the limits of international contracts," minister said. "We did the work in three-and-half months, which didn't happen in Pakistan's history," Leghari said.

"Within a month or two Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will give a good news to the public and industries," energy minister said. "Everyone will be benefited from it".

He said the task force has been constituted, in which the agencies' people have also been included.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani student at Oxford University, Israr Khan Kakar, who was recently elected as President of Oxford Union calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Interior minister lauds security forces for killing BLA terrorists in Mastung

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday commended the security forces for killing 3 terrorists of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in an intelligence-based operation in Mastung.

The minister in a news release, praised the professional capabilities of the security forces for conducting a successful operation against the terrorists responsible for the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Ali.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the security forces have brought the perpetrators of Zakir Ali's martyrdom to a dreadful end through a successful operation.

He added that Pakistan's security forces are capable and professional, and the nation is proud of them. He further said that the security forces are performing their duties with dedication to establish peace in Balochistan, and they will foil every conspiracy to create instability in the province.

## Relief efforts intensify in Lasbela district after floods

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following the directives of Federal Minister Jam Kamal and MPA Zarin Magsi, the district administration of Lasbela has intensified relief efforts in the flood-affected areas of Tehsil Bela. The administration is working tirelessly to provide relief to the affected families and restore normalcy in the area.

The district administration, along with provincial departments, is working to restore connectivity on affected roads. Efforts to repair the link road in Tehsil Lakhar are ongoing under the supervision of the district administration.

The administration is working tirelessly to provide relief to the affected families and restore normalcy in the area.

De-watering efforts have begun in schools and surrounding areas of Gadur Goth and other villages.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari chairs a video link meeting of the irrigation departments of Sindh and Balochistan, held at Bilawal House in Karachi.

## Commendation certificate & cash prize given: Killa Abdullah's excavator driver who rescued family from flood officially honored by DC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The excavator driver, Mohibullah, who saved a family stuck in the flashflood in Toba Achakzai area of Killa Abdullah, was officially honored by the Deputy Commissioner, on Tuesday morning.

The Deputy Commissioner Killa Abdullah, Dr. Farooq Abdullah invited the excavator driver, Mohibullah and his relatives in his office, Killa Abdullah to express gratitude on behalf of the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

It may be mentioned here that Mohibullah had rescued a family of five persons who was stuck in the flood water the other day.

The Deputy Commissioner highly appreciated Mohibullah on behalf of the Chief Minister and presented him the commendation certificate and cash reward.

Speaking to the gallant excavator driver, the Deputy Commissioner said that the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has appreciated his spirit.

He said that the Chief Minister would also meet him and give him the appreciation certificate as well. Talking to the Deputy Commissioner, Mohibullah said that he considered it his duty to rescue the family, stuck in the flood water.

He said that he helped the family for the sake of Allah Almighty. Mohibullah also said that it is included in teachings of our religion and traditions.

However, he is thankful to Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti who encouraged him saying that the endorsement of Chief Minister is a matter of pride for him.

He also thanked the people of country who extended love and appreciation to him.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Chief Executive Officer Taleem Foundation Asim Mushtaq meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

## Senate Body criticizes NHA for poor road conditions, mismanagement in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Communications held with Senator Pervaiz Rashid in chair on Tuesday criticized the National Highway Authority (NHA) over poor road conditions and mismanagement in Balochistan. The Senate Body on Communications in its session focused on a notice by Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, addressing alarming statistics from the Balochistan Medical Emergency Response Center (BMERC). BMERC reports indicate over 46,000 accidents on Balochistan highways in the past five years, attributed to inadequate road conditions and heavy traffic. Senator Mumtaz highlighted the poor state of key roads including Uthal (N-25), Kalat (N-25), Gwadar (N-10), and Killa Saifullah (N-50), covering a total of 620 kilometers. She emphasized that despite government al-

## Over 85,000 patients treated in last 9 months under Health Card Program in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): One-day training workshop was held under the aegis of Balochistan Health Card Programme here at the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) on Tuesday.

The workshop was organized in collaboration with the GIZ German Cooperation and Khyber Medical University.

The Chief Executive Officer of Health Card Programme, Asadullah Kakar, Director Technical, Dr Shako Mengal, Director Administration, Dr Ahmed Wali, Dr Maria Tareen, Dr Bakht Kakar and district support managers, Deputy district officers, PPHI officers and officers of Benazir Income Support Programme participated in the workshop.

Addressing the workshop, CEO Health Card Programme informed that the provincial government had introduced the programme nine months ago.

During this period, more than 85,000 patients have so far been provided free of cost treatment. He said that it is completely digitalized system in which there is no need of safarish.

## Bilawal felicitates scientists, engineers on successful test of Shaheen-II

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday felicitated the scientists and engineers on the successful test of the Shaheen-II ballistic missile.

