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NA passes resolution to confer civil award on Arshad Nadeem

Detailed News On Page-06

JI's sit-in achieved its targets, says Hafiz Naeem

Detailed News On Page-08



Turkiye calls for trial of Israeli leaders

Detailed News On Page-07



President, PM extend greetings to Arshad

Arshad Nadeem won the gold medal in the men's javelin

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday congratulated javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem as he secured a gold medal for Pakistan at the 2024 Paris Olympics, ending the country's 32-year wait for an Olympic medal. Arshad Nadeem won the gold medal in the men's javelin beating defending champion Neeraj Chopra of India to clinch Pakistan's first Olympic Athletic medal in Paris Olympics 2024, besides breaking the previous Olympic record with a 92.97-metre massive throw. "You are a pride of the whole nation," both the president and prime minister said in their separately issued statements. "Arshad Nadeem's victory is the victory of whole nation. Setting a fabulous Olympic world record is a great achievement. You have made us proud by winning the gold medal in a great contest of Olympics and bringing fame to Pakistan," President Zardari stated.

Pak-Saudi coop is inevitable

KSA to raise issues of Muslim world at global forum

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (F) President Maulana Fazlur Rehman stressed Pakistan and Saudi Arabia joint cooperation to raise issues of Muslim community in the global world. Talking at the National Assembly, he apologised for hurling of members to the Saudi Arabia delegation including Imam Masjid Nabawi sitting in the gallery. JUI-F president emphasised for Harmain Sharif sacredness, bilateral ties, muslims unity instead of internal matters. He stated that Saudi Arabia was supposed to lead muslim world, and highlight issues of Muslim World including Gaza, Kashmir, Burma and Palestine to resolve them. Fazl reiterated that Saudi Arabia was supposed to raise issues on the Arab League Forum and devise peaceful solutions for Muslim world.

US envoy extension of Afghan refugees

675,190 Afghans have returned to their country as of August 4

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: United States Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome has appreciated Pakistan's decision to extend the stay of registered Afghan refugees by a year, a statement from the US embassy in Pakistan said on Friday. A large number of Afghan immigrants, with an estimated 1.7m undocumented as of October 2023, reside in Pakistan. Last October, the caretaker government had announced the repatriation of all illegal foreigners citing security concerns.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor



ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation of leading Turkish businessmen led by Turkiye's Minister for Customs & Trade Omer Bolat calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Verdict 'resurrected dead party'

Bilawal Bhutto warns of constitutional crisis after SC ruling

"They have handed out the verdict and seats [to PTI] like candy," he said, adding that the court issued a political decision that the party did not even seek

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Friday that a defunct political party was resurrected through a court decision that stripped the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of its electoral symbol (bat), suggesting that the judiciary was responsible for the current crises. "No one sitting in this House is responsible for the current crisis in the country. Only the court was and is the reason for the crisis," said the PPP chairman. Addressing the National Assembly in today's session, Bilawal insisted

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PTI suspends hunger strike outside parliament

The move has happened on direction of PTI founder, says Omer Ayub

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on Friday announced to suspend its hunger strike camp outside the parliament. PTI's Secretary General Omer Ayub said that

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Ties with Bangladesh positive FO rubbishes Israeli media's baseless reports

The Israeli media had alleged that Pakistan planned to supply nukes to Iran

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch has rejected all statements emanating from India accusing Pakistan of any kind of involvement in recent developments that took place in Bangladesh. Answering a question at her weekly media briefing in Islamabad today, the Spokesperson said these statements depict India's disturbing obsession with Pakistan. She said Indian political ledgers and their media have a habit of blaming Pakistan for their failures in domestic and foreign policy. The Spokesperson said Pakistan and Bangladesh have positive relations which are continued to grow over the last several years. She said the government and

people of Pakistan have expressed their support and solidarity with the people of Bangladesh and we sincerely hope for a peaceful and swift return to normalcy. Muntaz Zahra Baloch said we are confident that the resilient spirit and unity of the Bangladeshi people will lead them towards a harmonious future. Replying to another question, the Spokesperson said Pakistan's High Commissioner attended the inauguration ceremony of new Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Answering another question, she said Pakistan rejects statements of former Indian law enforcement officials blaming Pakistan for increase in attacks in Indian Illegally Jammu and Kashmir. The Spokesperson said the Indian

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Meets COAS Asim Munir Pakistan has significant place in Ummah: Imam Masjid-e-Nabawi

Imam Al-Budair prays for peace, stability and unity of Muslim Ummah



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir Friday met with Masjid-e-Nabawi's Imam Dr Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair. According to statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations

(ISPR), Al-Budair said Pakistan has a significant place in the Muslim world and it is playing its vital role for peace and stability in the region. During the meeting, COAS Munir and Imam Al-Budair expressed satisfaction over Pak-Saudi relations as

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Seeks to boost Pak-Turk trade PM Shehbaz vows to extend utmost support to exporters

PM Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan will send 1,000 agricultural graduate to China to get higher education and training in agriculture and food sector

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the government was determined to extend utmost support to exporters and producers to facilitate them in serving the country with full capacity. The Premier was addressing as chief guest at the inauguration ceremony of the Food and Agriculture Expo-2024 (FoodAg24) here at the Expo Centre. On the occasion, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with others performed the digital inauguration of the event. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the last years export of rice and other Agri items was commendable and the ministers, administrative secretaries and all those who contributed in it deserve appreciation. But this is not enough, because Pakistan got huge potential and this is high time to serve together with our full capacity, he added. The Prime Minister called for the need to value addition to our produce and said for that we have to take appropriate steps like adaptation of latest technologies and more research and development. He also called for the need of comprehensive planning and effective implementation of the policies to achieve targets. He said that ever since coming into power, the present government, many steps have been taken for growth of agriculture sector and referred the project to solarise 28,000 tube wells in Balochistan to provide the farmers with cheap electricity. Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan will send 1,000 agricultural graduate to China to get higher education and training in agriculture and food sector. Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed

Continued on Page 06

Economic diplomacy vital for Pakistan's growth: Ishaq Dar

'We will have to focus more on economic diplomacy'

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday stressed the need to reorient the country's diplomatic initiatives from conventional diplomacy to economic diplomacy to ensure that Pakistan's development agenda was also advanced. "The conventional diplomatic times are over. Along with the conventional diplomacy, we will have to focus more on economic diplomacy," the Deputy PM said while addressing the passing ceremony of 43rd passing out specialized diplomatic course here at the Foreign Services Academy. He said the basic purpose of foreign diplomacy was not only to safeguarding national interests but also to help in stimulating economic growth by transforming the potential of the country's geo-strategic position into geo-economic one.

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IGP met police official and their families

LAHORE : Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar met the police employees and their families at the Central Police Office. IG Punjab heard the requests and problems presented by the police employees and issued orders for immediate relief. IG Punjab directed Additional IG Training to provide relief on contract renewal request of former PTC Lahore's psychologist Aqsa Safdar. IG Punjab issued instructions to the AIG Admin to provide relief to the recruitment requests of the sons of Head Constables Jamshed Ali and Muhammad Tufail on family claims basis. Dr. Usman Anwar directed the DIG Welfare to provide relief on the application of educational scholarship of the children of Head Constable Zafar Iqbal Shaheed. IG Punjab issued instructions to AIG Admin on son of Constable Muhammad Hafeez Shaheed's son transfer request to central police office from Special protection unit. On the request of the family of Constable Malik Noor Muhammad Shaheed, IG Punjab instructed DPO Khanewal to resolve the issues under personal supervision. On the recruitment request of son of Inspector Fida Hussain Shaheed on family claims basis, IG Punjab issued orders to the AIG admin for relief. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar directed that effective coordination and follow-up to provide relief through immediate action on all requests. IG Punjab also issued orders for relief on requests regarding discipline, welfare, other professional matters. Dr. Usman Anwar said that the supervisory officers should provide relief to the employees' families by solving the problems under personal supervision. —APP

SSC-I annual result announced

SARGODHA : The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Sargodha announced annual result 2024 of School Secondary Certificate part-1 (9th grade) on Friday. The ceremony was attended by Director of Colleges Sarfaraz Gujjar, Secretary of the Board Abu Al-Hasan Naqvi, Controller of Examinations Riaz Qadeer Bhatti, and other board officials. According to a press release issued by BISE office, a result announcing ceremony was held at board office in which chief guest Commissioner/Chairman BISE Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti officially unveiled the results online. A total of 107,523 candidates appeared in the examination, out of which 47,288 students secured more than 33% marks. The overall pass percentage stood at 43.98%. According to the results, 91,139 regular candidates appeared, with 41,176 passing. The pass percentage for regular students was 45.18%. On the other hand, 16,348 private candidates took the exam and 6,112 passed, resulting in a pass percentage of 37.30%. Among the candidates, 57,249 were boys and 20,024 were passed the exam and their total passing ratio was 34.98%. Meanwhile, 50,274 girls appeared, and 27,264 passed and total success ratio was 54.23%. —APP

ICCI, Al-Mustafa Trust Partner for community Projects

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), emphasized that serving humanity and alleviating the suffering of those in need should be the primary goal of every individual and that he in his personal capacity as well as the President ICCI is doing his level best to amicably fulfil this obligation. During a meeting with Abdur Razzaq Sajid, Chairman Al-Mustafa Welfare Trust, a non-profit international organization with operations in multiple countries that focuses on providing humanitarian aid, healthcare, education, and social welfare services to underprivileged here at the Chamber House, Bakhtawari praised the Trust's humanitarian efforts, particularly in supporting Palestinian brothers affected by Israeli brutalities. He assured Sajid of the business community's and ICCI's full support for the Trust's noble cause. The meeting explored various opportunities for cooperation between ICCI and Al-Mustafa Welfare Trust. Bakhtawari shared his charity initiatives, including installing water filtration plants in markets across the capital city to benefit traders and residents. He also highlighted his efforts in providing computers and lab equipment to educational institutions to promote education as part of his Corporate Social



Responsibility. Abdur Razzaq Sajid briefed Bakhtawari on Al-Mustafa Welfare Trust's activities, including operating four Eye Hospitals in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir,

where over 0.25 million cataract operations have been performed. The Trust also provides clean drinking water, free ration to needy families, free education to

underprivileged children, organizes tree plantation campaigns, and undertakes various other welfare initiatives. Additionally, the Trust is working in Gaza, running a field

hospital in Khan Younis, providing ration to over three lakh victims, and conducting Quran classes with the support of Al-Hashmi Trust. —APP

Nine more connections severed over violations

LODHRAN : Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) UFG Control Task Force raided and disconnected nine more connections including two commercial ones over violations. According to details, one consumer's meter was found being used in a school, while another residential consumer's meter was being used at a samosa shop. Both meters were disconnected, and further departmental action has been recommended. In another case, a consumer's meter was found on non-billing and was still installed on-site. The meter was also disconnected and departmental action was recommended. Additionally, two consumers' meters were found suspicious due to seal tampering, and those meters were sent to the lab after being disconnected. Four consumers' meters were found tampered with due to broken counters, and their meters were also disconnected with recommendations for further departmental action. The task force team also removed extensions from five homes that were found illegally supplying gas to multiple households. —APP

Pakistan hosts Int'l forum on gender and green economy: Romina

Romina Khurshid Alam said that 22 states' female parliamentarians' as delegates would convene to discuss the impacts of climate change on women and their role in the green economy

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday announced that Pakistan would host the two-day international Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (APFFD) on 'Gender Empowerment and Green Economy' that would convene regional female parliamentarians from 22 states. Addressing a curtain-raiser press conference regarding a two-day meeting of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (APFFD) on 'Gender Empowerment and Green Economy' starting from Monday (August 11th), she said Pakistan would hold an international

population and climate change conference under the auspices of the APFFD standing committee on Gender Empowerment. Romina Khurshid Alam said that 22 states' female parliamentarians' as delegates would convene to discuss the impacts of climate change on women and their role in the green economy. She added that these parliamentarians would gather to share personal experiences, and knowledge, and mull over regional solutions for the challenges like population and climate change that have posed formidable threats to human security in the region. In 1982, she said Pakistan was the founding member of this forum, whereas in the 1994 APFFD Conference, the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had actively participated in the global moot.

The PM's aide underlined that Pakistan has a great opportunity to host the APFFD two-day international conference from August 12-13. The outcomes of the two-day global conference would be shared with the media in an exclusive briefing to be held under the patronage of the Prime Minister later, he added. The conference, she said would specifically focus on green sectors, knowledge exchange, and best practices sharing among developing countries. Climate diplomacy was an important tool to address global warming and environmental degradation, necessary to promote stronger and durable collaborations for enhancing climate resilience for a sustainable future for all, she added. Romina Khurshid Alam said that Pakistan would play a pivotal role in this conference and would take

the lead role in engaging female parliamentarians of the member states in working out fruitful recommendations. "Climate change is a global issue and it has connected entire humanity. PM Shehbaz Sharif always gives priority to climate change, gender and peace," she said. The APFFD comprises of 30 member states whereas delegates from 23 states have confirmed whereas the delegates from Cambodia, Japan, China, Vietnam, Magnolia, Thailand and other regional countries are participating in the forum. Responding to a query, Romina said the 23 delegates participating in the conference also included Japan's Minister of State for Education and Culture along with parliamentarians having strong leadership roles in their respective parliaments.

CDA, QAU lead Margalla tree plantation drive

Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that educational institutions always excel in every field

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to ensure the participation of academia and educational institutions in on going Margalla Hills Tree Plantation Drive, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa along with students and alumni of Quaid-e-Azam University planted tree saplings on Margalla Hills on Friday. According to the details, a place has been designated for tree plantation in the name of Quaideen Enclave on Margalla Hills, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Member Environment Talat Gondal, Member Finance Tahir Naem being quaidian planted tree saplings in Quaidian Enclave along with the students. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that under the direction of the Prime Minister of Pakistan

and the Interior Minister and with the support of the Ministry of Climate Change, the preservation of beauty of Margalla Hills is being ensured through this plantation drive. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that everyone should play their role to make the city beautiful. He said that they are working together with all stakeholders including corporate sector and civil society in Margalla Hills Tree Plantation Drive. Chairman CDA said that saplings are being planted on Margalla Hills in collaboration with the academia and educational institutions including. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that a strict ban has been imposed on cutting of trees in Islamabad and FIRs will also be filed against those who cut trees.

tion and conservation of flora and fauna will be ensured in Margalla Hills Tree Plantation Drive. Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that the proposal should be considered for giving special marks to the students who have participated in the plantation campaign. He further said that a mobile app to track a Tree is being launched which will help to ascertain the location of the planted tree. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that educational institutions always excel in every field. That is why educational institutions are invited to lead the plantation drive while CDA will provide them full support. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa further said that a strict ban has been imposed on cutting of trees in Islamabad and FIRs will also be filed against those who cut trees.

Govt pledges comprehensive reforms in power sector

ISLAMABAD : Chairman National Task Force and Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Friday said the government is committed to bring comprehensive reforms in the power sector to enhance its efficiency. Talking to the media after chairing the meeting of National Task Force on Implementation of Structural Reforms in the Power Sector, the minister said that the Task Force reviewed the stock of all Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and their generation capacity. The Task Force also discussed various issues confronted by the energy sector of the country, he added. He said that the National Task Force strongly objected to propaganda about an increase in power tariff. Intentionally, persistent propaganda was being propagated that prices of electricity were being increased, he added. The minister said that practically, the power tariff witnessed a 77 paisa decrease while unfortunately impression was given by various newspapers and television channels that the tariff has been increased. He said that yesterday, the power regulator the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) issued a notification into fuel adjustment cost (FCA) for June. The adjustment for the billing month of August stood at Rs 2.56 per unit as compared to Rs 3.33 for July, thus the consumer would get relief of 77 paisa per unit, he said. Awais said that the government is making all-out efforts to address issues of the power sector adding that we would work with the same spirit to provide relief to the masses. He said that the people would hear good news within the next few weeks in this regard. He said efforts would also be made to provide a true picture to the people through an effective communication strategy with the collaboration of all concerned departments. —DNA

CASS explores ongoing crisis in Jammu and Kashmir

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, conducted a special session under its Catalyst Conversation Series on 'Chinars in Chains: India's Siege of Jammu and Kashmir' with Mr Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman, Kashmir Institute of International Relations, to discuss the current situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Air Marshal Ferooz Habib (Retd), Senior Director at CASS, set the stage for the discussion and highlighted that the full integration of IIOJK into the Indian Union has been a central element of the BJP and RSS's Hindutva agenda. He noted that abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A on 5th August 2019 by the Modi government were followed by severe security measures including curfews and communication blackouts in the disputed territory. Air Marshal Habib also observed that the Indian Supreme Court supported the government's actions, which included the enactment of laws aimed at changing the region's

demographics by allowing an influx of non-Kashmiris. He shared that five years on, the Muslim majority in IIOJK continues to face marginalisation and repression, with the international community largely remaining silent on these issues. In his Keynote Address, the Distinguished Speaker Mr Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman, Kashmir Institute of International Relations, discussed the considerable socio-political and economic upheavals in Jammu & Kashmir since the revocation

of Article 370 and 35A, marking five years of continued distress and despair. Mr Wani highlighted that Jammu & Kashmir remains under direct control from New Delhi, lacking an elected government, which he described as a severe democratic deficit. He noted that the region operates akin to a 'police state', with heightened levels of incarceration and constant surveillance. About 19,000 people, including political and human rights activists, were detained, impacting over 8



million Kashmiris who faced shortages of essentials and medical supplies due to the lockdown. He further pointed out the economic turmoil within the region, stating that businesses have suffered immense losses while poverty, hunger, and unemployment have risen, starkly contradicting claims made by the Modi government. Mr Wani observed that in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the electorate in IIOJK expressed their dissatisfaction through their votes.





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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia
National Day

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Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations
Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

NA Speaker welcomes Imam Masjid-e-Nabwi

The Speaker National Assembly, before the proceedings, announced that the Imam of Masjid-e-Nabawi was present in the House. "The National Assembly warmly welcomes His Excellency, the Imam and his presence is a moment of great pride and spiritual peace for us

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Speaker, National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday cordially welcomed the Imam of Masjid-e-Nabawi (PBUH), Sheikh Dr Salah Bin Muhammad Al Budair at the Parliament House with the delegation accompanied by the Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Malaki. The fifth meeting of the 8th session of the National Assembly commenced with the calming voice of Imam Sheikh Dr Salah Al Budair who recited the glorious verses of the Holy Quran advocating the commandments of Allah Almighty for the Muslims to keep unity intact among all their ranks to seek the blessings of their Lord. Deputy Speaker, National Assembly Syed Mir Ghulam Mustafa Shah was also present

on this occasion. The Speaker National Assembly, before the proceedings, announced that the Imam of Masjid-e-Nabawi was present in the House. "The National Assembly warmly welcomes His Excellency, the Imam and his presence is a moment of great pride and spiritual peace for us." Imam Sheikh Dr Salah Bin Muhammad Al-Budair along with his delegation witnessed the proceedings of the National Assembly. On the occasion, the Speaker said the Masjid-e-Nabawi has a special status in the hearts of all Muslim nations. "The House desires to benefit from your knowledge and teachings. May Almighty Allah bless all of us to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)," Ayaz Sadiq said. He also appreciated the Ambassador of KSA for being a staunch ambassador of Pakistan in the Kingdom.

The Speaker National Assembly also congratulated Arshad Nadeem on winning a gold medal in the javelin throw event of Paris Olympics 2024. "Arshad Nadeem is a talented and distinguished athlete. Arshad Nadeem has won a gold medal by demonstrating hard work, acing skills and struggle. Arshad Nadeem's services for the promotion of javelin throw in Pakistan are commendable. Arshad Nadeem has made Pakistan famous all over the world by throwing the longest throw in the history of the Olympics javelin throw," Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said. The whole nation is proud of Arshad Nadeem, he said after winning the gold medal in the javelin throw final and brought glory to the country and the nation. "Arshad Nadeem has created a new history in the sport of Olympics. He is an example for the youth of

the nation that he has achieved the impossible through extreme hard work and struggle," he added. On the occasion, Minister for Defence, and Defence Production and Aviation, Khawaja Muhammad Asif said the Imam of Masjid-e-Nabawi's presence in the House was a moment of great pride and honour. He also appreciated the Saudi Ambassador for his services and role as an ambassador of Pakistan in the Kingdom. He also felicitated Athlete Arshad Nadeem for winning a gold medal and making the country proud. "Arshad Nadeem in Paris has raised the head of the nation with pride and honour as after three decades' hiatus he brought a medal in Olympics for the country," he said. The minister said the national athletes used to prepare for games in great neglect and dilapidation without the patron-

age of the government and resources. "All the sports federations including javelin have no performance and patronage of the government except the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) that only looks after cricket. There is only politics in all the federations of the country including football, hockey, and the Olympics federation etc.," Khawaja Asif said. He derided the previous Presidents of the Olympic Association of Pakistan who stuck to their positions for decades but failed to achieve any convincing performance or betterment in the games. Khawaja Asif mentioned that all the sports federations had no structures but rather parallel forums were operating along with them. "This House also has this role and government has the prime duty taking the responsibility to cleanse the sports federations from politics," he added.

ANF seizes 81 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPIND: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 81 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He said, 12 kg opium and 21.6 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza Sheikhpura and an accused was arrested. In two separate operations conducted in Sialkot, 26.4 kg hashish and 10.6 kg opium were recovered from the possession of three suspects. In fourth operation, 1.4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused near F-7 Islamabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

Chinese enterprises assisting Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Chinese enterprises are assisting Pakistani farmers in cultivating chillies and exporting the locally produced chillies to China, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Meanwhile, more Pakistani chili farmers are currently engaged in contract farming cooperation with China. In August, Wahid, a farmer in Pakistan's Pakpattan District, celebrated a bumper chili harvest. This marks the third year he has cultivated chillies using seeds and technology imported from China. "My chillies are larger than those grown by others, and my neighbors are envious, Wahid proudly shared. He emphasized that the Chinese chili seed varieties are exceptional, and the planting techniques are more refined and efficient, ensuring a successful chili harvest. This year, Sichuan Neijiang bonded warehouse has successfully received two shipments totaling 332 tons of dried chillies under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Agricultural Cooperation Project. The chillies were promptly processed, with one portion used for producing Sichuan composite condiments and the other for processing Pixian douban, a fermented chili bean paste widely used in Sichuan cuisine. This partnership exemplifies the flourishing agricultural cooperation between China and Pakistan.—APP

Mohsin Naqvi meets audi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visited the Saudi Arabian Embassy in the Diplomatic Enclave and met with Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki here on

Friday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and ways to promote Pakistan-Saudi relations were discussed in detail. Interior Minister assured the Saudi Ambassador of taking robust action against professional beggars traveling

to Saudi Arabia. He stated that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has been directed to crack down against the mafia across the country involved in sending beggars to Saudi Arabia. He said that this mafia is tarnishing Pakistan's image

abroad. He highlighted that the people of Pakistan have great reverence and respect for Saudi Arabia. He said that Saudi Arabia has always stood by Pakistan in difficult times. The Saudi Ambassador said that both countries have brotherly relations.

Work for reopening of Mahandri bridge in progress

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Restoration work has begun on the Mahandri bridge in Balakot valley, which was washed away on July 30th due to flash flooding in Manoor water stream disconnecting Kaghan, Naran and areas beyond from the valley. The destruction of the bridge stranded 10,000-15,000 tourists and disrupted local lives. The Naran Babusar Road was also closed. Gwadar Pro

quoting an official statement stated in a report on Friday that, a Chinese state-owned company China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC) is providing materials, cranes, and mechanical equipment to support the restoration efforts. According to the company, the damaged bridge is being repaired through close cooperation between China and Pakistan. A total of 126 people died, 239 injured, and over 700 houses damaged across Pakistan by torrential rains and

flash floods between 1 July and 4 August 2024, as per Pakistan Monsoon 2024 Flash Update report produced by OCHA Pakistan. The restoration of the Mahandri bridge is crucial for reconnecting the affected areas and providing relief to the stranded tourists and local population. The collaborative efforts between the Chinese company and Pakistani authorities aim to address the infrastructure challenges and support local communities in the wake of the natural disaster.



AIOU gears up celebrations of independence day

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has completed its preparations for the nation's Independence Day celebrations. According to the AIOU, following the guidance of Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the campus has been decorated with national flags and illuminated buildings, creating a festive atmosphere. Visitors, including families and youth, have been flocking to the university in the evenings to enjoy the decorations, sparking patriotic enthusiasm. It is worth mentioning that Allama Iqbal Open University regularly celebrates Independence Day with great enthusiasm every year. Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, had instructed that this year, we should celebrate Independence Day in such a way that it becomes an example for educational institutions across the country. AIOU is among the first institutions to finalize its preparations, setting a high standard for other educational institutions.—DNA

Sheikh Abdul Aziz remembered

ISLAMABAD: As the 16th martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed-e-Azeemat Shaikh Abdul Aziz approaches, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and other pro-freedom organizations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) are coming together to honor the legacy of this iconic Kashmiri leader, whose contributions to the struggle for self-determination remain etched in the annals of history. Shaikh Aziz was martyred by Indian troops on August 11, 2008, while he was leading a massive march to Azad Kashmir in protest against the economic blockade of the Kashmir Valley imposed by Hindutva extremists in Jammu. His death became a rallying point for Kashmiris, further intensifying the resistance against the oppressive Indian occupation, said a press release issued on Friday. The APHC has called for special prayer meetings on Sunday to commemorate the martyrdom of Shaikh Abdul Aziz and others who have sacrificed their lives for the Kashmiri cause. "His enduring legacy continues to inspire and fortify the resolve of those fighting for the rights and dignity of the Kashmiri people", the APHC added. A coalition of voices within the APHC, including leaders like Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori, Syed Bashir Andrabi, Khawaja Firdous, Muhammad Yousuf Naqash, Javid Ahmed Mir, Abdul Samad Inqilabi, Sleem Zargar, Maulana Musaib Nadvi, Muhammad Iqbal Mir, Yasmeen Raja, Ghulam Nabi War and others, along with organizations such as the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, Jammu and Kashmir Muslim League, Jammu and Kashmir National Front, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and Kashmir Students Youth Forum, have pledged to continue the struggle until the complete liberation of Kashmir is achieved. They emphasized that the sacrifices made by Aziz and his associates during the 2008 uprising will never be forgotten. In Srinagar, posters commemorating Shaikh Aziz serve as a powerful reminder of his courage, boldness, and unwavering commitment. These visual tributes reinforce his decision to embrace martyrdom rather than surrender, solidifying his status as a beacon of resistance against oppressive forces. DNA

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Briefs

U.S. Ambassador Blome's Meeting with Amir Muqam

DNA

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome met with Minister of States and Frontier Regions Amir Muqam on August 8 to thank the Minister for Pakistan's long history of hosting Afghan refugees and reaffirm the United States' commitment to working with Pakistan to assist Afghan refugees and Pakistani community members in areas hosting refugees. The Ambassador expressed appreciation for Pakistan's recent decision to extend the validity of refugee Proof of Registration cards, for the positive steps taken to address protection concerns, and for our countries' continued cooperation to facilitate the safe, efficient resettlement of eligible Afghans to the United States.—APP

Patriotic fashion trend brings cheer to online retailers

ISLAMABAD: As country gears up to celebrate its Independence Day, the azadi dress trend has not only boosted sales for online marketplaces and fashion platforms but also provided a much-needed boost to small businesses where retailers are offering special deals and discounts on accessories like green jewelry, white sneakers, and tricolor-themed clutches to complement the azadi dresses. "The patriotic fashion trend has brought a significant surge in sales for online retailers, with many reporting a 20 to 30% increase in orders in the lead-up to Independence Day," said a report aired by a Private news channel. "Citizens are eager to showcase their patriotism through fashion, driving demand for tricolor-themed clothing, accessories, and footwear," said an online retailer while offering 50% discount on clothing items ahead of Azadi day. "Online retailers have capitalized on the trend by offering a wide range of patriotic fashion products, from subtle tricolor accents to bold Azadi-themed designs," said a citizen. "I love how fashion has become a way to express our patriotism. I have bought a few tricolor dresses and scarves to wear on Independence Day," said an online buyer. "I am so glad online retailers are offering such a wide range of patriotic fashion products. It makes it easy to find something that fits my style," said another woman. "The patriotic fashion trend has brought a much-needed boost to our sales. We are grateful to our customers for embracing the trend" a renowned fashion brand owner expressed satisfaction over the sale of tri-colored dresses. "Online platforms have made it so easy for us to reach a wider audience and sell our patriotic products. We are grateful to our customers for embracing the trend" another fashion brand seller commented.—APP

Ethiopia, Pak discuss collaborative initiatives for HRD

The joint skill development initiatives such as hands on trainings and courses came under discussion during a meeting between H.E. Mr. Jemal Beker, Ambassador Extraordinary, Plenipotentiary and Special Envoy of FDRE to Pakistan, and H.E. Mr. Salik Hussain, Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have discussed collaborative initiatives to produce productive human resources for their countries.

The joint skill development initiatives such as hands on trainings and courses came under discussion during a meeting between H.E. Mr. Jemal Beker, Ambassador Extraordinary, Plenipotentiary and Special Envoy of FDRE to Pakistan, and H.E. Mr. Salik Hussain, Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development. The joint initiatives, discussed in the meeting, are aimed at equipping both countries' youth with modern technical and vocational education and trainings in various sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, Computing, Block Chain and others. The meeting also focused on the collaborations that are imperative to foster strong bilateral relations between the two countries. During the meeting, H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker highlighted the



Ethiopian government's commitment to produce skilled and highly skilled manpower as a part of its Home Grown Economic Reforms Programme (HGERP) that is aimed to foster macroeconomic stability, encourage private sector investment, enhance domestic production, and improve the government's capacity to deliver quality services. He said under the HGERP 1.0, Ethiopia had achieved

a stable, robust and sustainable economy especially by attracting foreign direct investment, increasing productivity and job creation in the country. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker highlighted the recent launch of HGERP 2.0 by the Government of Ethiopia which is aimed at creating a stable macroeconomic environment, transforming investment and trade environment, boosting productive growth and improving public sector capability. H.E. Minister Hussain shared Pakistan's experience in human resource development, highlighting his ministry's efforts to forge collaboration with foreign countries for skill development and job creation for the country's youth. He assured the Ambassador of his government's full support for the collaborative initiatives of the skill development. He invited H.E. Ambassador Jemal to lead a tree planting event at the University of Gujrat in the earliest possible time. This event, organized by the Minister's office, aims to promote environmental awareness and aligns with GreenLegacy initiative of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

Call for exploiting Pakistan and Iran untapped potential

Those areas included the transportation, agriculture and services sectors. Lastly, he concluded by stating that developing border markets, revising visa requirements and ensuring the development and safety of Baluchistan province on both sides could significantly enhance trade and offshore investments between Pakistan and Iran

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, organized an event titled "Pak-Iran Economic Cooperation: Challenges and Opportunities" in Islamabad. Mr. Fraz Naqvi of the Iran Program, initiated the session by discussing trade relations between Pakistan and Iran.

He noted that despite cultural similarities, geographical proximity and a common border, both Pakistan and Iran could not fully utilize their trade potential, primarily due to the imposition of US sanctions on Iran. Mr. Naqvi proposed that Pakistan might benefit from drawing inspiration from the development models of

China, South Korea, Japan and other countries to establish alternative mechanisms for enhancing economic ties with Iran. Mr. Mohsen Shahshargi, an expert on South Asian economy from Tehran, stressed that economic cooperation between Iran and Pakistan was essential to cultivating the partnership on the basis of comparative advantage.

Taking a cue from the \$10 billion trade goal set between Pakistan and Iran in April this year, Mr. Mohsen emphasized on exploring alternative solutions such as establishing a systemic barter mechanism or conducting trade in third-party currencies like the Chinese Yuan. Adding on, though the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) was

still in place, it remained unimplemented for several years which further restricted the signing of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries, Mr. Mohsen noted. To evade the US sanctions, Mr. Mohsen highlighted certain areas where the cooperation could be carried out without invoking the US response.

Those areas included the transportation, agriculture and services sectors. Lastly, he concluded by stating that developing border markets, revising visa requirements and ensuring the development and safety of Baluchistan province on both sides could significantly enhance trade and offshore investments between Pakistan and Iran.

Ms. Noor Fatima, Senior Research Associate at the Research Society of International Law (RSIL), examined the legal dimensions of trade relations between Iran and Pakistan. She asserted that sanctions had been significant tools of foreign policy employed by states or organizations to influence the behavior of other states or entities without resorting to armed conflict.

In Iran's case, sanctions had been mostly applied unilaterally by countries like the US, UK, Canada, and Australia etc. Subsequently, the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project which aimed to supply Pakistan one billion cubic feet gas per day was stalled due to US unilateral sanctions on Iran, she added.

PDMA prepares for fresh monsoon spell

ISLAMABAD: With a new spell of monsoon rains expected to hit country from today till August 12, the Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh Syed Salman Shah Friday urged farmers and the general public to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions. Talking to PTV news channel, he has assured that timely early warnings and advisories will be provided to all stakeholders to minimize the impact of the heavy rains. As the province braces for another round of torrential downpours, the PDMA's warning has sounded an alarm for residents to take extra caution and stay alert to avoid any potential disasters. "The warnings have been issued to farmers to take extra care of their crops, particularly those in low-lying areas, and to take measures to protect their livestock," he added. "We have also alerted the irrigation department to ensure that all necessary measures are in place to prevent breaches in canals and watercourses, and to minimize the risk of flooding in urban and rural areas," he added. "We request people to avoid traveling to flood-prone areas, and to stay away from nullahs and watercourses. We also request farmers to regularly monitor the weather forecast and take necessary measures to protect their crops and livestock," he highlighted. Responding a query, he explained that PDMA Sindh is coordinating with all stakeholders, including district administrations, irrigation department, and emergency services, to ensure a coordinated response to the monsoon spell. "We have established relief camps in flood-prone areas, which will provide shelter, food, and medical aid to affected communities," he added. "A de-watering system has also been established to quickly drain out water from flooded areas," he added. "We have deployed heavy machinery, including pumps and excavators.—APP

RDA issues notices to marketing companies

RAWALPINDI: The Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate, Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has issued notices to two marketing companies namely Granna.com and Agency 21 regarding their upcoming Property Expo event in the Rawalpindi/Islamabad region. According to RDA spokesperson, no project or scheme could be advertised or marketed through any medium, including expos, without obtaining a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the authority.

He said, the notice directs Granna.com and Agency 21 to provide the RDA with comprehensive details regarding the venue and dates of their Property Expo. Additionally, they are instructed to ensure that no unapproved or illegal projects are featured or promoted during the event and that no

sales of plots, files, or investments occur. The spokesman said the RDA had also warned Shafiq Akbar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of marketing companies that failure to comply with the Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 (amended in 2014) and the Punjab Development Authorities Private Housing Scheme Rules 2021 could result in legal proceedings under relevant law. He said, "A sponsor shall not advertise sale of plots or housing units in print and electronic media or in any manner, without prior approval of Authority." In this regard, it is apprised that unless a project gets NOC from RDA Rawalpindi, it cannot be declared as an approved or legal project, he added. Moreover, legal status of the projects is easily accessible on RDA website www.rda.gov.pk or for further information or inquiries, contact the RDA office.—APP

Pakistan provides update on ICERD implementation to UN

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has presented its progress on the Implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). This review included a detailed response to the list of themes highlighted in the combined 24th to 26th periodic report by the CERD Committee, underscoring Pakistan's continued dedication to addressing racial discrimination and its efforts to align with international human rights standards. The delegation comprises Allah Dino Khawaja, Secretary Ministry of Human Rights, Samina Zahri, Chairperson of the Senate Functional Com-

mittee on Human Rights and Ambassador Bilal Ahmad, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to Geneva. Their participation signified the government's dedication to addressing racial discrimination and advancing human rights globally. During the review, the delegation provided comprehensive updates on significant progress since the last review in 2016. A major milestone has been the integration of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), ensuring a uniform application of laws and the Constitution across the region. This step directly addressed a key observation made by the Committee during the previous review. In line with the Committee's recommendations, Pakistan successfully com-

pleted its first-ever digital census in 2023, with the country's population now estimated at approximately 241 million. Notably, the population of key religious minorities, including Hindus and Christians, has shown an increase, reflecting the government's commitment to inclusivity and equality. The National Human Rights Institution has also been strengthened, with the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) recently accredited as an A-status institution by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). Between 2018 and 2023, the NCHR received 2,455 complaints, of which 2,301 have been resolved, showcasing the institution's effectiveness in addressing human rights concerns. The report

further detailed Pakistan's efforts to combat hate speech, with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) registering 85 cases of hate speech in 2023, and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) initiating over 4,000 requests to international social media companies to block content targeting minorities. Additionally, the government has undertaken significant legal and policy reforms to protect minority rights. This includes the enactment of the Hindu Marriage Act 2017, the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024, and the Punjab Sikh Anand Karaj Marriage Act 2018. The government has also taken measures to prevent the misuse of blasphemy laws and has ensured robust protections for religious minorities.—APP

Digital Gender inclusion strategy starts

ISLAMABAD: With the inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee on Digital Gender Inclusion, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) in collaboration with Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has formally commenced the implementation of the Digital Gender inclusion strategy to significantly reduce digital gender divide within next three years. The meeting was chaired by Minister of State for IT & Telecommunication (MoITT) Shaza Fatima Khawaja and convened by Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, said a news release issued here on Friday. During the meeting, Shaza Fatima Khawaja emphasized the government's commitment to advancing Pakistan's Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy and highlighted the need for collective action to bridge the digital gender gap. Chairman of PTA Maj. Gen (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman underscored PTA's role in coordinating efforts and ensuring effective implementation through collaboration with key stakeholders and thematic working groups. It was decided in the meeting that in order to assess the progress of working groups, a steering committee will meet every 3-4 months to review progress for which PTA will serve as the Secretariat. Multi-sectorial collaboration is essential for closing the digital gender gap and advancing women's role in Pakistan's digital transformation. The steering committee will be overseeing the smooth implementation of the strategy. The committee will be continuously assessing the outcome of the identified thematic working groups on access, affordability, digital literacy, inclusion, safety, security, data and research. The steering committee comprises representation from concerned government organizations, the private sector and academia including Raheela Hameed Khan Durani, Minister for Colleges Higher & Technical Education Balochistan, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Secretary Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, Dr. Naem Uz Zafar, Chief Statistician Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Aisha Hamera Chaudhry, Secretary of the Ministry of IT & T, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman HEC; Dr. Babar Majid Bhatti, CEO National IT Board; Aamir Ibrahim, CEO Jazz; and Gulalai Khan from Lahore University of Management Sciences.—APP



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Gaza's stolen Fridays

THE days are no longer the same, nor is anything that resembles itself in the Gaza Strip. Everything has changed, the genocide that Israel has been waging for 10 months has changed everything, except the Palestinians' faith in the justice of their cause. Separation, loss, dispersion, and even deprivation of the most basic things, are the characteristics of the war by which Israel is exterminating a defenseless people, live on air. Perhaps one of the most prominent things that the Palestinians of Gaza have been deprived of is the ritual of Friday, that day which has a special uniqueness in the life of Palestinians, in which they gather, share a communal meal that strengthens their relationships, and connect with their extended family. Friday used to be an official holiday from work, which most citizens dedicated to gathering with others, visiting relatives, and sharing a lunch feast – all of which has been absent since the start of the war on Gaza. The citizen Ibrahim Hammouda (45 years old) tells the PIC correspondent that they were deprived of Friday, which is like a weekly festival. He adds to our correspondent that they missed the Friday gathering, the atmosphere of prayer in the mosque, and meeting their loved ones. The Palestinians used to prepare early for the Friday prayer, wear their best clothes and go early to the mosques to listen to the Friday sermon before returning home to have the lunch meal, and all of this no longer exists. He explained that his family is scattered between the north and south of the Gaza Strip, as he and his family are staying in the city of Gaza, while the families of his brothers are currently in the south of the Strip. He cries bitterly, "I miss when we all gather, eat at one table, and perform the Friday prayer together, these are things we have been deprived of since the start of the criminal war." Over the past months, the Israeli occupation forces have destroyed the majority of the mosques in the Gaza Strip, and targeted the worshippers while they were praying in them. Performing the Friday prayer on the ruins of the destroyed mosques or in the courtyards in many neighborhoods has become a great risk, but thousands of Palestinians are still keen on it. In the Deir Al-Balah refugee camp in central Gaza Strip, the citizen Khaled Awda, who has been displaced since the start of the war 10 months ago, tells our correspondent that he misses the rituals of Friday, "the war has scattered the family, separated the gatherings, and planted sadness in the hearts of thousands." He continues that he has not seen his wife, who has remained in the north of the Strip for several months, and that he was displaced under Israeli coercion and criminality. About Friday, the citizen Awda sighs, and recalls a whole day of family gathering, food and visits.

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Britain's race riots

RECENTLY had the pleasure of watching the uniquely talented actor Dominic West in Arthur Miller's 1955 masterpiece "A View From The Bridge" at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London's West End. However, it was not only West's captivating and extraordinarily convincing portrayal of Italian American working-class Brooklyn longshoreman Eddie Carbone that stayed with me long after the play had ended. As an avid consumer of news, I always find it fascinating how history repeats itself and how some topics remain relevant no matter how much time has passed. Among those topics are the linked issues of immigration, the quest for economic opportunity, and xenophobia – three pillars of Miller's play that even today are still the subject of intense debate and sometimes violent protests and hate crimes, as we are currently seeing in the UK. In the play, impoverished Italians who illegally migrated to the US with a dream of earning \$50 a week to feed their families back home are subjected to harassment and discrimination because of their habits and appearance, and accused of wanting to marry an American only to obtain a US passport. In today's Britain, far right groups accuse even legal immigrants – and mainly Muslims, adding racism and religion to an already toxic brew – of not only reaping the benefits of the economic system, but of taking the jobs of the "native English" and refusing to integrate culturally. Now, as a former London resident myself, and indeed the author of a book on what it's like to be an Arab in the UK capital, I am the first to raise my hand and say, yes, there are many immigrant groups who have failed to integrate, who deliberately abuse the system, and who cause mayhem: among the most notorious is the Egyptian cleric Abu Hamza, who arrived in the UK on a temporary student visa in 1979, preached hate for decades while sponging off state benefits, and proved almost impossible to throw out of the country until he was finally deported to the US in 2012. This is exactly the kind of deterrent that is needed. After all, no matter how noble one might think a cause is, it doesn't give anyone the right to take the law into their own hands. Quite frankly, I believe observers – both at home and abroad – have had enough with thugs destroying public property, disfiguring national monuments or attacking others in the name of their "cause," whether it is religious, environmental or political. This applies equally to all races and religions alike. Certainly, the UK's minority Muslim community have an added responsibility to now curb any members from violating the law, no matter how angry or intimidated they feel. They would also be well advised to champion successful and inspirational stories of integration. Apart from Sadiq Khan, another impressive example would be Nadhim Zahawi, an Iraqi Kurd whose family fled Saddam's regime in 1978 when he was 11; Zahawi became an MP, and eventually Chancellor of the Exchequer, and is a hugely successful businessman. Last week in The Times he wrote a deep and thoughtful column entitled "How the British dream of integration can survive." In it, he argues that Britain remains the most tolerant country on Earth, but urges the quick punishment of wrongdoers while addressing the real concerns on all sides. Speaking of all sides, we must not miss the elephant in the room: the massive reach of social media, now with the added perils of Artificial Intelligence and its deep fake abilities.

De-escalation vs. self-defense: Double standards or racism?

Jamal Kanj

The above is not merely a double standard, but congenital Western racism toward the perceived "lesser" than equal people, for the US Administration, Canada, Britain, and the European Union's unadulterated racism has for decades enabled "Israel's" arrogance, both materially and diplomatically. By the same Western definition of the right to self-defense, the Iranian government, the Lebanese Resistance, and Yemen have every right to exercise their right, according to international law following Israeli attacks on Tehran, Beirut, and Hodeidah in Yemen. This is more so than what Western leaders erroneously bestowed on an occupying power following October 7

ON the evening of July 30, an Israeli drone targeted a residential building in the Southern Suburb of Beirut, killing three women and two children, and injuring 74 civilians. "Israel" claimed the attack was aimed at an officer of the Lebanese Resistance. Targeting residential infrastructures outside a war zone is part of the Israeli army's Artificial Intelligence (AI) program, known as "Lavender". The AI Lavender program, as we have seen in Gaza, koshers the killing of up to 100 civilians or entire families in order to assassinate a single commander. Less than 24 hours later, Israeli agents violated Iran's sovereignty and assassinated Palestinian leader Ismail Haniyeh during his official visit to Tehran, like when "Israel" bombed the Iranian embassy complex in Damascus last April, killing 8 military advisors and an equal number of Syrian civilians and Iranian consular staff. Rather than condemning the Israeli aggression, Western capitals called on the victims (Iran and the Lebanese Resistance) to de-escalate and exercise restraint. "No one should escalate this conflict," Blinken told reporters on August 6. "We've been engaged in intense diplomacy with allies and partners, communicating that message directly to Iran." German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock took to X calling on "especially #Iran, to exercise restraint and de-escalate for the sake of the people in the region." Britain and France doubled down on the foreign violation of Iran's sovereignty during the emergency UN Security Council meeting on July 31, blaming Iran, the victim in this case, for the dangerous escalation in the region. According to various resources, French President Emmanuel Macron told his new Iranian counterpart to end the "logic of reprisals" and for the "protection of civilian populations." Western powers called for de-escalation in response to the Israeli aggression against Iran and Lebanon. On the other hand, they defended "Israel's" right to "self-defense" following the Palestinian revolt against the Israeli siege on October 7. Leaders from more than 14 countries, 8 including heads of state paid homage to declare solidarity with "Israel". Yet, not a single Western leader called on "Israel" to de-escalate. If "Israel" is perceived as the target of an attack, Western leaders promote Israeli "logic of reprisals" under the pretext of "self-defense". Mean-

while, when others are targeted by "Israel", then and only then, de-escalation is deemed necessary for the "protection of civilian populations." Returning to the German Foreign Minister's recent post on X. When "Israel" was targeted on October 7, Germany saw no need to de-escalate "for the sake of the (Palestinian) people in the region." De-escalation was necessary though, "for the sake of the (Israeli) people..." following the Israeli attack on Iran and Beirut. Ironically, the call by Western leaders to "de-escalate" is not a genuine endeavor to avoid a wider conflict, but rather their proclivity to sanction Israeli wars. They sanctioned "Israel's" war of genocide when they excused its aggression as "self-defense" and then refused to call for a ceasefire for more than six months. They empowered "Israel" by waging a proxy war against Yemen on its behalf. They enabled "Israel's" defiance by continuing to supply the armament used to kill and maim the children of Gaza. They enabled Israeli-induced famine against 2.3 million people by refusing to accept the findings of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. More importantly, they enabled Israeli intransigence when, following the Israeli murder in Tehran and Beirut, the US president ordered US military deployments in the Middle East to defend "Israel" "against all threats from Iran." The above is not merely a double standard, but congenital Western racism toward the perceived "lesser" than equal people, for the US Administration, Canada, Britain, and the European Union's unadulterated racism has for decades enabled "Israel's" arrogance, both materially and diplomatically. By the same Western definition of the right to self-defense, the Iranian government, the Lebanese Resistance, and Yemen have every right to exercise their right, according to international law following Israeli attacks on Tehran, Beirut, and Hodeidah in Yemen. This is more so than what Western leaders erroneously bestowed on an occupying power following October 7. The Resistance is undoubtedly aware of Western powers' efforts to delay and/or diffuse the response to Israeli extrajudicial assassinations. European leaders, for instance, have sent direct and indirect equivocal messages to Iran expressing a willingness to open a new chapter after the election of the new reformist president.

Arab and Western leaders have also cautioned the Resistance in Lebanon against taking any action that could jeopardize the "progress" in the ceasefire talks, when, in reality, the opposite is true. The Palestinians are in a stronger negotiating position with support from the Lebanese and the Yemeni fronts, not by the groveling of Arab regimes to Israeli enablers. In fact, as it became clear that retaliation against "Israel" was imminent, the US, Qatar, and Egypt scrambled a statement on August 8 calling for a new round of ceasefire negotiations. This announcement was almost certainly coordinated in advance with "Israel", as evidenced by Netanyahu's unusually swift agreement to send a delegation "in order to finalize the details and implement the framework agreement." It is almost certain that the Resistance understands that all this is a ruse and outright prevarication by the Biden administration and two vassal Arab countries to muddy the waters, allowing "Israel" to literally get away with new murders. The aggrieved parties are expected to respond because allowing "Israel" to cross this redline would embolden Israeli intransigence and afford it a new opportunity to cross more dangerous redlines that could lead to a more destructive war in the future. In the last decade, "Israel" has murdered at least five Iranian scientists, including its top civilian nuclear program chief Mohsen Fakhrazadeh in 2020. These assassinations came at a very little cost, if any, for "Israel". However, the recent case of murdering an invited guest crosses a different redline that "Israel" and the West are unable to comprehend. In the East, protecting your guest is an honor that must be defended at all costs. It's implausible that the forces of Resistance would be dissuaded by the new American/Israeli gambit or the misplaced racist "de-escalation" rhetoric from the other Israeli enablers. According to public pronouncements from Iran, Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, a proportional retaliation against apartheid "Israel" is inevitable. Patience is a virtue, and as some have suggested, ambiguity and waiting it out are part of that broader strategy. While that might be true, there is, however, a cost-benefit dynamic related to the time taken to make a decision. The Resistance is likely aware that further vacillation would decrease the benefits and fetter the momentum for an in-kind reprisal against "Israel".

As world population shrinks, prepare for seismic changes

David Dodwell

Perhaps the most important force for managing the massive demographic shifts ahead – but the most controversial political elephant in the room – is migration. By 2054, according to the United Nations, immigration will be the most important driver of population growth in over 50 countries, including Australia, Canada, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the US. Contraction due to emigration will be a significant influence in a further 14 countries and areas – including Hong Kong, where over 5 per cent of potential births are likely to be lost to emigration

BROWSE through the latest UN World Population Prospects report and it is clear we are sliding at breakneck speed into an unrecognisable world. Shockingly, virtually no government is adequately preparing for it. And our region is set to be at the epicentre of change. Over the past three years, as we obsessed over the global polycrisis that embraces climate change, pandemics and global health threats, technological change, recession and geopolitical conflict, the accelerating demographic revolution has attracted little attention. This latest UN report provides a sobering corrective. Take China. A massive contraction in women's willingness to have children is expected to radically slash its population – down 204 million by 2054 and 786 million by 2100 to just 633 million. Imagine how different China would be with less than half of today's population. It would still be the world's second most populous country – after India with a projected 1.505 billion people in 2100, down from a peak of around 1.7 billion in the 2050s – but Pakistan (511 million) and Nigeria (477 million) with their fast-growing populations would be hard on its heels. No wonder the world's largest manufacturing economy is moving fast to replace manual labour with robots, automation and advanced technology. A seismic contraction of China's population would have massive global ramifications. It prompted the UN to revise its 2100 population forecast down by 700 million from a decade ago to just 10.2 billion, falling from a peak of 10.3 billion in the mid-2080s. China is one of 63 countries and areas with declining populations. By 2054, the list will include another 48, leaving 126 with growing populations, including India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the United States. But the consequences of this shift are huge and probably irreversible despite the earnest efforts of governments (including our own) to

lift fertility rates. The UN report is clear: "All populations are following a similar path towards longer lives and smaller families." Falling fertility rates are by far the largest force transforming the world's communities. Back in 1990, the average number of children a woman would have was 3.31 but today, the fertility rate is 2.25 and is fast heading below 2.1, the rate needed to keep the world population stable. The UN report identifies one fifth of all countries as already at "ultra-low fertility" – below 1.4 – with Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan among the lowest. "By the late 2030s, half of the women in countries with populations that have already peaked will be too old to have children by natural means," it said. By the early 2070s, 80 per cent of women in Hong Kong will be over 50 – which means our government is spitting in the wind if it believes it can reverse the collapsing fertility trend. The ramifications for families will be huge: apart from a surging total of childless families, it will mean fewer grandchildren, aunts and uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces, and the emaciation of family gatherings for yum cha and the Lunar New Year. Apart from collapsing fertility rates, three forces are hard at work transforming global communities: a longer life expectancy, urbanisation and migration. Over the past three decades, improvements in healthcare and disease control have lifted life expectancy by 8.4 years around the world to 73.3. Despite the pandemic blip, the UN predicts that global life expectancy will reach 77.4 years by 2054, with more than half of the world's population living beyond 80. For most economies with post-growth populations, "the time-bound window of opportunity for accelerated economic growth associated with a youthful population and declining fertility has already closed", the report said. Inevitably, this means more old people.

By 2080, there will be more aged 65 and older than under-18s. If ageist prejudices prevail – pushing older people out of the workforce, forcing them to become a community "burden" in need of pensions and triggering mounting healthcare costs – population ageing is set to be increasingly problematic. This sets the scene for an urgent imperative to re-engage the "silver population" – exploiting modern technologies to enable them to stay in work, facilitating reskilling, and investing in health systems that encourage people to stay healthy rather than to simply keep them alive. Perhaps the most important force for managing the massive demographic shifts ahead – but the most controversial political elephant in the room – is migration. By 2054, according to the United Nations, immigration will be the most important driver of population growth in over 50 countries, including Australia, Canada, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the US. Contraction due to emigration will be a significant influence in a further 14 countries and areas – including Hong Kong, where over 5 per cent of potential births are likely to be lost to emigration. Embracing this migratory inevitability may be key to managing the seismic population revolution, though the turbid and xenophobic hostilities to migration that drive politics in the US, France, Britain and many other economies could jeopardise the successful management of opportunities arising from migration. The good news is that this momentous transition may provide important relief as we try to contain global warming and reduce the environmental stress of our expanding footprint. As Stephanie Feldstein at the Centre for Biological Diversity noted in Scientific American, fewer workers and consumers could be good: "Population decline is only a threat to an economy based on growth."

Briefs

FO rubbishes Israeli media's...

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authorities and their media have a habit of blaming Pakistan for anything negative that happens under their watch. She said we urge them to understand the sentiments of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and take action in implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions to determine the future of the people of Jammu and Kashmir through an impartial plebiscite. Responding to another question, the Spokesperson categorically rejected and termed as patently false a report carried by Israeli paper Jerusalem Post, alleging that Pakistan plans to supply Iran with Shaheen-III ballistic missiles if the conflict between Iran and Israel escalates. The Spokesperson said this is a critical time in the Middle East and we urge all parties, including the media, not to indulge in peddling of fake news.

Pakistan has significant place in...

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they discussed matters of mutual interest. The army chief welcomed the dignity and highlighted that visit to the Masjid-e-Nabawi's imam to Pakistan is a matter of honour for the people of the country. At the end, the imam prayed for the peace, stability and unity of Muslim Ummah, said the military's media wing. Earlier, Imam Al-Budair recited verses from Holy Quran at the beginning of the National Assembly session at the Parliament House in Islamabad today. Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq welcomed the visiting dignitary, saying that his presence is a matter of pride and spiritual guidance for us. He said that Masjid-e-Nabawi holds a special place in the hearts of all the Muslim across the world.

Economic diplomacy vital for...

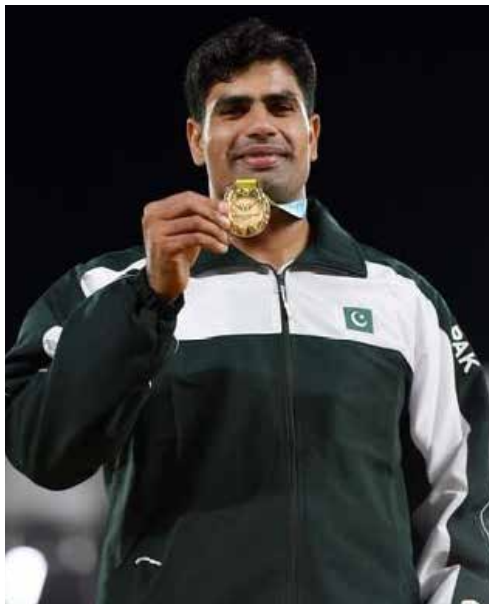
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Deputy PM Dar said Pakistan was at the cross road and at a very important location in the world. However, he said unfortunately "we failed to streamline and benefit from our location which the Almighty has blessed us". He emphasized the need for young diplomats to be equipped with the necessary skill set to promote trade and investment, tourism and opportunities to explore the workforce. "Today's diplomats should not only be experts in international law and politics alone but also economic diplomacy", he remarked. He also asked the young diplomats to work hard in their careers for the development of the country saying that to complete with the world, they should no longer engage in luxuries. "I am confident you will take this country forward on the road of prosperity, peace and stability," he said.

Bilawal warns of constitutional...

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that the judiciary is constantly "interfering" in Pakistan's politics. "The history of judiciary is before everyone," the young politico said, adding that his party had to fight for justice on behalf of its martyred leaders - Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto. He added that the PPP founder did not get a fair trial from the judiciary, while lamenting the delay in justice for common citizens. It was this year, he added, that his grandfather received justice posthumously. Commenting on PTI's bat symbol case, Bilawal said it was initially a result of the party's "rigged" intra-party elections, according to the court. He insisted that the verdict on the bat symbol was not issued by him or the government. "This verdict resurrected a dead political party after which, it started mobilising," he said, adding that the decision had political implications and benefitted the PTI at the last minute - closer to February 8 general polls.

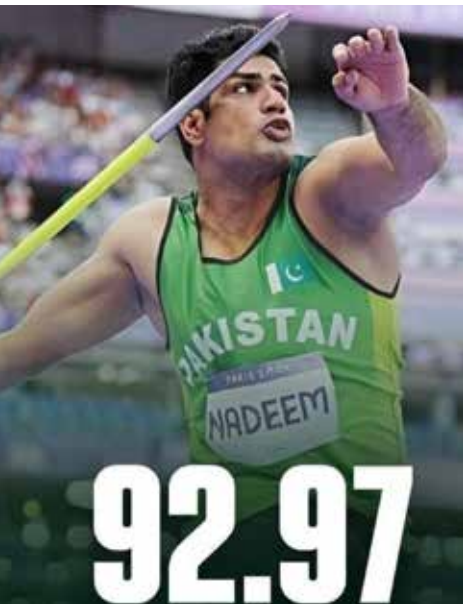
Countrymen continue to praise Arshad for his historic record

Arshad Nadeem becomes country's first Olympic gold medal winner



SPORTS DESK

MULTAN: Pakistani javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem sets up an Olympic record in the men's javelin throw final event held in Paris Olympic and grabbed a gold medal thus become Pakistan's first Olympic champion in 40 years. Arshad Nadeem who wrote his name in the stars in the Stade de France on Thursday night by winning the gold medal at the Olympic Games belongs to Mian Channu, Khanewal district. The record of 90.57, held by Norway's Andreas Thorkildsen since Beijing 2008, finally diminished into the rear view mirror as Nadeem surprised the world through his second throw covered the distance as 92.97. Nadeem threw his arms up in celebrations and near disbelief himself when the record flashed up on the board, confirming that it was the longest throw in the world this year. After the tremendous victory, Nadeem spoke about his difficult journey to the Olympics, saying he had



climbed to the top of the sport with no access to better grounds or training facilities. Using his current platform, he called for increased funding for track and field athletes in Pakistan. "I must say people have to be provided world-class facilities to develop athletes as the competition is getting tougher and tougher. You can't produce another Arshad without offering them those facilities", he said on the occasion. Nadeem's 92.97-meter throw in his second attempt broke the record and set the bar high early in the final completion. He beat silver medalist Neeraj Chopra by over three feet. Grenada's Anderson Peters won bronze. The country has won the last Olympic medal at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics with a bronze in men's field hockey, 32 years to the day before Thursday. The last gold medal for Pakistan was won at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics by the men's field hockey team. It may be important to note that Pakistan sent just seven athletes to Paris, tied with 2016 for the fewest athletes sent by the nation to the Summer



Olympics. Arshad's story is one of perseverance in spite of the shambolic athletic facilities in the cricket-mad country. "His success belongs to him and his family alone", reported the global media. Pakistan will surely celebrate the occasion - from his hometown of Mian Channu in the Punjab province to the southern metropolis of Karachi. In winning gold medal, Nadeem defeated his good friend and South Asian rival Neeraj Chopra, who won gold in Tokyo three years ago and is the reigning world champion. Both - Nadeem and Neeraj - will have to wait until Friday to get on the podium and wear the medals around their necks. Nadeem was born on January 2, 1997, in a small village near the city of Mian Channu in southern Punjab state. The third of seven siblings, Arshad Nadeem grew up in a household that struggled to make ends meet. His father, Muhammad Ashraf is a retired construction worker and the sole breadwinner. Nadeem's older brother, Shahid Azeem, 32, said their family used to eat meat only once a year, during Eid al-



Azha. Cricket was Arshad Nadeem's first love, said Shahid, talking to Al Jazeera, a Qatar-based media outlet. "I used to be a very good bowler and would participate in a lot of tournaments," Nadeem told. Shahid recalled that he could single-handedly get teams out. If he would have continued to play, I am sure he could have become as fast as Shoaib Akhtar, he added, comparing Nadeem to one of Pakistan's fastest bowlers, who retired in 2011. Rasheed Ahmad Saqi, a hotelier and resident of Mian Channu who scouts and invests in new athletic talent, saw Nadeem competing in a match in 2011. The 69-year old Saqi had competed on the provincial level in track and field, including in javelin throw, in the 1960s and 1970s. Two weeks after the event, Saqi was sitting in a hotel he owns in Mian Channu when Ashraf brought his son to his office. "Arshad is your son and your responsibility from today," Ashraf told him. "And from that day onwards, I have taken him under my wings," said Saqi, who became Nadeem's first coach and mentor.

Ricky Ponting rules out England coaching role

SYDNEY: Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting confirmed that he will never consider taking the coaching job of the England cricket team after Matthew Mott stepped down from his post. Mott was England's head coach when they won the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia by beating Pakistan in the final. However, doubts about his future were raised after the team's below-par performance in the ODI World Cup 2023 and T20 World Cup 2024 and he eventually stepped down. Speaking on The ICC Review, Ponting stated that as an Australian, he cannot take the job of coaching England. "No, I wouldn't ever consider doing that actually," Ponting said when asked about the England role. "I'm on record saying that international jobs for me right now are not really where my life is at as there's just so much more time taken up with an international job. "I've got other commitments as well, with my TV work and things that I do and also trying to balance that out with having a decent amount of home time, which I haven't had much of the last couple of years anyway. "Coaching other international teams is one thing, coaching England for an Australian is probably something slightly different, but right now there's sort of enough on my plate as I've got a bit more coming up in the next couple of months in the UK. "Australia's got some white-ball stuff coming up over there which I'll go and commentate, so no, right now if my name was on the list they can actually take it off." The former captain then expressed his desire to return to coaching in the IPL where he coached DC in the past. "I'd love to coach again in the IPL," he stated. "I've had a great time every year that I've been involved, whether that was in the early days as a player or the couple of years I had at Mumbai as head coach there. "And then I've had seven seasons at Delhi, which unfortunately didn't really work out the way that I would have wanted and certainly the way that the franchise would have wanted. - Agencies

Algerian boxer in gender row goes for Olympic gold

The boxing competition has been overshadowed by a bitter row over whether Khelif and Taiwanese fighter Lin Yu-ting should be allowed to compete in the women's category

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Algerian boxer Imane Khelif, at the centre of an Olympic gender eligibility row, goes for gold in Paris on Friday as Thierry Henry bids to lead France's footballers to glory. With just three days of sport to go at the Games, there is a packed athletics programme at the Stade de France. The boxing competition has been overshadowed by a bitter row over whether Khelif and Taiwanese fighter Lin Yu-ting should be allowed to compete in the women's category. Khelif and Lin were disqualified from last year's world championships by the International Boxing Association (IBA) after failing unspecified gender eligibility tests but she and Lin were cleared to compete in Paris. The International Olympic Committee is running the boxing in the French capital, which is being held at Roland Garros, the home of French tennis. The 25-year-old Khelif and Lin both fought at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago but there was no controversy at the time and neither won a medal. On Friday, Algeria's Khelif takes on China's Yang Liu in the 66kg final

while Lin is in action on Saturday in a different weight category. Cries of "Imane, Imane" rang out repeatedly before and during Khelif's semi-final bout on Tuesday as the crowd voiced their support for the boxer. "I am like all athletes, I am here to achieve my dream," she said. The penultimate evening of track and field action features the men's and women's 4x100m relays, the men's 400m hurdles, the women's 400m and the final event of the heptathlon, the 800m. US sprint star Noah Lyles was tipped for a sprint treble in Paris after winning the 100m earlier this week but he could only collect bronze in his favoured 200m on Thursday. Boxer in Olympics gender row moves into final, Thomas flies to 200m gold Minutes after the race, won by Botswana's Letsile Tsebe, Lyles revealed he had tested positive for Covid, saying the disease had "taken its toll". The American later posted on social media that his Games were likely over, but the US remain favourites to take gold in the sprint relay. In Friday's women's 10,000m final, Dutch runner Sifan Hassan will attempt to defend her crown after

coming up short in her bid for a historic long-distance treble. Defending champion and world record-holder Karsten Warholm is favourite to defend his title in the men's 400m hurdles. Henry "goosebumps": Henry's France take on Spain in the men's football final at the Parc des Princes. Henry, one of France's all-time great players, has led his country to the brink of their second football gold, 40 years after they won the title in Los Angeles. They have conceded just a single goal in five matches and Henry admits he does not want his Olympic dream to end. "I think it's going to be difficult waking up," he said. "Every night I watch and get goosebumps when I see guys win." Spain came from behind to beat Morocco 2-1 in their semi-final in Marseille in front of a hostile crowd, which will give them confidence that they can handle the pressure in the French capital. "It's another atmosphere that I will like," said Fermin Lopez, who has scored four goals at the Olympics after helping Spain win Euro 2024. In diving, China are targeting gold in the women's 3m springboard as they close in on clean sweep in Paris, with victories in all six events so far.

PM Shehbaz vows to extend utmost...

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confidence that "nothing is impossible, if we all put our best efforts". Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also congratulated the Pakistani Athlete Arshad Nadeem for winning Gold medal and setting new Olympic record in javelin throw in the Paris Olympic-2024 and said that this is the victory for the whole country and we all should celebrate. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with other dignitaries presented awards to top three exporters including rice, fruit and vegetable and meat sectors. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Commerce, Minister Jam Kamal said that the support of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the agriculture sector is exemplary and very encouraging for the entire community. He said that the Pakistan's Food sector is mature and the last year for the sector of Food and Agriculture remained excellent and achievements in the sector were manifestation of government's policies. He appreciated the TDAP for organizing the FoodAG-24 and said around 300 companies and 600 delegates are expected to attend the event. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed Pakistan's desire to promote trade relations with Türkiye.

PTI suspends hunger...

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the decision was made on the direction of the PTI founder. He said Imran Khan had directed the party members to prepare for the Independence Day celebrations in their constituencies. The party's secretary general, however, said the symbolic hunger strike would begin after a hiatus of few days and a formal announcement would be made in this regard. Meanwhile, Opposition alliance, Tehreek Tahafuz Ayin-e-Pakistan has announced to hold a public gathering in Lahore on August 27. Representative Akhuzada Hussain Yousafzai talking to media, he emphasised that Lahore public gathering would be the biggest and historic jalsa. He reiterated that this historic public gathering would pave the way for opening the doors of Adiala jail, referring to the release of Imran Khan. He disclosed that the venue for the public gathering would be finalised with the administration on August 16. He asserted that PTI was the biggest party of Pakistan and they requested Minar-e-Pakistan for the venue.

3rd arrested in planned attack on Swift's shows

VIENNA: The authorities in Vienna have arrested a third teenager in connection with a foiled terrorist attack on a Taylor Swift concert in the city this week. They said that they believe that the man, an 18-year-old Iraqi citizen living in Austria who is connected to the main suspect, was not part of the plan but had been in touch with the plotters and had recently sworn allegiance to the Islamic State. Ms. Swift was scheduled to stage three concerts in Vienna from Thursday through Saturday, but all three performances were canceled after the authorities arrested two teenagers over a plan to attack the sold-out, 50,000-seat stadium. Chancellor Karl Nehammer of Austria said the plot had been designed to leave a "trail of blood." Since arresting two

other teenagers on Wednesday, the authorities have been racing to investigate the planned attack, although after what the police said was a full confession by the main suspect, they said there was no longer an imminent danger. The police are looking into a network of people around the main suspect, a 19-year-old Austrian citizen of North Macedonian descent who they said had radicalized himself online and sworn allegiance to the Islamic State. Citing privacy rules, the authorities have declined to name the suspects publicly, but they said that both teenagers arrested on Wednesday were born in Austria and held Austrian citizenship. On Friday, the interior minister, Gerhard Karner, announced that he was starting the process of revoking the

Iraqi man's residency permit, under a special provision designed to deal with dangerous refugees or immigrants, because of his recent pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State. The police have said that while he was not part of the plot, the man was in the same "social environment" as the main suspect and that he had contact with him. During a raid on the main suspect's house on Wednesday, the police said, officers found chemicals used to make bombs, as well as explosives, timers, machetes, knives and a functioning police siren, which investigators believe he planned to use to gain access to or move around the area around the stadium. The police are currently in the process of forensically analyzing electronics and other items found in the search of the main suspect's house. The concert cancellations affected about 200,000 Taylor Swift fans, some of whom had traveled to Europe from other continents to see her perform as part of her Eras Tour. - Agencies

Nadeem's victory: Yasir Pirzada extends greetings

ISLAMABAD: The Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanaullah Khan, Secretary Nadeem Irshad Kayani, and Director General of Pakistan Sports Board, Yasir Pirzada, have congratulated Pakistani athlete Arshad Nadeem on winning the gold medal at the Paris Olympics 2024. Rana Sanaullah, who also holds the portfolio of the Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) praised Arshad Nadeem's outstanding performance, saying that this victory is a historic moment for Pakistan, one that the entire nation takes pride in, said a press release. Secretary Nadeem Irshad Kayani also commended Arshad Nadeem on his Olympic gold medal win, calling it a major achievement for Pakistan. Director General of Pakistan Sports Board, Yasir Pirzada, lauded Arshad Nadeem's dedication and hard work, emphasizing that his victory is a source of pride for Pakistan and will always be remembered as a significant accomplishment. - DNA

Legacy, Karachi clinch spots in women's c'ship final

Eman Mustafa was the star of the match, delivering an outstanding performance with four goals. Kayanat Bukhari also contributed significantly, scoring a brace to secure the win for Legacy FC



USAMA ARSHAD

ISLAMABAD: Legacy FC and Karachi City FC have secured their spots in the final of the National Women's Football Club Championship 2024, following their impressive performances in the semi-final matches held at Jinnah Sports Complex, Islamabad. In the first semi-final, Legacy FC showcased their dominance on the field with a resounding 6-0 victory over Karachi United. Eman Mustafa was the star of the match, delivering an outstanding per-

formance with four goals. Kayanat Bukhari also contributed significantly, scoring a brace to secure the win for Legacy FC. The second semi-final saw Karachi City FC display their prowess, overwhelming Hazara Quetta with an 8-0 triumph. Zahmena Malik and Suha Hirani each scored a brace, while Nadia, Zulfia, Sanah and Aliza added a goal each, ensuring Karachi City FC's place in the final. Karachi City FC will face Legacy FC in the final on August 10, 2024, at 8:30 PM at the Jinnah Football Stadium, Islamabad.



Briefs

UK king criticized for staying silent

LONDON: Britain's King Charles III has faced criticism for remaining silent on the near-daily riots seen since early last week following a deadly knife attack that killed three children. While the monarch and his wife Camilla conveyed their condolences to the families of the three girls killed in the mass stabbing on July 29, Buckingham Palace has not commented on the riots which ensued. "I am surprised that the king as head of state hasn't come out more forcefully, given that it's a perilous moment for the United Kingdom," said historian and royal commentator Ed Owens. However, according to constitutional law expert Craig Prescott "the monarchy does not comment on current political events." "Once the riots have subsided, you might expect members of the royal family to visit places affected and perhaps to see them more in multicultural settings," Prescott said in a post on X. "If the king speaks out about this, then what about the next big issue, and the one after that.—APP

Two-thirds of Sudanese lack access to medical care

LONDON : The World Health Organization (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reported on Thursday that two-thirds of the population in Sudan is unable to access medical care because of the ongoing conflict. "Two-thirds of people in Sudan cannot go to a hospital or see a doctor due to the ongoing conflict," Ghebreyesus said on X. "On top of that, thousands of people are facing famine," Tedros said. He supported the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' call to the Security Council for assistance in finding a peaceful and enduring resolution for the people of Sudan. The ongoing war in Sudan between the army and the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has driven the Zamzam camp near Darfur's besieged city of el-Fasher into famine, according to a UN-backed assessment released earlier this month. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) review, utilized by UN agencies, revealed that "famine is ongoing in July 2024 in Zamzam camp." "The main drivers of famine in Zamzam camp are conflict and lack of humanitarian access," the report indicated. Aid organization Plan International highlighted that "the IPC's latest report confirms what we and our fellow humanitarians have feared for months: that children in Sudan, having endured more than a year of harrowing conflict, are now dying of hunger.—APP

China appeals added EU tariffs on electric vehicles

BEIJING : China filed an appeal on Friday at the World Trade Organization (WTO) over the addition of tariffs imposed by the European Union on Chinese electric vehicles. On August 5, the Financial Times reported that EU nations are expected to back the proposed tariffs that would be imposed on Chinese electric vehicles in November, citing European Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis. This came after European Commission spokesperson Eric Mamer stated in July that the commission intended to apply import taxes on Chinese electric vehicles. Speaking to FT, Dombrovskis said, "It's clear that member states realize the need to protect the EU's car industry because this risk of injury is there. Chinese battery electric vehicle market share is growing very rapidly. That subsidization is there," stressing the need for the matter "to be addressed." It is anticipated that member states will vote on the tariff proposal in late October, with the decision going into effect in November.—APP



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presenting awards to the best performing exporters of the Food and Agriculture sector at the 2nd International Food & Agriculture Exhibition in Karachi on August 9, 2024.—DNA

Turkish FM calls for int'l trial of Gaza perpetrators

Fidan reiterated Türkiye's support for the genocide case initiated by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice

NEWS DESK

ANKARA : Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has called for the perpetrators of the massacres in Gaza to be held accountable, insisting they must not go unpunished. Speaking at a joint press conference in Istanbul on Friday alongside Montenegro's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ervin Ibrahimovic, Fidan underlined the importance of exerting international pressure on Israel to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza and prevent further suffering of the Palestinian people. Fidan reiterated Türkiye's support for the genocide case initiated by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice, underscoring Türkiye's involvement in the legal proceedings. Ankara became a party to the case on Wednesday. "The region cannot endure more tensions,



conflicts, or wars. Israel must be stopped," Fidan stated, directing his message to countries that unconditionally support Israel and supply it with weapons. "It is clear who is escalating the enson. Stop blaming the wrong parties. Achieving peace and stability in the Middle East requires reining in Israel's actions. Those who support Israel un-

conditionally are complicit in the massacre in Gaza." Fidan reiterated Türkiye's commitment to peace and stability in the region, stressing the urgent need to halt Israel's aggressive policies to avoid further complicity in the ongoing violence. Ibrahimovic is visiting Türkiye to discuss bilateral ties, Gaza, and other issues with Turkish officials. Meanwhile, The EU on Friday announced support for the latest call by the US, Egypt, and Qatar in pressing for a cease-fire in Gaza, where Israel has killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians since Oct. 7 and levelled much of the blockaded territory. "The EU joins Egypt, Qatar & the US in their call for concluding, without delay, the ceasefire & hostages release deal," the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on X. "We reiterate our full support to

their mediation to put an end to the unbearable cycle of suffering. The deal will also pave the way for regional de-escalation," he added. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stressed that an urgent cease-fire in Gaza is the "only way to save lives, restore hope for peace, and secure the return of hostages." "Thus I strongly support the efforts led by the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar to help achieve the peace and stability the region needs," she said on X. Egyptian, Qatari, and US mediators urged Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas on Thursday to conclude a cease-fire and hostage release deal with no further delays or excuses. A trilateral joint statement published by the Qatari Amiri Diwan, the emir's office, said: "There is no further time to waste nor excuses from any party for

further delay." The mediators expressed readiness "to present a final bridging proposal that resolves the remaining implementation issues in a manner that meets the expectations of all parties." They also called on Israel and Hamas "to resume urgent discussions on Aug. 15 in Doha or Cairo to close all remaining gaps and commence implementation of the deal without further delay." Indirect talks mediated by the US, Qatar, and Egypt have failed to agree on a permanent cease-fire and a hostage-prisoner swap. A week-long truce in November saw exchange of some of the around 250 hostages who were held during the Hamas incursion last October, in return of Palestinian prisoners. Tensions between the two sides escalated after the July 31 assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran's capital Tehran. The resistance group and Iran have blamed Israel for the attack, vowing revenge.

Maduro blocks X access for 10 days

CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Thursday took tensions with social media platform X and its owner Elon Musk to new heights, banning the platform in the South American country for 10 days amid furore over a disputed presidential election. Maduro said he signed a resolution presented by regulator Conatel which "has decided to take social network X, formerly known as Twitter, out of circulation for 10 days" and accused Musk of inciting hate, civil war, and death. "X get out of Venezuela for 10 days!" he said in a speech which was broadcast on state television. Maduro and Musk have frequently traded barbs over X, with the platform's owner comparing the Venezuelan president to a donkey, while Maduro has blamed Musk for being a driving force behind protests and dissent following the election. They have also offered and accepted challenges to fight each other in comments on X and via Venezuelan state television. The temporary ban on X represents another swipe at Big Tech, after Maduro this week urged supporters to abandon Meta-owned WhatsApp in favor of Telegram or WeChat, saying the messaging app was being used to threaten the families of soldiers and police officers. WhatsApp declined to comment. X did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Venezuela's electoral authority proclaimed Maduro the winner of the July 28 presidential election with some 51% of the vote, although it has yet to produce the voting tallies. The declaration sparked widespread accusations of fraud and protests which were promoted across social media. Local advocacy group the Venezuelan Observatory for Social Conflict reports at least 23 people have been killed in protests.—APP

Japan PM scraps overseas trip after 'megaquake' advisory

WEB DESK

TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Friday canceled a trip to Central Asia after earthquake scientists warned the country should prepare for a possible "megaquake." The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) issued the advisory on Thursday after eight people were injured by a tremor of magnitude 7.1 in the south. Kishida was due Friday to travel to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia and had planned to attend a regional summit. "As the prime minister with the highest responsibility for crisis man-

agement, I decided I should stay in Japan for at least a week," he told reporters. Kishida added that the public must be feeling "very anxious" after the JMA issued its first advisory under a new system drawn up following a major magnitude 9.0 earthquake in 2011 which triggered a deadly tsunami and nuclear disaster. "The likelihood of a new major earthquake is higher than normal, but this is not an indication that a major earthquake will definitely occur," the JMA said. Traffic lights and cars shook and dishes fell off shelves during Thursday's earthquake off the southern island of Kyushu, but no serious dam-

age was reported. The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said eight people were hurt—including several hit by falling objects. Sitting on top of four major tectonic plates, the Japanese archipelago of 125 million people sees some 1,500 quakes every year, most of them minor. Even with larger tremors the impact is generally contained thanks to advanced building techniques and well-practiced emergency procedures. The government has previously said a megaquake has a roughly 70 percent probability of striking within the next 30 years. It could affect a large swath of the Pacific coastline of Japan and threaten an estimated

South Korea witnesses surge in COVID-19 cases

SEOUL : South Korea announced on Friday an increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations as the country faces a summertime resurgence of the virus. According to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, the number of people admitted to hospitals nationwide for COVID-19 has reached 861 in the first week of August, marking the highest level since early February. This number represents a high rise from 148 hospitalizations in the second week of July, 226 in the third week, and 475 in the fourth week, Seoul-based Yonhap news agency reported. The data reveals that 65.2% of the inpatients this month are aged 65 and older, with another 18.1% aged between 50 and 64. In response to the surge, the government has decided to intensify its monitoring of senior citizens and other high-risk groups. South Korea has reported approximately 34.4 million confirmed COVID-19 cases since the pandemic began in 2019, according to Statista data.—APP

Lassa fever perished 163 in Nigeria

ABUJA: The death toll in Nigeria from Lassa fever, a deadly hemorrhagic disease, rose to 163 on Thursday. According to a statement from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, the Lassa fever outbreak continues to spread across 34 states and the Federal Capital Territory. The Nigerian government previously announced that three medications have been identified for treating the disease. During the dry season, which typically runs from November to May, Lassa fever cases tend to increase. In 2023, a total of 1,227 cases of Lassa fever were detected and 219 people lost their lives. Lassa fever, which is also found in several other African countries like Mali, Togo, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, was first detected in Nigeria in northeastern Borno state in 1969. On Jan. 23, 2019, the Nigerian government declared a state of emergency due to a Lassa fever outbreak. The disease is transmitted through contact with rat feces, can spread from person to person, and can cause fatal hemorrhagic fever.—APP

Brazil, Nicaragua expel each other's envoy

BRASÍLIA : Brazil and Nicaragua expelled each other's ambassadors on Thursday, as souring relations between the two Latin American nations deepened into a fresh diplomatic feud. A Brazilian diplomatic source told AFP that the latest flareup in tensions came after Brazil's ambassador to Nicaragua skipped an official ceremony in Managua. The event was the July 19 commemoration of Nicaragua's Sandinista revolution that would eventually lead to President Daniel Ortega coming to power, several exiled Nicaraguan opposition media reported. Brazil's ambassador was not the only diplomat absent from the ceremony, the source noted. Nicaragua nonetheless asked the Brazilian ambassador to leave the country, leading Brasilia to reciprocate on Thursday. Nicaraguan Vice President Rosario Murillo, who is also the wife of President Daniel Ortega, announced on state media that Brazil's ambassador "has left our country, our Nicaragua" and that their own ambassador "is on her way to our homeland." Relations between the two governments have soured since Ortega dismissed Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's efforts to mediate, at Pope Francis' request, talks aimed at securing the release of an imprisoned bishop. In January, Nicaragua sent two Roman Catholic bishops, 13 priests, and three seminarians to Rome. Yesterday, the Nicaraguan government announced deporting to Rome seven Catholic priests detained in July, Nicaraguan Vice President Rosario Murillo said.—APP

Far-right riots raise specter of civil war in UK

Violence by far-right groups was sparked by the fatal stabbing of three young girls in Southport last week and stoked by misinformation on social media

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON : Britain is facing a national crisis in the face of the worst rioting in 13 years. Violence by far-right groups was sparked by the fatal stabbing of three young girls in Southport last week and stoked by misinformation on social media. A tense few hours in this part of London ahead of a potential anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, far-right attack; their target, a legal center in this public building that supports refugees. There is fear in the air, shops and offices have closed early. There's a heavy police presence but before long anti racist protesters assemble to protect the building, their numbers swelling quickly. The far right had threatened online

that they would be here by 8pm. Darkness has started setting in and the police are still lined up outside the library to protect it with counter protests still ongoing behind us. Businesses shut down earlier in the day in anticipation of far-right rioters showing up in the area. But there is no sign of them. Meanwhile, Muslim healthcare professionals in the UK have experienced a rise in racism in the past week, according to the president of the British Islamic Medical Association. Dr. Salman Waqar said the increase in incidents comes amid a week of riots driven by far-right mobs across the UK, leaving medical staff living in fear. The riots began after misinformation was spread online in the aftermath of a knife attack in Southport that left three young

girls dead. Social media posts alleged that the attacker was a Muslim asylum-seeker. The individual arrested and charged with the offenses was later identified as a Cardiff-born Christian, but rioters subsequently targeted mosques, Muslim neighborhoods and businesses, and facilities housing asylum-seekers across the country. "I've seen some really terrible messages ... of people having to close up their GP surgery early, of people being trapped in their practices, of people having to take taxis back and forth from work, people not going on home visits, people working remotely from home, there's too many to mention and to count," Waqar told The Guardian. "From our perspective, in terms of our members reporting how fearful they are, reporting how they're

having to think twice about what they do, international colleagues questioning whether or not they have a future in the UK. "That is unprecedented, I've never seen anything like this before. In terms of the volume, in terms of the strength of feeling, there is no comparison to it." He added: "The amount of chatter on social media, on WhatsApp groups, the amount of messages that people are sending to each other to be safe, to look out for one another, that is not normal. And that is absolutely alarming, it's unprecedented." The British Egyptian Medical Association, meanwhile, said in a statement that its members had experienced a "troubling increase in fear of racist abuse and discrimination" in the past week. "Our members, especially those working in frontline healthcare roles,

have expressed heightened concerns about their safety and well-being in light of these incidents. The environment has become increasingly hostile, contributing to significant stress and anxiety among medical professionals," said BEMA, which represents more than 11,000 medical staff in the UK. "The atmosphere of intimidation has led to increased absenteeism, reduced morale and a general sense of insecurity among healthcare workers. "This situation is detrimental to the overall healthcare delivery system, as it affects the wellbeing of those who are critical to its operation." Health Secretary Wes Streeting said earlier this week that anyone racially abusing medical staff "can and should" be turned away from National Health Service hospitals and doctors' surgeries.

Briefs

Pakistan reports 14th polio case of 2024

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Another polio case emerged in Pakistan as a 20-month-old boy has been confirmed to be infected with the virus, ARY News reported citing the National Institute of Health (NIH) sources. The sources said that the affected child belonged to the KilaSaifulah district of Balochistan. This is the 14th polio case that has been reported in Pakistan so far this year out of which 11 emerged from Balochistan alone. The child is affected with Wild Polio Virus Type 1 and he showed polio symptoms on July 22. The National Institute of Health sources said that the genetic relationship of the polio virus in the affected child is being investigated. It is pertinent to mention here that 11 polio cases have been reported from Balochistan, two from Sindh, and one from Punjab this year. Earlier, the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health, Islamabad, has confirmed the detection of the virus in an environmental sample from nine districts, taking the total number of districts with virus presence to 52 so far this year.

BYC sit-in ends after reaching agreement

DNA

QUETTA: The Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) and the government reached an agreement on Friday, bringing an end to the 11-day sit-ins across various parts of Balochistan, Express News reported. Following the negotiations, a committee has been established to oversee the implementation of all agreed-upon points. Once their demands are met, participants of the Gwadar sit-in are expected to proceed to Turbat in a rally today. Negotiations were led by Provincial Minister Zahoor Buledi, along with the Commissioner of Makran Division, the Deputy Commissioner of Gwadar, and the SSP. The BYC presented their demands, including the release of detained activists, the withdrawal of cases, and compensation for public losses. It was agreed that no force would be used against peaceful gatherings, and the Balochistan Home Department would issue a notification. Additionally, all roads in Gwadar and Makran will be reopened, and communication networks restored. The Baloch Yakjehti Committee has announced plans to march from Gwadar to Turbat, where they will outline their future course of action.

NA passes resolution to confer civil award on Arshad

FAISAL SHEKH

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly (NA) on Friday unanimously passed a resolution on Friday to confer a civil award on Arshad Nadeem, who made history by winning a gold medal at the Paris Olympics last night. The resolution, presented during the NA session, praised Nadeem's remarkable achievement in the javelin throw event, where he set an Olympic record with a throw of 92.97m, securing Pakistan's first Olympic gold in 40 years. The resolution further recommended that the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari bestow a civil award upon Nadeem in recognition of his extraordinary accomplishment. The resolution was passed with unanimous support. Arshad Nadeem ended the country's 32-year medal drought in the Olympics after bagging a gold medal with the longest throw of 92.97 meters in the javelin final at the Paris Olympics 2024. Arshad Nadeem became the first-ever individual gold medalist in the Olympics for Pakistan.

'Generals, bureaucrats have taken control of country': CJP

Supreme Court halts removal of Wildlife Board chairperson and blocks transfer to Interior Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has intervened to prevent the removal of Rana Saeed as Chairperson of the Wildlife Board, while also suspending the notification that placed the Wildlife Board under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry. During a hearing concerning commercial activities in the Margalla National Park, Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa remarked, "The generals and bureaucrats have taken control of the country's system, and the Attorney General is unaware of the proceedings." According to Express News, the Supreme Court summoned Cabinet Secretary Kamran Ali Afzal and Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan, as well as the owner of the private Monal restaurant, Luqman Ali Afzal. The chief justice directed that the matter be brought to the attention of the prime minister. The court was informed that the chairperson of the Wildlife Board had been removed from her position, and following a court order, the Wildlife Department was placed under the Interior Ministry. Chief Justice Isa questioned this move, stating, "The Interior Ministry's role is to maintain law and order. The government's actions appear to be an attempt to override the court's decision to protect national assets. What is the relationship between the owner of the private hotel and the Cabinet Secretary? Is the Cabinet Secretary not the brother of the hotel owner? The Cabinet Secretary got the summary to remove the Wildlife Board chairperson approved by the prime minister." After a brief recess, Attorney General Awan appeared in court, and the judges pressed for an immediate response regarding the transfer of the Margalla



Hills National Park to the Interior Ministry. The court also sought details about the Pine City housing project located within the Margalla Hills. Attorney General Awan assured the court that the issue of Rana Saeed's removal and the park's transfer would be brought to the prime minister's attention, leading the court to adjourn the hearing until August 15. During the session, Chief Justice Isa emphasised the increasing control of the country by military and bureaucratic powers, criticising the Attorney General for being out of touch with how things are unfolding. A notable moment occurred when Cabinet Secretary Kamran Afzal referred to the Prime Minister as "Sahib," prompting Chief Justice Isa to retort, "Refer to him as the Prime Minister or Mr Shehbaz Sharif. There is no such thing as 'Prime Minister Sahib' in English; break free from the chains of servitude." Secretary of Climate Change informed the court that the power of judicial review lies with the courts and declined to comment further. In a related matter, the court also discussed the transfer of the Wildlife Board under the Interior Ministry and the management of the Wildlife Board. Attorney General Awan assured the court that the notification to transfer the Wildlife Board to the Interior Ministry would be halted and that the decision to remove Rana Saeed would be reversed. The Supreme Court directed that the matter be brought to the prime minister's notice and adjourned the case until August 15, requesting details regarding the Pine City project.

JI's sit-in achieved its targets: Hafiz Naeem

Hafiz Naeem urged the government to cut its expenditures

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami emir Hafiz Naeem Rehman said that they have achieved the targets through its historical sit-in staged in Rawalpindi against the exorbitant electricity bills. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Friday, he said that the JI gave some time to the government to reconsider its policies pertaining to the Independent Power Producers (IPPs). "We have not called off our sit-in. We just put it on hold for some days and gave time to the government," JI emir said. He urged the government to cut its expenditures in order to avoid the JI's sit-in in future. Hafiz Naeem added that the JI gave awareness to the people over the issues of exorbitant electricity bills and IPPs. "The joint committee of JI and government will review the electricity bills within a month," he said. Earlier, the government and JI had reached an agreement pertaining to relief for the masses in electricity bills, reduction in taxes for the salaried class and reviewing the IPPs contracts. The JI had staged a sit-in for its demands. Several rounds of talks between the government and the JI took place and on Thursday their negotiations concluded with the formation of a taskforce to resolve issues and announcement from the Jamaat to postpone its sit-in. Both sides reached an agreement with respect to reducing power tariff, reviewing IPPs contracts, and cutting taxes imposed on salaried class. Talking to journalists, JI Naib emir Liaquat Baloch had said, "An empowered taskforce has been set up which will complete its work in a month and submit its report to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "The sit-in staged by JI on July 26 has created a history as the government set up a taskforce to meet the JI's demands," he said. The government has also agreed on the ToRs of the taskforce, which include selecting experts from the public-private sector, involving the Wapda chairman and auditor general, and hiring a private firm and chartered accountants to examine the IPPs matters, Baloch said.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah. - DNA

Israel agrees to resume Gaza truce talks next week

A framework agreement was "now on the table, with only the details of implementation" left to conclude, and the mediators were "prepared to present a final bridging proposal" to resolve remaining issues, they said

NEWS DESK

GAZA STRIP: Palestinian Territories, Aug 8, 2024 Agence France Presse: Israel has agreed to resume Gaza ceasefire talks on August 15 at the demand of US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on Thursday, as regional tensions skyrocket over the war. Gaza's Hamas-controlled civil defense agency said Israeli bombardment killed more than 18 people in strikes on two schools on Thursday, as Iran accused Israel of wanting to spread war in the Middle East. After a week-long pause in November, US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators have endeavoured to secure a second truce in the 10-month-old war sparked by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel. In a joint statement on Thursday, the three countries' leaders invited the warring parties to resume talks on August 15 in Doha or Cairo "to close all remaining gaps and commence implementation of the deal without further delay." A framework agreement was "now on the table, with only the details of implementation" left to conclude, and the mediators were "prepared to present a final bridging proposal" to resolve remaining issues, they said. Netanyahu's office said later Thursday Israel would send a negotiating team on August 15 "to the agreed place to conclude the details of implementing a deal." A prospective cessation of hostilities also involving the release of hostages held in Gaza and scaled-up aid deliveries has centered around a phased deal beginning with an initial truce. Recent discussions have focused on a framework outlined by US President Joe Biden in late May which he said

had been proposed by Israel. "It's not like the agreement's going to be ready to sign on Thursday. There's still a significant amount of work to do," a senior Biden administration official said of the talks that come after calls between Biden and the Egyptian and Qatari leaders this week. Israel had been "very receptive" to the idea of the talks, the official told reporters on condition of anonymity, rejecting suggestions that Netanyahu was stalling on a deal. The announcement of the talks came after Hamas named YahyaSinwar - the alleged mstermind of the October 7 attack - as its new leader, sparking fears the torturous negotiations have become even more difficult. On the ground in Gaza, the Hamas-controlled civil defense agency said Israeli strikes hit Al-Zahra and Abdel Fattah Hamoud schools in Gaza City, killing more than 18 people. Senior agency official Mohammad Al-Mughayyir said 60 people were wounded and more than 40 still missing. "This is a clear targeting of schools and safe civilian facilities in the Gaza Strip," he said. The Israeli military said the schools housed Hamas command centers. At least 13 people were killed elsewhere in Gaza, rescuers and medics reported, as the Israeli military issued its latest evacuation order, for parts of the main southern city of Khan Yunis. Diplomats pressed efforts to defuse tensions in the region, sky-high after the killing of two top militant leaders in attacks blamed on Israel that the militants and their Iranian backers have vowed to avenge. Iran's acting foreign minister, Ali Bagheri, told AFP that Israel had committed "a strategic mistake" by killing Hamas's political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran last week - hours after the assassination in Beirut of Hezbollah's military chief.

Naqvi assures strict action against beggars

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi met Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki on Friday. Mr. Naqvi visited the Saudi Embassy in the Diplomatic Enclave where the Saudi ambassador welcomed him. Duo discussed matters of mutual interest including Pak-Saudi relations. During the meeting, Naqvi assured the ambassador of complete crackdown against professional Pakistani beggars in Saudi Arabia and ordered the Federal Investigation Agency to start action against them. He said that beggars' mafia was tarnishing the image of Pakistan, adding that Pakistan had deep-seated connection with Saudi Arabia which was based on love and respect. The Saudi ambassador thanked the Interior Minister for visiting him by saying that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were brothers.

PML-N plans to change Sindh Governor

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is reportedly making efforts to change the Governor of Sindh, a private news channel reported, citing sources familiar with the matter. Sources close to the development revealed that the, discussions between the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and PML-N have been ongoing regarding the potential change of Sindh governor. Sources indicate that the PPP has agreed to the name proposed by PML-N, suggesting former Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency (DG-FIA) and currently president of the PML-N Sindh, Bashir Memon, as the new Governor of Sindh.

UK king criticized for staying silent

LONDON: Britain's King Charles III has faced criticism for remaining silent on the near-daily riots seen since early last week following a deadly knife attack that killed three children. While the monarch and his wife Camilla conveyed their condolences to the families of the three girls killed in the mass stabbing on July 29, Buckingham Palace has not commented on the riots which ensued. "I am surprised that the king as head of state hasn't come out more forcefully, given that it's a perilous moment for the United Kingdom," said historian and royal commentator Ed Owens. However, according to constitutional law expert Craig Prescott "the monarchy does not comment on current political events." "Once the riots have subsided, you might expect members of the royal family to visit places affected and perhaps to see them more in multicultural settings," Prescott said in a post on X. "If the king speaks out about this, then what about the next big issue, and the one after that." Charles's silence is in keeping with his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II, who remained similarly quiet during the last wave of riots which shook England in 2011. It is typically explained by the expectation that British monarchs avoid commenting on anything deemed political. Owens argued Charles, who has gradually resumed public duties after a cancer diagnosis earlier this year, may not have publicly reacted due to two main reasons. On the one hand, he may have been "advised by his government that it would be unwise at this stage of intervene directly." On the other, the monarch might himself have deemed the issue too "combustible." "To court controversy can lead to the alienation of certain sections of the British public," Owens told AFP. Officials have blamed the riots, which have seen mosques and immigration-linked sites targeted, on far-right elements and "thugs." They are accused of trying to use the stabbing tragedy and growing mainstream right-wing concern over immigration levels to further their extreme cause. Owens noted the monarch has previously celebrated the benefits of legal migration as well as multiculturalism. But his current silence is also "characteristic of a deeper silence on this very specific topic of illegal migration," which remains politically divisive, he added. - Agencies

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