According to a press release issued here by the party secretariat, Bilawal Bhutto said "Our missile technology reflects the expertise and dedication of our scientists and engineers."

Chief PPP said that the successful test of Shaheen-II is a message of fear for Pakistan's enemies. "It is a matter of pride that this missile technology is a gift to the homeland from my mother," Bilawal Bhutto added.



QUETTA: Fouzia Shaheen and others meeting with Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola

## Gas tariff to remain unchanged until December-January: Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Masadik Masood Malik Tuesday said that the current gas tariff would remain unchanged until the winter months of December and January.

Addressing a press conference, he said that the gas tariff has not been increased, and the government is striving to avoid placing any additional burden on the people.

"If the need arises to provide relief, we will make decisions in consultation with all provinces and move forward together. However, our aim is to avoid increasing gas prices," he said.

The minister said that 98% of domestic electricity consumers, who use up to 500 units, have been provided relief by the Punjab government.

He added that 86% of those consuming up to 200 units have also received relief from the federal government. He urged other provincial governments to offer similar relief if they wish.

He urged political leaders to refrain from spreading chaos and to participate in parliamentary committees to contribute to the nation's development.

Dr. Malik highlighted that certain elements are attempting to create obstacles in the country's progress, prosperity, and development. "These are the people who do not want to see the country progress," he added.

Dr. Malik also recalled that after the elections, the opposition was offered the chance to form the government, but they refused.

He mentioned that the Pakistan Peoples Party had also extended an offer to the current opposition to form the government.

## New Gwadar Intl Airport to be completed by end of this year, states DG GDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Director General of Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Shafiqat Anwar Shahwani has stated that the new Gwadar International Airport would be completed by end of this year.

He said that Gwadar is going to become biggest economic zone because of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, establishment of central business desk and special economic district.

He said that the industrial activities have already been started in the free zone.

Besides, the government is taking practical steps for launch of the trade activities at Gwadar port.

The Director General of GDA was speaking in the programme of state-run TV "baat karobar ki" on Tuesday.

He mentioned that in first phase of the CPEC, social and economic projects were included. Of them, most of the projects have almost been completed, which are included: new Gwadar International airport, GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital, Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute, East by Expressway, Gwadar University, water desalination plant and free zone's first phase projects. In second phase, attention would be given towards establishment of industrial zones, he announced.

## BFA cracks down on fake beverage factory in Quetta

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Balochistan Food Authority and Quetta Police conducted a joint operation against a fake beverage factory on Sabzal Road, Quetta. The factory was producing counterfeit "Sting" beverages and other multinational brands. The authorities seized 2400 fake cold drinks, filling machinery, and labeling materials from the factory. The factory was producing beverages for local and multinational companies, including Fanta, Coca-Cola, Sting, and Redish Anar. The joint operation resulted in the immediate sealing of the factory, and further legal action was taken against the owners.

## Governor assigns look-after charge of VC of SBKWU to Prof. Dr. Naheed Haq

QUETTA: The Pro-Vice Chancellor or Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University (SBKWU), Professor Dr. Naheed Haq has been assigned the look-after charge of vacant position of Vice Chancellor of the University with immediate effect.

This was announced in an official notification issued here by the Governor's secretariat the other day.

According to the notification, the Governor, who also happens to be the

## Chairman PAC, DG NADRA visit Registration Office Pishin

QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly and Chairman Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Asghar Tareen visited the NADRA Registration Office in Pishin on Tuesday.

Also accompanied with him was Director General NADRA Balochistan, Kashif Iqbal.

During the visit, the Chairman PAC along with DG NADRA reviewed the women center for Women in the NADRA Registration center.

## Naseem emphasizes importance of education for Pakistan's progress

QUETTA: Provincial Advisor for Environment and Climate Change, Naseem ur Rahman Khan Mulla Khail, stressed that Pakistan's independence was a result of educated, aware, and enlightened thinking. He emphasized that the power of knowledge can elevate Pakistan among the top nations globally.

Speaking as a special guest at the 33rd anniversary of Islamic Girls College Quetta and Pakistan's 77th independence day celebrations, he said that education should be the top priority, as it not only safe-

## ECP fixes Aug 26 for postal ballots in bye-election in NA 171

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission (ECP) has fixed August 26 last date for receipt of applications for postal ballot papers for Bye-Election in NA-171 R.Y. Khan-III.

This facility, under the law, has been extended to the persons in Government service, members of Armed Forces, their wives and such of their children as are registered voters and ordinarily reside with them provided they are stationed at a place other than the place in which their constituency is situated.



QUETTA: National Party Head & MP Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch addressing on condolence reference of founder of National Party Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo.