

# Islamabad POST

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**Journalists are paid to malign judiciary: CJP**

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**Arshad aims to compete till 2032 Olympics**

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## Further investigation continuous

# Three ex-army officers taken into custody in Faiz Hameed case

Those who have been arrested include Brig ® Ghaffar and Brig ® Naeem. One colonel Asim has also been arrested

CENTRELINE REPORT

RAWALPINDI: In connection with the Field General Court Martial (FGCM) proceedings of Lieutenant General (ret'd) Faiz Hamid, three more retired officers have been taken into military custody, the army's media wing said on Thursday. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) added that the retired officers were arrested for their actions prejudicial to military discipline. Those who have been arrested include Brig ® Ghaffar and Brig ® Naeem. One colonel Asim has also been arrested. "Further investigations of certain retired officers and their accomplices for fomenting instability at the behest of and in collusion with vested political interests are continuing," it also said. On August 12, the ISPR said Gen Faiz had been taken into custody by the army over allegations of land grabbing and snatching valuables from the owner of a private housing society. "Complying with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a detailed court of inquiry was undertaken by the Pakistan Army to ascertain the correctness of complaints in Top City Case made against Lt Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hamid," the ISPR had said. Consequently, the ISPR had said appropriate disciplinary action had been initiated against the former spymaster under provisions of the Pakistan Army Act. It had added that multiple instances of violation of the Pakistan Army Act post-retirement had also been established against the former general, who also served as Peshawar corps commander. "The process of Field General Court Martial has been initiated and Lt Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hamid has been taken into military custody," the ISPR had said in the communique. The arrest was made in connection with a petition filed by a housing society's chief executive officer (CEO) in the Supreme Court last year, wherein the former ISI director general (DG) was accused of land grabbing and stealing valuables during a raid. In a plea filed with the apex court's human rights cell (HRC) in November 2023, the petitioner sought action against the former DG ISI.

## COAS warns of attempts to create rift between public and Army

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir has paid heartfelt tribute to the contributions of the retired personnel, lauding their dedication and instrumental role in shaping the nation's history. The COAS hosted a graceful reception in honor of Pakistan Army veterans on the occasion of Independence Day. The event brought together a multitude of retired army officers and soldiers, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The COAS paid heartfelt tribute to the contributions of the retired personnel, lauding their dedication and instrumental role in shaping the nation's history. He emphasized the paramount importance of unity and resilience in the face of challenges, urging veterans to continue playing a vital role in Pakistan's progress and development.

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

The COAS also cautioned against the insidious threat of fake news and propaganda being perpetrated by inimical elements to weaken the bond between the people of Pakistan and the Armed Forces. He reassured that the unwavering support of the nation, including the veterans would foil all such futile efforts. The veterans expressed faith and confidence in the leadership of the Pakistan Army, pledging their support in combating both internal and external security challenges. The event served as a testament to the unbreakable bond between the Pakistan Army and its veterans, united in their commitment to the nation's prosperity and security.

## MOROCCAN AWARD



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan Mohamed Karmoune, who is also Dean of the African group, confers prestigious Wissam Allaoui, National medal by His Majesty the King of Morocco, on Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan, who has recently finished his posting in Morocco as Pakistan's Ambassador. Hamid Asghar thanked His Majesty for the award and hoped relations between the two countries would further be cemented. - DNA

## Predicts more arrests

Every institution should begin self-accountability process, says Atta Tarar  
Faiz Hameed and PTI founder were in contact, says Ata Tarar

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has indicated that the recent wave of arrests will not be confined to a single institution, signaling a broader crackdown on attempts to destabilize the country. Addressing a press conference on Thursday, Tarar emphasized that maintaining peace and order remains



Omar Ayub says Country cannot move forward with injustices

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub has said that the country cannot move

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## Briefs

**Security forces kill 7 terrorists in Kurram**

The militant's hideout was also busted and a large quantity of weapons was recovered

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces on Thursday killed seven terrorists in an intelligence based operation in Kurram district. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a statement, said the operation was conducted on reported presence of the terrorists. During conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the militant's location, as result of which, seven terrorists of "Fitna Al Khawarij" were killed, while five of them got injured. The militant's hideout was also busted and a large quantity of weapons, ammunition & explosives was recovered.

**Hammad steps down as PTI Punjab president**

Says Asghar played a key role in conducting successful rallies

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PTI leader Hammad Azhar has announced his resignation from the position of Punjab party chairman. He stated that the party's leadership should be entrusted to those closely connected with PTI founder Imran Khan. "Unfortunately, I am not connected to the PTI founder. I was, and always will be, a worker of Imran Khan," he said. Azhar mentioned that he could not visit Adiala Jail due to strict surveillance of his movements and expressed disagreement with certain decisions made by the party leadership.

## 'Gen Faiz was our asset'

# Imran Khan accuses Bajwa of removing Faiz

Jailed PTI founder says he did not want to remove then ISI chief from his office due to Afghanistan issue

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Days after the former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lieutenant General (ret'd) Faiz Hamid was taken into custody by the Pakistan Army, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) founder Imran Khan has distanced himself from the retired general. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on August 12 announced the arrest of the former ISI chief, saying that he was "taken into custody" over allegations of land grabbing and snatching valuables from the owner of a private housing society. "Complying with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a detailed court of inquiry was undertaken by the Pakistan Army to ascertain the correctness of complaints in the Top City Case made against Lt Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hamid," the army's media wing said earlier this week. "I have no connection with General (ret'd) Faiz," the incarcerated PTI leader said on Thursday while talking to journalists at Adiala Jail. "If the military wants

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## PML-N decides to fully support establishment

Nawaz ordered party leaders to be careful while making statements on Faiz Hameed case

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif directed the party leaders to be very careful while issuing statements on Faiz Hameed case. Chairing a high-level party meeting in Model Town Lahore, Nawaz Sharif said that all party leaders should refrain from giving emotional statements. It was also decided to fully support the government and the establishment. During the meeting,

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## Baker takes charge as deputy chief of US mission

Natalie served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Doha, Qatar



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) Mission to Pakistan on Thursday welcomed the arrival of Deputy Chief of Mission Natalie A Baker. Prior to assuming the duties of Deputy Chief of Mission at US Embassy Islamabad, Natalie served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Doha, Qatar. Natalie has previously served as Director of the Office of North African Affairs in the US Department

Continued on Page 06

# MBS 'at risk of assassination' over Israel-Saudi normalisation

Crown prince says he's putting his life in danger by pursuing grand bargain with US, Israel, as per Politico

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: A report published in US-based news publication Politico has claimed that the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) is at risk of assassination because of his push for normalisation of ties with Israel. The report said the Saudi crown prince told members of US Congress that he was putting his life in danger by pursuing a grand bargain with the US and Israel that includes normalising Saudi-Israeli ties. According to Politico, MBS, referencing the slain Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat - who was assassinated after making a peace deal with Israel - questioned, "What did the US do to protect him?" He also opened up about the threats he is facing in explaining why any such deal should include a true path to a Palestinian state, especially as the Gaza war has now intensified Arab fury against Israel. The report said the discussion with MBS was revealed to Politico's correspondent by a former US official briefed on the conversations and



## New round of Gaza ceasefire talks begins in Qatar

FOREIGN DESK

DOHA/CAIRO: A new round of Gaza ceasefire talks was underway in the Qatari capital Doha on Thursday afternoon, an official briefed on the meeting told Reuters, with Israel's spy chief joining his US and Egyptian counterparts and Qatar's prime minister for the closed-door meeting. The talks, an effort to end 10 months of fighting in the Palestinian enclave and bring 115 Israeli and foreign hostages home, were put together as Iran appeared on the point of retaliating against Israel following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31. With US warships, submarines and warplanes dispatched to

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# ISSI webinar analyzes Taliban's three-year rule challenges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a webinar, titled "Interim Afghan Government in Power - Three Years on." The webinar was moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. Speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb, Charge d' Affaires/Minister Counselor, Afghanistan Embassy, Islamabad; Ambassador Ayaz Wazir, Former Pakistani Diplomat; Dr. Mandana Tishehyar, President of the Iranian Peace Studies Scientific Association; Dr. Ye Hailin, Director, Center for

South Asia Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing; Dr. Zamaraeva Natalia Alekseevna, Senior Researcher, Center for the Study of the Near and Middle East, Russia; Adam Weinstein, Deputy Director of the Middle East Program at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, Washington D.C. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stated that while the Taliban have consolidated power over the past three years, significant concerns persist regarding their governance, respect for human rights and women's rights, and counter-terrorism measures. He acknowledged positive developments such as improved security and certain economic indicators like increased revenue and exports, but noted that these were overshadowed by ongoing challenges in other domains. He mentioned that potent threats from groups like ISKP and TTP continue to challenge the

Taliban's authority and stoke regional tensions. These concerns were borne out by the UN report as well. It was important for the Interim Afghan authorities to address Pakistan's specific concerns on this account in an effective, credible and sustainable manner. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood also highlighted the complexities of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and emphasized the imperative of enhanced cooperation in diplomacy, trade and economy, and security and counter-terrorism to stabilize the region. While stressing that a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan was in Pakistan's vital interest, he underlined the need for the Taliban authorities to take the long view and work with Pakistan to counter the threats and realize the opportunities for peace, stability, connectivity and prosperity. Ms Amina Khan noted that the Taliban have solidified their status as the de facto political authority, though not de jure. They have established a fair degree of stability and security, along with efforts to stabilize the economy. In a significant diplomatic shift from the 1990s, the Taliban have been engaging in diverse regional and global interactions, including 18 active political missions internationally. However, she expressed concerns over ongoing human rights violations, particularly against women, and threats from transnational terrorist groups like ISKP and TTP. Ms. Khan emphasized the fundamental importance of the bilateral relationship that is crucial in shaping the future of the region. Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb stated that the Interim Afghan government has maintained internal unity.



LAHORE: School teachers welcome the students on the opening day after Summer Vacation as Students arrive to attend their first day of school. —APP

## Mirpurkhas launches tree planting campaign

MIRPURKHAS: The Women Leadership Forum, under the Civil Society Support Program on Thursday kicked off a tree planting campaign in Darlaman, Mirpurkhas, to commemorate Independence Day. The event drew a crowd of prominent figures, including Divisional Commissioner Faisal Ahmed Uqeli, Deputy Commissioner Dr Rashid Masood, and religious leaders. Neem, pelican, and other plant species were planted in the newly constructed Dar-ul-Aman building premises. Commissioner Uqeli and Deputy Commissioner Khan also visited the site, acknowledging the challenges faced by the Darlaman building, including staff, furniture, and solar system issues.—APP

## Ban on kite, pigeon flying in areas near to airport

PESHAWAR: District administration under section 144 has imposed ban on kite and pigeon flying in areas situated in proximity of airport. The ban has been imposed in areas including Pishtakhara, Gulberg, Swati Phatak, Landi Akoon Muhammad, Umar Gul Road, Nawar Kale, Old Bara Road, Customs Chowk, Abdara Road and Pawake Road. The ban has also been imposed on quad copter flying, use of high beam lasers and shops of pigeon selling.—APP

# Kundi emphasizes support for youth affected by terrorism

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Thursday stressed the importance of providing benefits to the war on terror affected youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through the Prime Minister's Youth Program. The Governor said this during a ceremony at the Prime Minister's Secretariat, where squash player Norina Shams from Dir was awarded a sponsorship by the Zakori Group. The event was attended by Prime Minister's Advisor on Youth Affairs Rana Mashhood, NEVTEC Chairperson Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Zakori Group Chairman Ayub Zakori, Bilour Group Director Sherbaz Bilour, Deputy Secretary of Sports Qasim Khattak, and other officials. Governor Kundi expressed appreciation for the support extended to Norina Shams and

also urged institutions and affluent individuals across the country to support and encourage talented youth from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Rana Mashhood, Advisor to the Prime Minister, affirmed the government's commitment to making Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a priority under Governor Kundi's leadership. He cited the success of Arshad Nadeem, who was supported by the government and brought honor to the country, and promised similar support for thousands of other youths. Mashhood praised Gulmina Bilal Ahmad for her decades-long dedication to societal betterment. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Chairperson of NEVTEC, described the agreement as the first step toward supporting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's athletes and commended Governor Kundi's efforts.



## KU, donors discuss expansion in scholarship projects

KARACHI: The University of Karachi and donor organizations discussed different proposals to expand the existing scholarship schemes for KU students. The representatives of Balochistan Education Endowment Fund, Alkassar, USA, UKAHA Houston, Pakistan Baitulmal, and Ihsan Trust met the KU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi at the KU VC Secretariat on Thursday. The KU Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Professor Dr Shaista Tabassum, the KU Dean of the Faculty of Science Professor Dr Musarrat Jahan Yousuf, in-charge KU Students Financial Aid Office Professor Dr Ziasma Haneef Khan, and others were also present on this occasion. The General Manager Ihsan Trust Fayyaz Ur Rehman informed the meeting that over 500 students from different departments of the University of Karachi have received interest-free loans from the trust in the past and now they can provide financial support to more than 500 students in a single year. He mentioned that evening students can also avail themselves of the Ihsan Trust scheme, and easy loans are available to every needy student at any stage of their education. He said the trust can also provide financial aid for purchasing transport bus (s) for campus students. Qaim Mehdi representing Alkassar USA shared that the Pakistani community living in the US is supporting students as they are willing to improve the education sector of Pakistan. He said that the University of Karachi has a large number of students and Alkassar wants to uplift their education standards.—APP

## Karachi Mayor announces road Tenders for all districts

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that a tender will be issued for road construction in all seven districts of Karachi to resolve delays in developmental work due to the tendering process. He mentioned this while addressing the inauguration ceremony of modern Funland at Karachi Zoo after flag hoisting ceremony with school students at the Mughal Garden. He said that work will be visible on M.A Jinnah Road, Hub River Road, Malir, Korangi, and Ibrahim Hyderi, among other areas. Resources are improving, benefiting the citizens, and people are satisfied that things are getting better, he said. He said that no tax will be applied on electricity bills up to 200 units. KMC has received an additional revenue of 4 billion rupees. At the end of this month, we

will inform how much revenue has been received and how it will be spent on the development of Karachi, he said. On this occasion, Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Mayor Karachi's spokesperson for political affairs Karam Allah Waqasi, Deputy Parliamentary Leader in the City Council Dil Muhammad, Jaman Darwan, Senior Director Recreation Iqbal Nawaz, and other officials were also present. Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that modern Funland has been inaugurated at the zoo today. This space was previously unused, but now quality recreational facilities have been provided for the citizens, he said. He said that large number of people visiting the zoo. For the lower and middle classes, this is a great recreational spot in Karachi where families

can observe various animals and birds and spend pleasant moments. We will continue to improve Karachi Zoo and enhance recreational facilities, he said. He also mentioned that on Independence Day, a tree plantation campaign has been launched in Karachi to increase greenery and reduce the intensity of the weather. Small and large parks, as well as green belts along roads, have also been made greener through this plantation effort, which includes the establishment of urban forest, he said. He said that proper arrangements have been made for the protection and watering of the planted trees to ensure that this plantation effort contributes to making the city more beautiful and environmentally friendly in the future. The Mayor also enjoyed a ride on the train installed in Funland.—APP

# IGP commends security on Independence Day

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has praised the police force for ensuring foolproof security arrangements on the Independence Day. He appreciated the performance of the police force across the province, including Lahore, for their excellent security arrangements. He said that police officers and personnel carried out their duties with high diligence across the province, including Lahore, and provided a completely peaceful

environment for citizens to celebrate Independence Day. IG Punjab mentioned that police teams maintained law and order and ensured smooth traffic flow despite heavy crowds, providing security to families and women on roads, in parks, and at recreational spots. He acknowledged the excellent performance of all field formations, including the Special Branch officers and personnel, CTD corporals, traffic police, and Dolphin Force. He thanked the entire force for performing their duties exceptionally well on this important occasion. IG Punjab instructed the police to

continue performing their duties in the future with the same spirit of public service and dedication. Meanwhile, A strict crackdown was carried out by the Punjab Police over various law violations, including one-wheeling and jubilant firing on the Independence Day. A total of 514 alleged lawbreakers were arrested across the province and 461 cases were registered against them. A spokesperson for the Punjab Police said that 415 suspects were arrested for one-wheeling, and 375 cases were registered across the province. Additionally, 29 suspects were arrested for jubilant

firing, and 24 cases were registered. Furthermore, 23 suspects were arrested for kite flying, and 26 cases were registered. For silencer modifications and other violations, 47 suspects were arrested, and 36 cases were registered. The spokesperson said that 194 lawbreakers were arrested in Lahore, and 174 cases were registered over law violations. Specifically, 174 suspects were arrested for one-wheeling, and 155 cases were registered. Moreover, 13 suspects were arrested for jubilant firing, and 7 for kite flying, resulting in the registration of 19 cases.

## Minister stresses awareness on flood risks at local level

Khawaja Salman Rafique emphasised the need to raise awareness among citizens regarding the risks of rains and floods at the local level

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister and Chairman Cabinet Committee for Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique emphasised the need to raise awareness among citizens regarding the risks of rains and floods at the local level. Presiding over a Cabinet Committee meeting at the PDMA Head Office here on Thursday, he urged the district administrations and revenue officers to disseminate critical information through mosques and other community channels. The meeting, which reviewed action plans related to river erosion prevention schemes, also discussed a 6-point agenda. DG PDMA

Irfan Ali Kathia provided a detailed briefing on the agenda items. Among the approvals granted during the meeting were the construction and repair of the Walawala safety dam in Kasur and a project to mitigate erosion of the Chenab River in Hafizabad's Bhan Fazil area. In addition, significant steps have been taken by PDMA to address flood risks in the Rajanpur and DG Khan rivers, with a grant of 7 million approved for an early warning system and 11 million allocated for the strengthening and repair of river dams and embankments. The completion of these projects will be overseen by PDMA Punjab and the Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan. The meeting also included

a review of arrangements in light of the monsoon rains and potential flooding in the Chenab River. PDMA's preparations were praised, with the Cabinet Committee expressing satisfaction with the measures in place. Attendees of the meeting included Additional Chief Secretary Punjab Ahmad Raza Sarwar, SMBR and Relief Commissioner Punjab Nabil Javed, Commissioners from Bahawalpur, Lahore, and Gujranwala, as well as Deputy Commissioners from Bahawalnagar, Kasur, and Hafizabad, who participated via video link. Officers from the Irrigation, Local Government, Housing and Urban Development, Livestock, Emergency Services Department, and Special Branch

also attended the meeting. Meanwhile, The National Emergencies Operation Center of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Thursday anticipated that rain, wind and thundershower with isolated heavy rainfall was anticipated in the catchment areas of River Chenab till August 18. "Consequently, the Chenab River is expected to reach High to Very High level flows which may result in inundation in low lying areas & damage of infrastructure," the NDMA news release said. All villages and towns or settlements near Marala, Hanki, Qadirabad, especially along the flood plain, could be affected by increasing flows. A strong Monsoon spell was active in catchment

areas of eastern rivers, particularly in catchment areas of River Chenab including Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Chiniot, etc. Similarly, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) including Reasi, Akhnoor, Salal, Rajouri, Jammu, etc. Heavy rainfall is anticipated in isolated places until August 18, which will result in significant increase in the flow of River Chenab as well as local nullahs. Urban flooding is expected in the urban centers, however, high to very high flood levels are likely in River Chenab. Rainfall intensity is expected to taper down after August 18; however, more rains can be expected till August 25 with gaps in catchment areas of Chenab.

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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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Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
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### Hospitals

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# RCCI celebrates 77th Pak Independence day

President RCCI Saqib Rafiq said that the business community pledges that they will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the sake of their dear homeland and will continue to play their role in the progress and development of the country

FAISAL SHEIKH

A grand ceremony was organized on the occasion of 77th Independence Day of Pakistan at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). RCCI President Saqib Rafiq, along with Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad hoisted the flag to mark the 77th Independence Day of Pakistan at the Chamber Building. Director AIC, Brig. Ejaz Qamar Kiani, Former Presidents, executive committee members, chairman standing committee on culture Martin Parvez, representatives from the trade associations, Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, Sheikh Hafeez, distinguished RCCI Members and a large number of businessmen, women entrepreneurs participated in the event. In his address, President RCCI Saqib Rafiq said that the business community pledges that they will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the sake of their dear homeland and will continue to play their role in the progress and development of the country. He said, "It is also a day of happiness; a day of bowing down our heads before Almighty Allah in thankfulness and a



day of renewing our pledge that we will continue to struggle with unity and oneness for the objectives, for which Pakistan was created." RCCI President Saqib Rafiq also planted a tree under the Plant for Paki-

stan initiative reflecting the nation's commitment to combating the adverse impacts of climate change. Independence Day cake was also cut on this occasion. Later, while expressing their views,

the participants highlighted the sacrifices of elders and leaders for the creation and independence of Pakistan. They also pledged that every possible effort will be made for the progress and prosperity

of the country. A special prayer was also offered for the country's security, progress and prosperity. A musical performance was also performed to pay tribute to the national heroes.

## Climate change ministry, BISP joins hands to boost country's forest cover

DNA

ISLAMABAD :Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday said that engaging communities in tree plantation is vital for effective forest conservation and management, because their well-being is often intricately linked with the health of the forests they depend on, according to press statement issued here from the climate change & environmental coordination ministry. The PM's climate aide said further that since local communities often have traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to sustaina-

ble forest management, they can play an effective role in enforcing conservation, managing natural resources and protecting biodiversity. "In fact, community-based forest management practices in many Asian countries have shown that communities, when strengthened with knowledge and ownership of resources act as the frontline defenders of forests against illegal activities like logging, poaching and land grabbing. Besides, they can also help monitor and report illegal activities and advocate for forest protection," PM's climate aide highlighted. Given the effectiveness of community-based forest management in forest pro-

tection and conservation, the climate change & environmental coordination's Upscaling Green Pakistan Programme (UGPP) has launched an ambitious tree plantation campaign in collaboration with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) across all provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan to enhance tree cover in the country. Underlining the overarching aim of the partnership between the ministry and BISP, the PM's climate change coordinator Romina Khurshid said that partnership would aim to utilise large-scale nationwide network of the BISP

financial aid beneficiaries and engage them in various tree plantation activities across the country. "Such a large-scale involvement of the BISP beneficiaries in the tree plantation activities would help foster environmental stewardship and contribute to a greener Pakistan. Below is an overview of the activities and plans in each province," Ms Alam hoped. She also said that a large number of women beneficiaries and their families were also pro-actively engaged in various tree plantation activities on the Plant for Pakistan day, which was celebrated on the 77th Independence Day of Pakistan across the country on Wednesday.

## NA abolishes 220 redundant posts, saves Rs 563mln

ISLAMABAD: As part of the national austerity campaign, the National Assembly Secretariat has abolished 220 redundant positions ranging from grades 1 to 19, leading to annual savings of over Rs 563 million for the national treasury. During a Finance Committee meeting chaired by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the body approved the implementation of the austerity plan. The plan included a comprehensive review and improvement of the processes for determining, eliminating, appointing, and promoting positions within the National Assembly Secretariat. It also enhances transparency in these processes. The cost-cutting measures are being implemented in three phases, with the first two phases already completed. In the first phase, 90 unnecessary positions across various grades were eliminated, resulting in annual savings of Rs 255 million. In the second phase, an additional 130 posts from grades 1 to 19 were abolished, generating further savings of over Rs 307 million annually. Together, these measures will save more than Rs 563 million each year, with the third phase expected to contribute an additional Rs 400 million in savings. These actions, directed by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, aimed to achieve the overall target of Rs 1 billion in annual savings target. According to a press release issued on Thursday, the Finance Committee has also decided to halt further recruitments in the National Assembly Secretariat. —DNA

## Telenor launches 4G internet services in GB

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan launched its state-of-the-art 4G internet services in Hunza along with upgradation and expansion of its network in Gilgit and Skardu, marking a significant milestone in the region's digital transformation. According to news release received here on Thursday this move is set to enhance connectivity, stimulate local tourism, and drive the growth of e-commerce in Hunza and the broader Gilgit-Baltistan region, including Skardu. By upgrading its cellular infrastructure, Telenor Pakistan is bringing high-speed mobile broadband to the heart of one of Pakistan's most picturesque and remote areas. This advancement not only addresses the connectivity needs of the local population but also paves the way for Gilgit Baltistan's expanding tourism industry and digital economy. Enhanced internet speeds will also support the expansion of e-commerce platforms, enabling local

businesses to reach broader markets and fostering economic opportunities within and outside the region. To celebrate this significant milestone, Telenor Pakistan hosted a panel discussion titled "Unleashing the Power of Connectivity: Transforming the Northern Areas of Pakistan into a Digital Hub." The event delved into various crucial topics, including education, e-commerce, tourism, and skill development. The distinguished speaker line-up featured Rohma La-beeb, Country Director at Accelerate Prosperity; Ahsan Maykan, VP Consumer Marketing & Digital Products at Telenor Pakistan; and Abdul Wahab, Chief Business Officer at Bookme.pk. Additionally, Naeem, Co-founder of uConnect, shared a success story from Gilgit Baltistan, highlighting how the tech startup has created over 100 jobs in the region while developing skills for the youth through their skill development program.

Khurram Ashfaq, Chief Executive Officer, Telenor Pakistan, emphasized the importance of this initiative and said, "In this increasingly digital world, where connectivity is a critical driver of growth and development, Telenor Pakistan is thrilled to bring the benefits of 4G internet to the people of Gilgit Baltistan. Given the geographic nature of region, it is very difficult to maintain high quality services, but we have taken on this technological challenge as a testament to our commitment to connect and empower communities where connectivity matters the most. We look forward to supporting the region's digital journey and socioeconomic development. Following the successful launch of 4G services in Gilgit and Skardu in 2019, Telenor Pakistan has now extended its reach to Hunza, a region where high-speed internet connectivity matters the most for communities to introduce themselves in the digital world.



ISLAMABAD: People of Jammu and Kashmir observed Black day on the occasion of Indian Independence day in the Federal Capital. —ONLINE

## Nine lawbreakers netted

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against illegal weapon holders, fireworks dealers and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested nine accused besides recovering weapons, drugs, and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Civil Lines police arrested a fireworks dealer namedly Taimoor and recovered fireworks items from his possession. In another raid, an accused allegedly involved in aerial firing was rounded up by Race Course police and a 30 bore pistol and ammunition were recovered from his possession. He said that Jatli and Suddar Wah police arrested three drug pushers namedly Muhammad Rash-eed, Muhammad Naveed and Rashid and recovered total over 2.5 kg charras and other items from their possession. City Police netted a bike lifter, Muhammad Abbas and recovered a stolen motorcycle from his possession. Similarly, Gujjar Khan and Waris Khan police held Zeeshan Asghar, Ishfaq and Zia ur Rehman and recovered two 30 bore pistols, ammunition and five liters liquor. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are under process. —APP

## Pak day celebrated in Doha

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Flag-hoisting ceremony to commemorate the 77th Independence Anniversary of Islamic Republic of Pakistan was held at the Embassy of Pakistan in Doha. The event was held in a festive manner and attended by hundreds of community members. Ambassador Muhemmed Aejaz hoisted the Pakistan Flag at the Embassy premises in Doha's diplomatic area. National Anthem was recited in unison by the assembled audience on the occasion. Messages of the President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan were read out. In his message on the occasion, Ambassador felicitated fellow Pakistanis on the landmark occasion of the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan.

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## Briefs

## Adab festival will inspire audience of two cities

ISLAMABAD: Acclaimed literary stalwart & founder of Pakistan's premier literary events, Ameena Saiyid disclosed that the annual two-day Adab Festival comes to Lahore and Karachi which will feature star-studded lineup of authors, intellectuals, and artists, August 17-18, promising thought-provoking discussions and inspiring performances will hold. Talking to a private news channel, she said this year's Adab festival is set to break new ground with a fresh topic of discussion on 'women's cricket', adding, renowned sports personality Bushra Aitazaz Hassan will participate in the festival to share her insights and expertise on the subject. The inclusion of women's cricket in the festival's lineup reflects the organizers' commitment to promoting diverse voices and perspectives, and is expected to spark lively debates and discussions among attendees, she added. With its unique format and diverse range of topics, including women's cricket, the Adab Festival is set to captivate audiences and inspire meaningful conversations, she said. Ameena Saiyid announced that this year's edition will mark a new milestone as it expands to Lahore for the first time, she said, adding, in a departure from previous formats, the festival will feature short, focused discussion topics, replacing lengthy sessions. With a diverse range of sessions, workshops, and performances, the Adab festival promises to be a melting pot of ideas, inspiration, and creative expression, she added. This innovative approach aims to foster more dynamic and engaging conversations among participants, making the festival a unique and enriching experience for literature enthusiasts and cricket fans alike, she added. Responding to a question, she explained the books that will be discussed at the two events include 'Unveiled Jazba, a History of Pakistan Women's Cricket' by Aayush Puthran, 'Jinnah: A Life' by Yasser Latif Hamdani, 'Dear Mr Jinnah' by Salman Faruqi, 'Second Coming' by Athar Tahir, 'Betrayal' by Omar Shahid Hamid and 'Beyond the Fields' by Aysha Baqir. The Adab festival seeks to establish a vibrant platform where Pakistani and international authors, intellectuals, and media personalities can converge, share ideas, and engage in meaningful discussions, she replied in a question.—APP

## Meteorologist predicts monsoon spell

ISLAMABAD: Chief Meteorologist of the flood forecasting division Lahore Shahid Abbas on Thursday predicted monsoon spell which will bring widespread showers to the Northern areas, including Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. This rainfall spell will not only provide relief from the heat but also help to replenish water sources, mitigate the risk of wildfires, and support agricultural activities in the region, talking to PTV news channel he said. Shahid Abbas expressed confidence in the preparations made to handle the anticipated monsoon spells, stating that a wise strategy had been adopted and optimal arrangements put in place to deal with the situation. Additionally, he said that areas vulnerable to flooding and other extreme weather events were also being identified, enabling authorities to take proactive measures to mitigate potential risks and ensure public safety. Replying to a query, Chief Meteorologist Shahid Abbas provided an update on the water levels at Tarbela Dam, revealing that it was currently 98% full. He reassured the public that despite the high water levels there were no flood warnings in effect for any rivers or areas during the current monsoon spell, indicating that the situation was under control and being closely monitored by the authorities. To another query, he said the upcoming monsoon spell would bring a significant end to the suffocating heat and hotness that has gripped the region, providing a much-needed respite to the public.—APP

## Exorbitant prices of books haunt inflation-stricken parents

The price of school supplies from glue, color pencils, markers, lunch box, water bottle, geometry box, school bags, and cut box to textbooks, notebooks and uniforms has registered a significant increase which made it difficult for families, especially salaried class, to manage the educational expenses

ISLAMABAD: As back-to-school essentials shopping is picking up pace with reopening of the educational institutions in the country after summer vacations, parents are grappling with the higher prices on all the essential school items. Most of the private schools start their new academic session after the summer break and it is a common practice for many parents to buy the back to school essentials for their kids prior to the opening of the schools by physically visiting the designated stationary stores or ordering through the online suppliers. The price of school supplies from glue, color pencils, markers, lunch box, water bottle, geometry box, school bags, and cut box to textbooks, notebooks and uniforms has registered a significant increase which made it difficult for families, especially salaried class,

to manage the educational expenses. "I have spent around Rs 20,000 to purchase the textbooks and notebooks for my son promoted in Grade-III while the stationary, uniform and other essential stuff are still to be purchased which I will buy on weekend as the students can wear colored clothes during the first week", Hammad Ali, a parent of two said. Although it has become difficult to bear the expenses of my one school going son who is studying in private schools but we have no option left when the government institutions lack facilities and educational standards, he lamented while talking to APP on Thursday. Ayesha Malik, a mother of three kids, said, "I was shocked to hear the price of trolley bag during my visit to the school supplies shop what to talk of other items". Talking to APP, she said, "The price of

an ordinary trolley starts from Rs. 8,000 while those having fewer prices are not durable enough to be dragged in a long way in school premises. Getting education in a private school has become a luxurious practice keeping in view the increasing fee structure, expensive textbooks and a long list of stationary and other items". "Not only the parents have to buy all the stationary themselves but these schools also grab annual charges for stationary too in the name of art work, overburdening the parents", she observed. Another parent, Farah Hamid said that instead of making things easier for the parents, the private schools provided a long list of stationary items to the parents for buying which is usually not fully utilized during the whole year. She urged the

concerned authorities to keep check on unusual increase in the prices of school items in the markets and take action against the unjust price hike. Mehmood, who is associated with the profession of teaching for a long time, said that parents already struggling amid rising inflation and facing a cost of living are forced to pay high prices for the essential school items of their kids. He said that back-to-school shopping is really stressful for them but they have to pay as being parents they consider these items as an essential category in their shopping list. They are making some real sacrifices and leading uncomfortable life in these days due to soaring inflation, high priced fuel, electricity and gas. Prices of school items like shoes, uniform, backpack and lunch boxes,

crayons, markers, notebooks, chart papers, binders, paper, pens, erasers and pencils have been increased substantially due to the prevailing inflation. Zia Saleem, who is the owner of stationary shop in F-8 Markaz, said that the inflation has not only distressed the parents of the school going kids but every section of life." He revealed that the price of back to school essentials has registered a significant increase this year as compared to the last year. The notebooks which were sold at Rs. 250 each last year are now being sold at Rs. 500 due to increasing price of paper. "We cannot less the price of stationary items on our own as we are getting these items on increased prices too. Ultimately, we are left with no option but to shift this burden on the customers", he said. —Agencies

## ANF seizes 71 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI: An Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations managed to recover 71 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 235 grams ice was recovered from a parcel sent to New Zealand from a courier office in Lahore. 30 kg hashish, 12 kg opium and two 30 bore pistols with 4 magazines and 200 rounds were recovered near Chungi no 26 Islamabad while two accused were arrested during the operation. 24 kg hashish and 500 grams ice were recovered from a vehicle intercepted in Pishin and an accused was arrested. 3.3 kg hashish was recovered from a motorcyclist on MM Road Mianwali. In two operations near M-1 Islamabad, 800 grams hashish, 250 grams heroin and 100 grams ice were recovered from the possession of two suspects. Investigations have been started by registering cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act against the arrested accused.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kuwait to Pakistan, Abdul Rehman Jay. Al-Mutairi with Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan in Independence Day function.—DNA

## Initiative to reward public's green contributions

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to combat climate change and control smog, Punjab Secretary for Environment and Climate Change Raja Jahangir Anwar Thursday unveiled a comprehensive plan to accelerate the "Plant for Pakistan" campaign, where a novel initiative to reward the public's green contributions is being launched. The initiative aims to recognize and encourage individuals, communities, and organizations to make efforts to plant trees, reduce pollution, and adopt eco-friendly habits, thereby contributing to a cleaner, greener, and healthier environment in Punjab, he said while talking to a Private news channel. He explained that the government will make "green investments" in sectors severely impacted by climate change, supporting their transition to more sustainable practices, adding, furthermore climate change education will be integrat-

ed into school curricula to raise awareness and promote climate literacy among students. In a unique move, the government will also offer an honorarium to individuals who contribute to environmental conservation by planting trees and recycling waste, encouraging community-led initiatives and fostering a culture of sustainability, he mentioned. By offering a monetary reward to individuals who plant trees and recycle waste, the government aims to create a culture of environmental responsibility, where citizens are motivated to contribute to the country's ecological well-being, he highlighted. This honorarium scheme will not only encourage individuals to adopt eco-friendly practices but also inspire a sense of pride and civic duty, as people become actively engaged in preserving Pakistan's natural resources for future generations, he said.—APP

## Al-Shifa performs a highly uncommon surgical procedure

## DNA

RAWALPINDI: Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital doctors have successfully performed a rare surgery on a three-year-old child with twin lenses and cataracts. It was the second case in ophthalmology history to ever be documented. The first case was thirty years ago in India, while the second such case was reported in Pakistan. According to the details, Muhammad Ahmed, a resident of Rawalpindi, brought his male child, Muhammad Mussa, to Al-Shifa Hospital for a check-up after noticing that his one eye was more significant than the other. The child was put on thorough examination, and doctors found a Double Crystalline lens (Twin Lenses) in the right eye of the child. The doctors termed it a rare congenital problem and that it happens very rarely

during birth. Usually, there is a single lens in one eye. The doctors decided to remove these abnormal lenses to prevent future problems with the child's eyesight. After ninety minutes of complicated surgery, the faulty lenses were replaced with an artificial lens. Experts say that each eye typically has one lens. If a cataract is present at birth or develops later, the lens is removed, and an artificial lens is placed so the patient can have normal vision. This unusual presentation of two lenses inside the eye is scarce, with only two cases reported in the literature worldwide to date. Professor Dr Hanif Malik at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital's Paediatric Ophthalmology Department undertook this complex and challenging surgery, which helped the child gain vision. Al Shifa Trust Eye Hospital performs 25 cases of Pedi-

atric cataracts daily with free-of-cost surgery, provision of intraocular lenses, and hospital stay. All other eye surgeries are also performed at the Pediatric Ophthalmology Department. This department is a one-of-a-kind, highly specialized unit operating at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, which also provides OPD and surgery facilities to adults and children of all economic backgrounds. No one is refused treatment on the grounds of non-affordability. Even the most complex, challenging cases declined at other hospitals are taken up with open arms at Al Shifa. Al-Shifa Trust also serves people at its facilities located in Sukhar, Kohat, Muzaffarabad, and Chakwal. The trust's president, Major General (Retd) General Rahmat Khan, is eager to extend services to remote areas of the country, including Gilgit-Baltistan.

## Healthy eating habits help cure stomach-related problems

ISLAMABAD: While the monsoon season provides relief from the scorching heat, it also increases the risk of infectious diseases where expert warned public for water contamination risks and urge awareness for taking precautionary measures with food storage, consumption and avoid roadside eats to stay safe. Renowned Gastroenterologist Dr. Irfan Ali Richan, speaking to PTV News emphasized the crucial importance of recognizing the symptoms of monsoon-related diseases, which often include high fever, body aches, and fatigue. Dr. Richan cautioned that if left untreated, these diseases can progress to severe cases, requiring hospitalization and intensive care. Dr. Richan's warning comes as the monsoon season intensifies, bringing with it an increased risk of waterborne and food-borne diseases. By being aware of the symptoms and taking prompt action, citizens can protect themselves and their loved ones from these potentially life-threatening illnesses, he added. Dr. Richan advised citizens to be vigilant about food and water hygiene, stressing the importance of drinking clean water, avoiding raw or undercooked food, and washing hands regularly. He also emphasized the need for timely medical attention if symptoms persist or worsen. In severe cases, hospitalization and intensive care may be required to manage complications such as dehydration, organ failure or septicemia. Dr. Richan urged citizens not to delay seeking medical help if they experience severe symptoms, as prompt treatment can significantly improve outcomes. By taking preventive measures and being mindful of the risks, citizens can stay safe and healthy during the monsoon season. Dr. Richan's expert advice serves as a timely reminder to prioritize health and take proactive steps against monsoon-related diseases. Responding to a query, he said it is imperative to take necessary precautions like drinking clean water, preferably boiled and cold water, eating freshly cooked hot food, avoiding eating outside, and washing fruits and vegetables thoroughly before using. Citizens should keep surroundings clean and avoid water stagnation to keep mosquitoes away and follow hand hygiene practices," the expert added further, he added.—DNA

## PCB, IBCC join forces to promote cricket in schools and colleges

ISLAMABAD: Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IBCC and PCB, Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) has organized a consultation workshop here to discuss how to promote domestic cricket in schools and colleges level. The workshop was attended by representatives from educational boards, focused on addressing the challenges faced by students, such as physical fitness, financial limitations, and access to proper facilities. As a result, inter-school and inter-college cricket tournament is set to start in October 2024. The winners of the tournament will compete in inter-provincial and national levels and the winner will have a chance to represent Pakistan internationally. The collaboration will ensure that students receive athletic training, physical fitness sessions, and access to well-maintained cricket grounds. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will provide technical support, while educational boards will help identify young talent.—DNA

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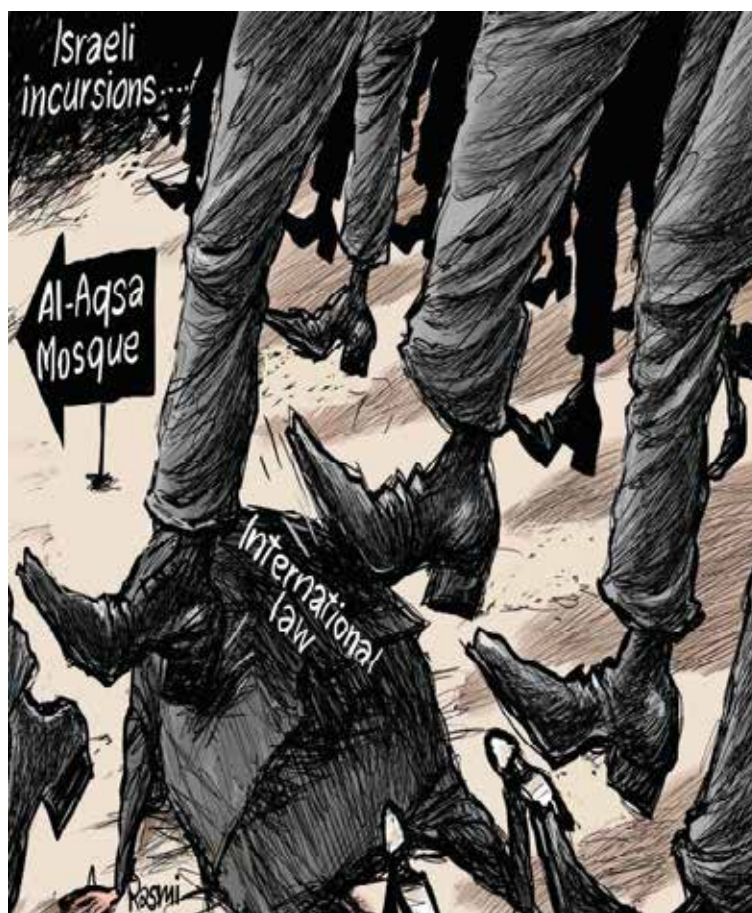
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## The view on Sudan's vicious war

IT'S hard to get aid to Sudanese civilians, but weapons flow towards them endlessly through each of the country's neighbours. The destruction they wreak forces people to flee: 10,000 children are displaced each day. The suffering now will be matched by future pain. Girls as young as eight are being raped by fighters, famine is intensifying and 25 million people are experiencing acute hunger, as the belligerents block aid deliveries: Tom Perriello, the US special envoy to Sudan, warned that they are using starving women and children as their arsenal. But the destruction in the country's agricultural heartland bodes ill for what lies ahead. The last hospital in the besieged city of El Fasher, in Darfur, is under assault. The International Organization for Migration warns that the situation is at breaking point, with the prospect of tens of thousands of preventable deaths unless there is an immediate and massive global response. Heavy rains and flooding have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, but its real cause is the conflict that began more than a year ago, when the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) under Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) under Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, turned upon each other. The Sudanese military didn't turn up for talks in Geneva on Wednesday that were supposed to pursue a ceasefire deal. The RSF – which the army birthed and worked with to eject the civilian government – did. But its leaders can hardly pose as the peacemakers while continuing their campaign of terror. The SAF refuse to accept they will have to give any ground, though internal divisions may also have shaped the decision to stay away. The RSF make unfeasibly ambitious demands, and many doubt whether they could really come to peace anyway: they are united largely in their rampage and plunder. There can hardly be a ceasefire agreement when one side hasn't even made it to the table. But talks do, at least, give the US and others an opportunity to press the RSF to rein in their brutality and protect civilians – abiding by commitments that they have already made. It is also an opportunity to reiterate the need for US partners and others to pull back. Jockeying by outside powers, despite their denials of involvement, has fuelled the conflict. UN sanctions monitors have noted "credible" allegations that the UAE is supplying the RSF. Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which is cohosting these talks, are aligned with the SAF. All are present at these talks. Russia appears to have tried to play both sides, though it may be shifting towards the army. Arms made in China, Turkey, Iran and Serbia have been spotted. James Elder, the UNICEF spokesperson, described Sudan as "a crisis of neglect". That is almost too kind a description. Refugees face an increasingly hostile reception in neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia. Egypt has expelled many of those who have fled a war to which it has contributed. Meanwhile, the UN relief effort is only one-third funded. The telescoping of Sudanese aspirations, from the grand horizon of the 2019 revolution and civilian leadership to the daily struggle for survival, has been sudden and brutal.



## US prioritizes self-interest, undermines ME peace

THE latest US decision to approve the sale of \$20 billion worth of arms to Israel, announced by the State Department on Tuesday, shows the United States is continuing to fuel the conflict in the Middle East, which badly needs signals of de-escalation of the hostilities and efforts to build peace and stability. The new arms sales will include scores of fighter jets and advanced air-to-air missiles, which, according to a State Department release, underscores the US' commitment to the security of Israel and shores up the US' national interests in assisting Israel to develop and maintain a strong and ready self-defense capability. This is bunkum given Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people. The US move is tantamount to pouring oil on the flames of Israel's furious assault on the Palestinian people in Gaza, and the spillover effect of that bellicosity is dragging more parties into the vortex of violence. The US' partiality and the staunch support it has given Israel, which have facilitated the latter turning Gaza into a living hell for millions of Palestinians, is callous to the extreme. It is crystal clear that Washington is more interested in pursuing its own agenda in the Middle East via its proxy than it is in dousing the flames of animosities and working to promote peace and stability in the region. The betrayal of the right of people in the region to live in peace and their right to development at a time when the region had hopes of finally escaping the quagmire of long-festering enmities will only deepen the US' political and moral debt to the people in the Middle East. As the staggering civilian death toll in Gaza continues to rise, the US administration under Joe Biden has been under growing and unprecedented opposition at home for the unconditional support it has given Israel. Under such circumstances, the delivery time for the weapons in the latest arms sales is expected to take several years. But the sale exposes the US' obstinacy in continuing its favoritism and partiality for Israel no matter how many crimes the latter has committed in Gaza. Latest statistics from the Palestinian side show the Palestinian death toll in ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza has risen to nearly 40,000. The Israel-Hamas conflict has created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza. But the US has maintained a one-sided stance in the conflict. Instead of joining the world community to push the belligerent parties to resolve their differences, it has been obdurate in providing weapons to its key ally, even while making a show of urging Tel Aviv to exercise restraint and acting as a broker for peace talks. The US' irresponsible and immoral behavior has already sparked serious concerns and criticism among the international community. With the whole region grappling with the fear of a wider war and exacerbated tension after the killing of Hamas' political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Teheran last month, any misstep is likely to push the situation to breaking point. On Tuesday, Iran rejected a call by the leaders of the United Kingdom, France and Germany urging it to refrain from any retaliatory attacks that would further escalate regional tensions, calling it an "excessive request".

# The intense political outlook of Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



In recent times, the political landscape of many nations has been marked by intense power struggles and dramatic shifts. One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon can be seen in the ongoing efforts to remove a prominent political figure and his party from the national stage. The government and military establishments, determined to maintain control and stability, have resolved that Khan and his party must be permanently removed from the political scene. This decision reflects a broader strategy to eliminate any threats to their authority and prevent the possibility of Khan ever wielding...

IN a dramatic development within Pakistani politics, the government of Pakistan, with the apparent backing of the military, is considering an outright ban on the political party led by ousted former Prime Minister Imran Khan. This move comes in the wake of the explosive riots that erupted on May 9, 2023, which have been attributed, at least in part, to Khan's alleged incitement. The government's proposed actions also include charging Khan and other prominent figures in his party with treason, reflecting the gravity of the political and legal crisis at hand. Imran Khan, who served as Pakistan's Prime Minister from 2018 until his ousting in a no-confidence vote in April 2022, has remained a polarizing figure in Pakistani politics. His party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has continued to be a significant force, advocating for Khan's return to power and analyzing the current administration. The riots on May 9 were particularly violent and destructive, with widespread reports of property damage and clashes with security forces. These disturbances have been framed by the government as part of a broader destabilization effort spearheaded by Khan and his party. The decision to pursue a ban on PTI is not merely a political maneuver but also carries significant legal and constitutional implications. In Pakistan, political parties are integral to the democratic process, and the banning of a major party such as PTI would have far-reaching consequences for the country's political landscape. Such a move would not only eliminate a key player from the political arena but could also lead to increased polarization and unrest among Khan's supporters. The treason charges being considered against Khan and his party leaders are particularly serious. Treason in Pakistan's legal framework is a grave accusation, typically associated with actions deemed to threaten the sovereignty or integrity of the state. If Khan and his associates were formally charged, the legal proceedings would likely be highly contentious and closely scrutinized both domestically and internationally. The charges would need to be substantiated with concrete evidence linking Khan's actions directly to the riots and other alleged destabilizing activities. The role of the military in this political drama cannot be overstated. In Pakistan, the military has historically played a powerful role in politics, and its involvement in this case suggests a significant level of support for the gov-

ernment's stance. The military's concurrence with the proposed ban and legal actions against Khan indicates a coordinated approach between the civilian and military branches of government, aimed at addressing what they perceive as a serious threat to national stability. The potential banning of PTI and the treason charges against Khan raise important questions about the state of democracy and governance in Pakistan. Critics argue that such actions could undermine democratic institutions and civil liberties, particularly if they are seen as politically motivated rather than based on genuine legal concerns. On the other hand, supporters of the government and the military might view these measures as necessary steps to restore order and prevent further chaos. As Pakistan navigates this complex and volatile situation, the international community will be watching closely. The outcome of these legal and political maneuvers will likely have significant implications for Pakistan's political stability and its relations with other countries. The unfolding events underscore the intricate interplay between politics, law, and military influence in one of South Asia's most strategically important nations. In recent times, the political landscape of many nations has been marked by intense power struggles and dramatic shifts. One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon can be seen in the ongoing efforts to remove a prominent political figure and his party from the national stage. The government and military establishments, determined to maintain control and stability, have resolved that Khan and his party must be permanently removed from the political scene. This decision reflects a broader strategy to eliminate any threats to their authority and prevent the possibility of Khan ever wielding legislative power or forming a government again. Khan, a figure who once commanded significant political influence and popular support, now finds himself at the center of a high-stakes battle for political survival. The government's stance is unequivocal: Khan's removal is not just a matter of political rivalry but a strategic imperative. The reasons behind this drastic measure are multifaceted, encompassing concerns about potential challenges to the established order, perceived threats to national security, and a desire to consolidate power. The military's involvement in this decision highlights the intersection of politics and defense in con-

temporary governance. In many countries, the military plays a pivotal role in shaping political outcomes, either directly or indirectly. The government's collaboration with military establishments in this case underscores the gravity of the situation and the perceived need for a decisive response. The military's influence extends beyond traditional defense roles, affecting political dynamics and policy-making processes. The determination to ensure that Khan and his party are permanently excluded from power speaks to a broader strategy of political consolidation. By removing Khan from the equation, the government aims to eliminate a key challenger and secure its position in the legislative and executive branches. This move is part of a broader pattern observed in various political contexts, where incumbent powers take drastic measures to neutralize potential rivals and maintain their dominance. The implications of this decision extend beyond the immediate political landscape. The removal of Khan and his party could have far-reaching consequences for democratic processes, political pluralism, and civil liberties. In democratic societies, political competition and the presence of diverse voices are essential components of a healthy political system. The exclusion of a significant political figure raises questions about the health of democratic institutions and the extent to which political dissent is tolerated. Moreover, the removal of Khan and his party could have ripple effects on public sentiment and societal cohesion. Political decisions that appear to be driven by a desire for absolute control can contribute to a sense of disenfranchisement and alienation among segments of the population. Public trust in institutions and governance can erode when political processes are perceived as being manipulated or suppressed. The government's and military establishments' decision to permanently remove Khan and his party from the political scene represents a significant moment in the nation's political trajectory. It reflects a broader strategy of consolidating power, addressing perceived threats, and shaping the future political landscape. While this move may achieve short-term objectives, it also raises important questions about the health of democratic institutions, the role of military influence in politics, and the broader implications for political pluralism and public trust. The unfolding situation will undoubtedly continue to shape the nation's political discourse and governance in the years to come.

## Is it appropriate to link illiteracy with the National Anthem?

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Another aspect to consider is the broader implications of such advertisements on the perception of the education system in Pakistan. By linking illiteracy directly with the inability to sing the national anthem, the advertisement may inadvertently send a message that the education system has failed at its most basic level. This could erode public trust in educational institutions...

IN recent week, a television advertisement has stirred significant controversy across Pakistan, raising questions about the link between illiteracy and the national anthem. The ad, which claims that every fourth child in Pakistan cannot read or sing the national anthem, has sparked a heated debate regarding its appropriateness, especially given its proximity to the celebration of Independence Day. This campaign, while undoubtedly aimed at highlighting the severe issue of illiteracy in the country, has also brought to the forefront a range of concerns about the method of conveying such a message. The claim that every fourth child in Pakistan is unable to read or sing the national anthem is a bold one. It taps into the patriotic sentiments of the nation, utilizing a deeply respected symbol—the national anthem—to draw attention to the issue of illiteracy. However, one must question the validity of such a statement and the basis on which it is constructed. Is this a factual representation, or is it an exaggeration designed to shock the public? More importantly, is it appropriate to connect a failure to sing the national anthem with illiteracy in the first place? To begin with, the national anthem is a symbol of unity, pride, and patriotism. It is a song that represents the hopes, aspirations, and collective identity of the people of Pakistan. Associating it with a negative narrative, such as illiteracy, can inadvertently tarnish the perception of this revered symbol. While it is true that illiteracy is a pressing issue that needs to be addressed, linking it directly to the national anthem could be seen as a misguided attempt to raise awareness. The anthem is a source of national pride, and using it as a tool for highlighting social issues may lead to a sense of shame rather than a call to action. It raises the question of whether there might have been a better way to present the issue—one that does not involve compromising the integrity of a national symbol. The primary concern here is the impact such an advertisement may have on the public psyche. National symbols are deeply

ingrained in the cultural and emotional fabric of a nation. When they are used in a context that highlights societal failures, there is a risk of creating a sense of disillusionment and frustration rather than fostering a desire for change. The advertisement in question may evoke feelings of embarrassment or guilt among viewers, rather than motivating them to tackle the issue of illiteracy in a constructive manner. Moreover, the advertisement's timing is particularly troubling. As Pakistan approaches its Independence Day, a time when the nation comes together to celebrate its identity, history, and achievements, this ad serves as a stark reminder of the challenges that still plague the country. While it is essential to recognize and address these challenges, the manner in which they are presented can have a significant impact on public morale. Instead of inspiring pride and unity, the advertisement risks overshadowing the spirit of independence with a focus on shortcomings. This is not to say that the issue of illiteracy should be ignored during national celebrations, but rather that there might be a more positive and effective way to address it without undermining the collective national spirit. Another aspect to consider is the broader implications of such advertisements on the perception of the education system in Pakistan. By linking illiteracy directly with the inability to sing the national anthem, the advertisement may inadvertently send a message that the education system has failed at its most basic level. This could erode public trust in educational institutions and create a sense of hopelessness regarding the future of education in the country. While it is true that the education system faces significant challenges, it is crucial to approach these issues in a way that encourages reform and improvement rather than simply highlighting failure. There is also the question of whether this advertisement meets the ethical standards expected of public service campaigns. Public awareness campaigns are intended to educate, inform, and inspire

action, but they must do so in a manner that is respectful and considerate of the audience's values and sentiments. The use of the national anthem in this context may be seen as an exploitation of patriotic emotions for the sake of creating a shock value, which could be considered ethically questionable. Furthermore, the advertisement's potential to cause distress or discomfort among viewers, especially children who may feel ashamed or inadequate for not knowing the anthem, should not be overlooked. Given these concerns, it is worth considering whether such advertisements should be discontinued, or at the very least, re-evaluated. The goal of raising awareness about illiteracy is undoubtedly a noble one, but it must be done in a way that does not compromise the dignity of national symbols or the emotional well-being of the public. There are numerous other ways to highlight the importance of literacy without resorting to tactics that may be seen as disrespectful or demoralizing. For instance, campaigns could focus on the positive impact of education, showcasing success stories of individuals who have overcome illiteracy, or highlighting the role of education in building a stronger, more prosperous nation. In conclusion, while the issue of illiteracy in Pakistan is one that demands urgent attention, the manner in which it is presented to the public is equally important. Linking illiteracy to the inability to sing the national anthem is a strategy that carries significant risks, both in terms of public perception and emotional impact. As Pakistan approaches its Independence Day, it is a time for reflection, pride, and unity—values that should not be overshadowed by negative publicity. The advertisement in question may have had good intentions, but it raises important questions about the ethics and appropriateness of using national symbols in public awareness campaigns. Going forward, it is crucial to find ways to address societal issues that respect and uphold the dignity of the nation's symbols, while still inspiring the public to take positive action.

## Briefs

## MBS 'at risk of assassination' over Israel...

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two other people with knowledge of them. Despite the risks, the crown prince is willing to pursue the mega-deal with the US and Israel, viewing it as crucial to his country's future, according to the report. However, the report adds that the Israeli government has been unwilling to incorporate a credible path to a Palestinian state in the agreement. Earlier this year, amid an intense Israeli offensive against Palestinians in Gaza, Saudi Arabia told the US its position stands that there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognised on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem and Israeli "aggression" on the Gaza Strip stops, the Saudi foreign ministry had said in a statement. Before this, White House National Security spokesperson John Kirby had said that the Biden administration had received positive feedback that Saudi Arabia and Israel are willing to continue to have normalisation discussions.

## New round of Gaza...

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the region to defend Israel and deter potential attackers, Washington is hoping a ceasefire agreement in Gaza can defuse the risk of a full-out wider regional war. Hamas officials, who have accused Israel of stalling, did not join Thursday's talks. However mediators planned to consult with Hamas' Doha-based negotiating team after the meeting, the official briefed on the talks told Reuters. Israel's delegation includes spy chief David Barnea, head of the domestic security service Ronen Bar, and the military's hostages chief Nitzan Alon, defense officials said on Wednesday. CIA Director Bill Burns and US Middle East envoy Brett McGurk represented Washington at the talks, convened by Qatari prime minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, with Egypt's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel also in Doha.

## Baker takes charge as...

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of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs; Deputy Chief and Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., of the US Mission to Libya; Deputy Director of the Iran Regional Presence Office at the US Consulate in Dubai; and Economic Counselor at the US Embassy in Kuwait. In Kuwait, Natalie worked with the Department of Defense to support the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. From 2009-2011, Natalie served as Political and Economic Counselor in Libya, as the bilateral relationship was normalizing after a nearly 30-year pause. She remained in Libya until the Libyan Revolution forced the US Embassy to evacuate in February 2011. Natalie's previous other assignments included Special Assistant in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Consular Officer in Islamabad, Pakistan, and Cultural Officer in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

## Imran Khan accuses...

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the accountability of General Faiz [then] it should proceed and do it," Khan said, asserting that it is the army's internal matter. Welcoming the development, the former premier said it was good that army has launched the process of internal accountability, he noted. However, he urged the military to ensure that the process of accountability should be across the board. Responding to a question relating to his past engagement with the former spymaster, the 72-year-old cricketer-turned-politician said that while he was the premier he did not want to remove General Faiz from his office amid regime change in Afghanistan. At the time, General Faiz was engaged with the Afghanistan government and Taliban, the PTI founder said, adding that the former army officer arranged his meeting with then US envoy on Afghanistan's peace process Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban representatives.



ISLAMABAD: Players of Rising Stars Hockey Club in a group photo with Olympian M Usma, Coach of Pakistan National Hockey team on the occasion of Aug 14 exhibition match. — DNA

# Arshad Nadeem aims to compete till 2032 Olympics

## Arshad Nadeem, highlighting his long-term goals after his historic achievement for Pakistan

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's Olympic gold medalist, Arshad Nadeem, has announced his intention to continue competing until the 2032 Olympics. Speaking to the media at the Governor House in Karachi, the record-making athlete expressed his ambition to bring further accolades to the nation. "This is just the beginning of my journey. I want to defend my title in 2028, and if I stay fit, I intend to participate in the 2032 Olympics as well," said Arshad Nadeem, highlighting his long-term goals after his historic achievement for Pakistan. Arshad recounted the warm reception he received at Lahore Airport, where he was honoured by the Chief Minister, who visited his village, and the Prime Minister, who invited him to the PM House on Independence Day. He also thanked the Governor of Sindh, Kamran Tessori, for his respectful



acknowledgement. "I received more honour than my medal, for which I am truly grateful," he stated, reflecting on the overwhelming support from his country.

the crowd yesterday made me feel like if someone handed me a javelin, I could set a world record right there," Arshad shared. Arshad emphasised his commitment to working even harder in the future. Reflecting on his performance at the Paris Olympics, he mentioned feeling confident after the qualifiers but noted a slight mishap during his first throw due to his run-up. "I soon calmed myself down and managed to achieve a record throw on my second attempt," he recalled, discussing his medal-winning effort. "I've worked a lot on my run-up, and my physique gives me an advantage," he added, highlighting his focus on improving his technique. Nadeem also revealed that he is scheduled to meet with the Army Chief in the coming days. When asked about the performance of athletes from India and Pakistan, he expressed his happiness, saying, "I am glad to see athletes from both India and Pakistan showcasing their talent on the global stage."

## PML-N decides...

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the situation arising after the arrest of Gen (r) Faiz Hameed was debated. During the meeting, the report of the legal team on the proposed constitutional amendment regarding the extension of the tenure of the judges was discussed. Moreover, a proposal to ban public demonstrations in Islamabad and Punjab for law and order was also considered. PM Shehbaz Sharif briefed the participants of the meeting on the role of Parliament in ending the political and judicial crisis. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar told the participants about the latest situation on the country's economy and negotiations with the IMF. The government's strategy for dealing with the opposition in the political field was also discussed during the meeting. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, National Assembly speaker Ayaz Sadiq, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Hamza Shehbaz, Rana Sanaulah, Salman Shehbaz participated.

## Every institution...

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a top priority for the government. Tarar revealed that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will soon announce relief measures for electricity bills in his address to the nation. This move is part of the government's broader economic reforms, which Tarar assured will soon benefit the public. "The Prime Minister is set to present a comprehensive five-year economic plan in his upcoming address," Tarar said. "Despite ongoing economic challenges, the government is committed to providing maximum relief to the people." On the topic of accountability, Tarar confirmed that the government supports ongoing investigations and welcomed the recent press release from the ISPR.

## Country cannot...

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forward the way former Prime Minister and PTI founder Imran Khan was being treated in the country. Talking to media outside Adiala Jail, Omar Ayub said that ahead of meeting with the PTI founder, PTI leaders were advised by the Deputy Superintendent jail to avoid political talks with Imran Khan. He said PTI leaders visited their leader to discuss the political affairs of the country. He questioned why PML-N leaders were not given such directives when Nawaz Sharif was in jail. He said agency officials showing their undue alertness. He claimed that PTI leaders will continue to discuss the political situation with Imran Khan. Omar Ayub said he would raise this matter in the Assembly. He said that the country can not move forward with injustices. Senator Shibli Faraz said that the entire nation knows PTI leaders meet their leader in Adiala Jail and discuss various political affairs. He said today Deputy Superintendent threatened them that if they discussed political questions then the jail administration would adopt a legal way.

## New Zealand's Conway opts for casual contract

LONDON: New Zealand opener Devon Conway has opted for a casual rather than central contract for the upcoming 2024-2025 season, allowing the lefthander the flexibility to play in South Africa's SA20 league next January. Johannesburg-born Conway, who has played 20 Tests, 32 ODIs and 50 Twenty20 since qualifying for New Zealand in 2020, will be available for all nine Black Caps Tests and next year's Champions Trophy, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said. "The decision to move away from a central playing contract isn't one I've taken lightly, but I believe it is the best for me and my family at this present time," the 33-year-old said in a news release. "Playing for the Black Caps is still the pinnacle for me and I'm hugely passionate about representing New Zealand and winning games of international cricket." Conway follows his former captain Kane Williamson, who will also play in SA20, in being granted a casual contract as NZC look to keep their best talent for most of the season in the face of lucrative offers from Twenty20 leagues. "In the current environment it's important to have flexibility in our system to navigate some of the challenges posed by franchise cricket," said Scott Weenink, NZC chief executive. Conway and Williamson have been included in the 15-man squad for a one-off Test against Afghanistan and a two-match series in Sri Lanka in September. Injured Black Caps Allen, Conway on course for T20 World Cup Another Black Caps opener, Finn Allen, has joined fellow internationals Lockie Ferguson and Adam Milne in turning down a central contract and will be available for selection on a match-by-match basis. — Agencies

## Spanish football star Yamal's father stabbed

MADRID: The father of teenage Spain and Barcelona star Lamine Yamal was stabbed and left in a serious but stable condition, Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia reported late Wednesday. Mounir Nasraoui was stabbed multiple times in a car park in Mataro after an argument with some men while he was walking his dog, who later came back to attack him, said the report, citing "official sources familiar with the incident". The Catalan regional police, in charge of the investigation, did not publicly confirm the incident or respond to AFP requests for information. Newspaper La Vanguardia said some arrests have already been made. The attack took place in the Rocafonda neighbourhood of Mataro, around 30 kilometres north of Barcelona, where Yamal grew up and where his father and grandmother still live. — Agencies

## Mushtaq confident BD spinners will trouble Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mushtaq Ahmed backed Bangladesh's spin bowlers, emphasising their potential as match-winners ahead of the upcoming two-match Test series against Pakistan. The series will kick off in Rawalpindi, with the first Test set to begin on 21 August. The action will then move to the National Bank Stadium in Karachi, where the second Test match will take place from 30 August to 3 September. Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, Mushtaq, who serves as Bangladesh's spin-bowling consultant, mentioned that the team combination will be finalised after assessing the conditions in Rawalpindi. "We will decide the combination after going to Rawalpindi and

assessing the conditions there," said Mushtaq. "Spinners have an important role in Test cricket, their importance cannot be denied." The former Pakistan leg-spinner praised Bangladesh's spinners and the country's overall bowling talent. "Bangladesh's spinners are a vital cog in their lineup and they are genuine match-winners. The good thing is that the country is producing good bowlers," he added. "If the condition is favourable for fast bowlers, we have good pacers too." He also expressed gratitude towards the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for extending an invitation to the visiting team to arrive early and engage in practice sessions ahead of the series, especially in light of the political turmoil in Bangladesh.



## CT 2025: Jay Shah opens up on India's participation

The ICC event is set to be held in Pakistan early next year

SPORTS DESK

NEW DELHI : The Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Jay Shah, has at last addressed the possibility of the Indian cricket team travelling to Pakistan next February for the ICC Champions Trophy. The ICC Champions Trophy is set to be held in Pakistan early next year. However, India's participation remains uncertain, as the BCCI is seeking government approval for the team to visit the country. In a recent interview with Times of India, Jay Shah was asked about the likelihood of India making the trip to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy. "No decision has been finalised yet," he said. "No stand as of now. We will cross the bridge when it

comes," he added. Three venues — Karachi, Rawalpindi and Lahore — will host the matches of eight teams and according to PCB's proposed schedule to ICC, all of India's matches will take place in Lahore. The PCB also allocated Rs12.80 billion for upgradation of three stadiums. Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium, Karachi's National Bank Cricket Arena and Rawalpindi International Cricket Stadium will be elevated ahead of the marquee event. Except India, all eight teams that will participate in the Champions Trophy have already played in Pakistan and the PCB believes that India does not have a strong reason not to come here. The proposed dates for the Champions Trophy are from 19th February to 9th March. This event will

mark the return of the ICC Champions Trophy after an eight-year hiatus, with its last occurrence in 2017, when Pakistan emerged victorious by defeating India in the final. Meanwhile, The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has turned down the International Cricket Council's (ICC) offer to host the forthcoming

ICC women's T20 World Cup in October. Bangladesh have to host the tournament from October 3-20 but political turmoil in the country has led ICC to look for alternatives. Speaking to the media, BCCI's chairman Jay Shah responded to the offer. "They [ICC] have asked us if we would conduct the

World Cup. I have categorically said no," Shah told media. "We're in the monsoon and on top of that we will host the Women's ODI World Cup next year. I don't want to give any kind of signals that I want to hold consecutive World Cups." India ruling themselves out as hosts leaves Sri Lanka and United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the possible alternatives for the upcoming tournament. Earlier, ICC emphasised mainly on hosting the tournament in Bangladesh, however, the political unrest led ICC to change its decision. In this regard, an ICC official stated earlier this week that the condition in the country is being monitored, ESPN reported. "The ICC is closely monitoring developments in co-ordination with the Bangladesh Cricket Board [BCB], their

security agencies and our own independent security consultants," an ICC statement said. "Our priority is the safety and well-being of all participants." But, Muhammad Yunus's interim government is making a last-ditch attempt to host the tournament in their country. Security challenges aside, the BCB is also amid a crisis, with their president and the former sports minister Nazmul Hassan effectively out of office since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5. Several board directors, who have direct or indirect political connections, have also been incommunicado. The Bangladesh cricket team is currently in Pakistan for the two-match Test series. They're also slated to tour India next month for two Tests and three T20s.



## Briefs

## Typhoon Ampil approaches Tokyo

TOKYO: Typhoon Ampil bore down on Tokyo on Thursday, prompting airlines to cancel hundreds of flights and railways to suspend part of their operations in the peak summer travel season. The typhoon, categorised as "strong" by the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), was about 690 km (430 miles) off Japan's Pacific coast at 9:00 a.m. (0000 GMT on Thursday), heading towards Tokyo and surrounding regions. The agency has two higher categories - "very strong" and "violent". Ampil was blowing winds of 35 metres per second (78 mph), with maximum gust of 50 metres per second (112 mph), according to the JMA. "With this typhoon approaching, we urge the public to be highly vigilant against storms, high waves and heavy rains," a JMA official told a news conference. Japan Airlines said it planned to cancel 191 domestic and 26 international flights, many of them leaving or arriving at Tokyo's Haneda airport, on Friday. China's rains and floods led to near doubling of natural disaster losses in July. Another major airline, ANA, announced it would cancel 280 domestic flights that were originally slated for Friday, affecting more than 60,000 passengers. Central Japan Railway said it would cancel all the "Shinkansen" bullet train services between Tokyo and Japan's industrial heartland of Nagoya on Friday.—APP

## Türkiye reports zero Mpox cases

ANKARA : No cases of Mpox, a disease particularly observed on the African continent, have been detected in Türkiye, according to the country's Health Ministry. According to the ministry's official X account, there is currently no need for restrictions or additional measures in the country. The Health Ministry is carrying out the necessary work, and the process is being closely monitored, it added in the statement. The announcement came after the World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday declared the Mpox situation a "public health emergency of international concern." Since the beginning of 2024, over a dozen African countries have reported the disease, which is transmitted through close contact, with the Democratic Republic of Congo accounting for more than 90% of reported cases. According to the WHO, Mpox causes rashes and flu-like symptoms.—DNA

## Protests escalate in India over rape of doctor

MUMBAI: Thousands of women marched across several Indian cities overnight and Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for strict punishment for crimes against women, as outrage and protests against the rape and murder of a doctor escalated. Holding candles and posters that said "reclaim the night," women held marches across cities, including the eastern Indian city of Kolkata, where the rape and murder of a trainee doctor last week has triggered protests by fellow medics, demanding better and safer working conditions. Many government hospitals in cities across India suspended all services except emergency departments earlier this week, as junior doctors sat outside in protest, demanding justice for the victim. The 31-year-old doctor was found dead on Friday. Police said she had been raped and murdered and a police volunteer was subsequently arrested in connection with the crime. "As a society, we have to think about the atrocities being committed against our mothers, daughters and sisters. There is outrage against this in the country. I can feel this outrage," Modi said in an address to the nation on its 78th Independence Day on Thursday.—Agencies

## Backed by US

## Israel committing 'crimes against humanity': Iran

Iranian FM spokesman said that that the Israeli regime has killed 40,000 innocent Palestinian people, including some 15,000 children, and injured more than 100,000 people in the Gaza Strip during its 10-month-old war

## NEWS DESK

TEHRAN : Iran says the "terrorist and racist" Israeli regime is fully supported by the US and its Western allies in committing "crimes against humanity" for several decades. "The Zionist regime is a racist terrorist regime that has been engaged in gross and systematic violations of the basic, natural and human rights of the Palestinian people and perpetrating 'crimes against humanity' for several decades with the full support from the West, especially the US government," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani said in a post on his X account on Thursday. He added that the Israeli regime has killed 40,000 innocent Palestinian people, including some 15,000 children, and injured more than 100,000 people in the Gaza Strip during its 10-month-old war. Since the beginning of the war in Gaza in October, thousands of Palestinians have also been missing under the rubble, the Iranian spokesperson noted. Kan'ani lashed out at the US officials for "brazenly" calling Palestinians and resistance groups terrorist and expressing support for Israel which is committing crimes. "The American

## Columbia University president steps down

BOGOTA : Columbia University's president has resigned after facing extensive criticism regarding her handling of pro-Palestinian protests on campus, which sparked widespread protests in other US universities. Minouche Shafik announced her resignation in an email to the university community on Wednesday after a little more than a year on the job, becoming the third president of an Ivy League university to step down in the wake of campus protests over Gaza war. The university faced criticism for its heavy-handed tactics against pro-Palestinian students protesting the genocide in Gaza. Shafik authorized New York police to move on to campus and break up their encampments, claiming the protesting students "pose a clear and present danger to the substantial functioning of the university." Hundreds of faculty members issued statements condemning Shafik's tactics, and walked out in support of their students. Since then, Shafik had come under growing pressure to step down over her role in the crackdown. Shafik made her decision to resign public on Wednesday. She said she wanted to ensure that new leadership is in place before the upcoming term starts on September 3, a date when student protesters have pledged to continue their demonstrations. "It has... been a period of turmoil where it has been difficult to overcome divergent views across our community. This period has taken a considerable toll on my family, as it has for others in our community," Shafik said in a statement. The university appointed Katrina Armstrong, the dean of Columbia's medical school, as the interim president. In her statement, Armstrong expressed deep understanding of the challenges the University has encountered in the past year. Shafik, a former head of the London School of Economics and ex-World Bank official, has declared her intention to return to the UK after stepping down from her position. The student protest group Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine welcomed the resignation on social media network X. "After months of chanting 'Minouche Shafik you can't hide' she finally got the memo. To be clear, any future president who does not pay heed to the Columbia student body's overwhelming demand for divestment will end up exactly as President Shafik did," the group wrote.—APP

government says it is committed to defending Israel in the face of 'terrorists!' The closure of the vital crossing has so far led to the deaths of over 1000 children and patients in Gaza. Kan'ani emphasized that through an "absurd and false logic", the American government is providing the Israeli regime with financial, arms and political support in its genocide against Palestinians. He

said the US's all-out support for Israel is an absolute disgrace and makes Washington liable for prosecution, which can be pursued through legal channels, as an international obligation of states.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7, 2023 after Palestinian resistance groups carried out a surprise retaliatory operation into the occupied territories. Concomitantly with the war, the regime has been enforcing a near-total siege on the coastal territory, which has reduced the flow of foodstuffs, medicine, electricity, and water into the Palestinian territory into a trickle. Meanwhile, The Israeli army at dawn on Thursday killed six more Palestinians in airstrikes on central Gaza City as well as Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said three Palestinians were killed and others injured in an Israeli airstrike on a home of the Khzeiq family in the al-Sabra neighborhood in southern Gaza City. The Israeli army also carried out a limited incursion into the southern areas of the city's southeastern Zeitoun neighborhood, amid firing of heavy artillery shells. Wafa added that three other Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike on the town of Bani Suhaila, east of the city of Khan Younis.

Israel, flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire, has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Hamas.

## President Erdogan pushes for reforming UN Security Council

Erdogan advocates for a more equitable Security Council, supporting broader global representation

## WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has strongly endorsed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' recent remarks on reforming the Security Council, emphasizing the need for a more equitable global system that includes African representation. In a statement addressing Guterres' X post, Erdogan said: "The structure of UN Security Council, which is far from fulfilling its duty to ensure global peace and security, must be changed



fundamentally," Erdogan's comments came after Guterres' statement, saying:

"The Security Council was designed by the victors of World War II. The world has changed. The world has changed but the composition of the Council has not kept pace." "Expressing your views sincerely and loudly about the need for the United Nations Security Council to undergo reform in alignment with current conditions and in a fair manner is very valuable for the world to have a just system again," Erdogan said. Türkiye's continued support for establishing a fair international system, he said: "We will

continue to stand by all friends who strive for a fair international system and a UN Security Council that meets today's conditions." The Turkish president specifically addressed the lack of African representation in the council, saying: "The African continent and all our African brothers must be given the opportunity to contribute to this fair system." "In response to these expectations, we will continue to say the world is bigger than five and act with the understanding that a More Just World is Possible," he said.

## Yoon offers working-level talks with North Korea

SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol offered on Thursday to establish a working-level consultative body with North Korea to discuss ways to ease tension and resume economic cooperation, as he laid out his vision on unification of the neighbours. In his National Liberation Day speech marking the 79th anniversary of independence from Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule after World War II, Yoon said he was ready to begin political and economic cooperation if North Korea "takes just one step" toward denuclearisation. South Korea's Yoon heads to Central Asia for talks on energy, minerals Yoon said launching the "inter-Korean working group" could help relieve tensions and handle any issues ranging from economic cooperation to people-to-people exchanges to reunions of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War. "We will begin political and economic cooperation the moment North Korea takes just one step toward denuclearisation," he said. "Dialogue and cooperation can bring about substantive progress in inter-Korean relations."—APP

## Indonesia, KSA boost clean energy collaboration

JAKARTA: Indonesia is seeking to boost its clean energy sector through closer cooperation with Saudi Arabia, its state power firm said on Thursday after signing a deal with the Kingdom's energy giant, ACWA Power. Indonesia's Perusahaan Listrik Negara signed a power purchase agreement with ACWA Power on Tuesday to develop the Saguling Floating Solar Photovoltaic Project in West Java province. This project will have with a 92 megawatt peak capacity, marking the Saudi Arabia company's first such venture in Southeast Asia's biggest economy. PLN's subsidiary Indonesia Power will hold a 51 percent equity stake in the project, while the remainder will be owned by ACWA Power, PLN said in a statement on Thursday, adding that the collaboration will help expand Indonesia's clean energy reach. "Global warming is a huge challenge, but it also offers us extraordinary opportunities for development and collaboration, whether through strategies, technology innovation, or investments. "We want to make sure that the future generation will have a better future than our own, and everything begins with this extraordinary collaboration," PLN President Director Darmawan Prasodjo said. "ACWA Power is committed to do mega-sized projects in Indonesia, especially a big green hydrogen project with the expertise that ACWA Power already has from the NEOM Project."—Agencies

## 130 killed in war-torn Gaza every day: Volker

GENEVA : UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk on Thursday condemned the ongoing Israeli violence in the war-torn Gaza Strip, revealing that nearly 130 people have died daily since Oct. 7. "On average, about 130 people have been killed every day in Gaza over the past 10 months. The scale of the Israeli military's destruction of homes, hospitals, schools and places of worship is deeply shocking," Turk said. Turk stressed that the "unimaginable situation" in the besieged enclave is overwhelmingly due to the recurring failures of the Israeli army to comply with the rules of war. He also noted the importance of protecting civilians, civilian property, and infrastructure as outlined by international humanitarian law (IHL). "Our Office has documented serious violations of IHL by both the Israeli military and Palestinian armed groups, including the armed wing of Hamas." In a call to the international community, Turk urged all parties to agree to an immediate cease-fire, cease hostilities, and halt the bloodshed. "As the world reflects on and considers its inability to prevent this carnage, I urge all parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire, lay down their arms and stop the killing once and for all." "The hostages must be released. Palestinians arbitrarily detained must be freed. Israel's illegal occupation must end and the internationally agreed two-state solution must become a reality." Flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire, Israel has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Hamas.—DNA



Baghdad: Mahdi Salih, a Member of the Basra Chamber of Commerce and an electric fan importer from Pakistan, called on Ambassador Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed. Discussions were held on bilateral trade relations, particularly the import of fans from Pakistan.—DNA

## Politicians' language stokes far-right violence: Sadiq

These are British citizens, they've not broken the law, they've done nothing wrong, and they're feeling scared,' says London mayor

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON : The language used by politicians in Britain has fueled the recent far-right violence that has plagued the country, according to London Mayor Sadiq Khan. "I'm afraid when mainstream politicians use words like, in inverted commas, 'invasion' when it comes to migrants, use words like 'this is an Islamist country,' or words like 'London is run by Islamists,' which is something said by a senior conservative politician," he told Anadolu in an exclusive interview. "That leads to a dehumanization of Muslims, a dehumanization of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. They don't think we're human, they think we're subhu-

man," said Khan, who was born to a British Pakistani family. "That's why I think politicians have a responsibility to use language carefully, because the consequences are Muslims are being scared." Khan spoke on the measures taken against the far right in the city, steps that can be taken to curb hatred and violence on social media, and the impact of the language used by politicians on far-right extremist actions. After last month's stabbings in Southport, England, which took the life of three children and were falsely blamed on a Muslim asylum seeker, right-wing extremists targeted Muslims and people of color, Khan said. After anger was stoked by false

online claims about the attack, said Khan, people "attacked a mosque, they tried to attack other mosques. We know people in cars have been stopped and targeted to see if they're Muslims. We know a hostel housing asylum seekers was set on fire." London Muslims are 'scared' On a meeting he had with Muslim community leaders in the wake of the violence, Khan said: "Leaders I've spoken to just now... their congregations are scared. Many of their parents whose children returned to school are scared. And my job as the mayor, working with the police, working with the government, working with Londoners, is to make sure Londoners, par-

ticularly those who are Muslim, aren't just safe, but they feel safe as well. Because these are British citizens, they've not broken the law, they've done nothing wrong, and they're feeling scared." "And that's not right," said Khan. "I know that I'm targeted because I'm a Muslim. I know this because I have police protection as a result." Khan also commented on the indiscriminate nature of the attacks, saying: "You know, these racists, these far extremists, don't discriminate between 'this Muslim' and 'that Muslim.' We're all targets." "What I'd say to the social media companies (is) unless you take responsibility yourself, don't be surprised if there's

(new) regulations," Khan said about the use of social media to spread discriminatory smears and far-right violence. Hate crimes such as racism, Islamophobia, and antisemitism are amplified by the perceived "no rules" environment of social media, he observed. "Unfortunately, though, this hatred, (this) misinformation is amplified on social media and it spreads before there's a chance to rebut it. Unfortunately, social media has given the impression of being a no-rules environment. The rules don't apply to them, and they should apply to them, about misinformation, disinformation, incitement to hatred," he said, adding that such incitement is "a criminal offense."

## Taiwan rattled by 5.7 magnitude quake

TAIPEI: A 5.7 magnitude earthquake struck off Taiwan's northeastern county of Yilan on Thursday, the island's central weather administration said, with no immediate reports of damage. The quake shook buildings in the capital, Taipei. The quake had a depth of 9 km, the weather administration said, and was just off its northeastern shore. Subway services in Taipei continued at a lower speed immediately after the quake, authorities said. Taiwan lies near the junction of two tectonic plates and is prone to earthquakes. Taiwan recorded its biggest earthquake in at least 25 years in April which killed nine people and injured more than 900.—APP

## Global male cancer deaths may surge 93% by 2050

LONDON : A recent study published in the American Cancer Society's peer-reviewed journal, Cancer, projects a significant increase in cancer cases and deaths among men worldwide by 2050. According to the research, cancer deaths among men are predicted to rise by 93%, with cancer cases expected to increase by 84% between 2022 and 2050. The study highlights that these alarming increases will be more pronounced among men aged 65 and older, particularly in countries and territories with low to medium human development indices. The Global Cancer Observatory data was used to analyze over 30 types of cancer across 185 countries and territories, providing demographic projections that reveal this concerning trend. CBS News chief medical correspondent Dr. Jon LaPook noted that the study's findings translate to approximately 5 million more cancer deaths per year in men by 2050, compared to current figures. This follows earlier predictions by the World Health Organization, which estimated that global cancer cases would rise by 77%, reaching over 35 million by 2050. The study attributes the projected increase in cancer cases to several factors, including population aging, growth, and changes in exposure to risk factors like air pollution, tobacco, alcohol use, and obesity were also identified as significant contributors.—APP

## Briefs

### Naqvi pays tribute to Police

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has paid tribute to the police for foiling a terrorist attack on a police checkpoint in Taunsa, saying that the brave officers stationed at the checkpoint thwarted the nefarious designs of the khwarij with bravery. Interior Minister commended the brave personnel of Punjab Police who foiled the terrorist attack, saying that the police responded promptly and courageously to the cowardly attack by the khwarij. He praised the courageous young personnel of Punjab Police who foiled the attack, saying that we are proud of the brave officials of Punjab Police.

### TLP leader's remand extended

COURT REPORTER

LAHORE: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) extended the physical remand of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) leader Maulana Muhammad Tahir Saifi for an additional eight days in the case related to issuing a fatwa against Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa. Sheikhupura police presented the accused in the court of ATC duty judge Irfan Haider after the expiration of his previous remand on Thursday. The investigating officer informed the court that a case had been registered against the accused at A-Division Police Station in Sheikhupura. He added that a photogrammetric test of the accused needs to be conducted, and a microphone used in the crime needs to be recovered. The police investigation officer requested an extension of the physical remand of the accused for the recovery, which the court approved and granted an additional eight days of physical remand.

### ECC okays continuation of PM relief package

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here on Thursday approved the continuation of the Prime Minister's (PM) Relief Package for the fiscal year 2024-25. The decision was taken in the ECC meeting chaired by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, according to a press statement issued here. The ECC approved continuing to relief package through Utility Stores Corporation (USC) with revised priced and subsidy. The proposal to continue the package was presented by the Industries and Production Division. The ECC also approved the request of the Ministry of Industries and Production to declare the Warehousing and Logistic Sector as an industry, the statement added Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Privatisation Abdul Aleem Khan, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, and other senior officials of the relevant ministries were also present on the occasion. The federal government has decided to continue the current Prime Minister's package - subsidies on five basic kitchen items - at utility stores until the new package is announced. ARY News reported on Monday. As the period of the PM's relief package on utility stores has ended, the new announced package in the budget 2024-25 could not be able to implement from today. It is pertinent to mention here that a total of Rs 65 billion have been allocated for the PM's and Ramadan packages in the budget out of which Rs 10 billion will be allocated for the PM's Ramadan Relief Package, and remaining Rs 55 billion for the PM's Relief Package.

# IHC judge questions govt's foreign investment strategy

"The world is watching how our courts are dealing with these disappearances," he stated. "If the government labels this as enforced disappearance, they need to identify who ordered it and negotiate with them," he stated

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD High Court's (IHC) Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb on Thursday questioned how the government was planning to attract foreign investment amid the continuing phenomenon of missing persons in the country. The judge issued the remarks during a hearing related to the recovery of missing PTI worker Malik Faizan. Two days ago, the IHC had also summoned the interior and defence secretaries, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) director general, and the Islamabad inspector general of police (IG) on a petition seeking the recovery of PTI activist Azhar Mishwani's two brothers. Zahoor and Mazhar were allegedly picked up by law enforcement agencies in June, with Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi ordering the Punjab IG to recover the two brothers. The PTI has also launched a campaign on social media for the recovery of "abducted" workers and activists, including the party's international media coordinator Ahmad Waqas Janjua. The campaign aims to draw the attention of the courts to the disappearances. Justice Aurangzeb heard the petition for Faizan's recovery today. "The world is also watching what Pakistani courts are doing in cases of missing persons," Justice Aurangzeb said. "Or either admit that the world come and invests here but people will still go missing and the courts will not be able to do anything."

He continued: "If the government calls it a case of enforced disappearance, then they need to find out who ordered it. The government then needs to sit down with the abductors." When the judge asked who the missing workers were, the petitioner's lawyer mentioned Faizan, who works for the PTI's media cell. Addressing the additional attorney general, Justice Aurangzeb - in a harsh tone - suggested that he "change the Constitution, remove fundamental rights from it, end our (the court's) jurisdiction". "I don't know what the state wants to achieve with this. You arrest him (Faizan) and we won't say anything, but the country cannot run like this," the judge said. "The Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, and the state are all content with this, but I don't understand what is going on. What do you aim to achieve with this?" Justice Aurangzeb asked. The judge also remarked that earlier, the bench which heard the case wrote that it was a matter of enforced disappearance. Calling it a "cruel act", he wondered what the constitutional courts should do in such a situation. "The federal government means the prime minister and the federal cabinet, so the responsibility ultimately rests with the executive," Justice Aurangzeb remarked. The additional attorney general said that the petitioners "did not knock on the door of the court with clean hands". In response, Justice Aurangzeb remarked: "Should the petition be dismissed if they did not file the petition with clean hands?" "Do you want me to become a servile

judge?" he asked. "Should I reject 'dirty' applications from 'dirty' applicants? I don't understand where you are going with this," Aurangzeb said, asking the prosecutor, "Tell me, what I should do?" The AAG replied: "We do not know who the kidnappers are." Justice Aurangzeb further remarked, "When one of our fellow judges issued a strict order, the government propaganda machines started propaganda against him." He added that he would pass a written order in the case and adjourned the hearing. Earlier in August, the government announced a Rs5 million "support package" per family of missing persons, which would provide them with legal and financial assistance. Addressing a press briefing in Islamabad, Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar said that a report, based on the findings of two previous cabinet committees, had been presented to the cabinet committee for missing persons during the caretaker government's tenure. He added that the report was presented before the federal cabinet and some of its salient recommendations had been approved. "A special committee will be formed to determine which families need an immediate support package, after which each [eligible] family will receive Rs5 million," Tarar said. "Keep in mind that this is not a compensation of any kind, as there is no compensation for a human life," the law minister clarified, adding that the package was being given as a "support" to such families considering their "hardships until the matter is resolved".

## Operations resume at Torkham crossing

The border crossing shut down on Monday

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Torkham border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which had been closed for three days due to skirmishes, has reopened, an official said on Thursday. The crossing, connecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) with Afghanistan's Nangarhar province, was shut down on Monday following clashes between the security forces of the two countries. Abdullah Khan, a local Pakistani official at the border, confirmed to Anadolu that "the border has reopened this morning for travellers and transport after remaining closed for three days." The closure of the Torkham border, one of the two main crossings between Pakistan and Afghanistan, has caused heavy losses to already depreciating trade between the two neighbours, as Torkham is one of the busiest trade routes between Islamabad and Kabul. The trade volume between landlocked Afghanistan and Pakistan has been mostly affected by terrorist attacks in Pakistan that Islamabad blames on Afghanistan-based militants, leading to the closure of border crossings.

## Flood alert issued for Chenab River

ISLAMABAD: The National Emergencies Operation Center of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Thursday anticipated that rain, wind and thundershower with isolated heavy rainfall was anticipated in the catchment areas of River Chenab till August 18. "Consequently, the Chenab River is expected to reach High to Very High level flows which may result in inundation in low lying areas & damage of infrastructure," the NDMA news release said. All villages and towns or settlements near Marala, Khanki, Qadirabad, especially along the flood plain, could be affected by increasing flows. A strong Monsoon spell was active in catchment areas of eastern rivers, particularly in catchment areas of River Chenab including Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Chiniot, etc. Similarly, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) including Reasi, Akhnour, Salal, Rajouri, Jammu, etc. Heavy rainfall is anticipated in isolated places until August 18, which will result in significant increase in the flow of River Chenab as well as local nullahs. Urban flooding is expected in the urban centers, however, high to very high flood levels are likely in River Chenab. Rainfall intensity is expected to taper down after August 18; however, more rains can be expected till August 25 with gaps in catchment areas of Chenab. The public is advised to stay informed by keeping track of weather updates and alerts. NDMA has launched the Pak NDMA Disaster Alert application, available on Google Play Store. - DNA



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir welcoming retired military officers during reception on Independence Day. - DNA

# Gaza death toll surpasses 40,000, health ministry says

NEWS DESK

GAZA: More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, the territory's Health Ministry said Thursday. Israel's offensive has also wounded 92,401 people and displaced over 85 percent of the population from their homes, the ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants in its toll. The announcement came during yet another push from international mediators to broker a ceasefire in the war, now in its 11th month. The conflict began Oct. 7 after Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people - most of them civilians - and dragging roughly 250 hostages to Gaza. Israel says 111 of the captives

have not been released, including the bodies of 39. The hostages include 15 women and two children under the age of 5. In Gaza, health officials have struggled to fully identify the dead as bodies stream into overwhelmed hospitals and morgues where they say the count is compiled amid the chaos of war and displacement. In its most recent detailed report on the dead, issued Thursday, the ministry said 40,005 people have been killed. Health officials and civil defense workers say the true toll is likely thousands higher, since many bodies remain buried under the rubble of buildings destroyed in airstrikes. Israel's air and ground offensive in Gaza has been one of the most devastating military campaigns in recent history. The bombardment and shelling have killed entire Palestinian families. With cem-

eteries often unreachable, families fleeing Israeli airstrikes bury their dead wherever possible - in backyards, along roadsides and under the staircases of their homes. Israel says it aims to eliminate Hamas. It blames Hamas for civilian deaths because militants operate in civilian areas and have built extensive tunnel networks underneath them. Israeli forces have regularly targeted mosques, schools, hospitals and cemeteries where it claims fighters or tunnels are located, often causing civilian casualties. The fighting has also killed 329 Israeli soldiers. The Israeli military claims around 15,000 Hamas fighters are among those killed in Gaza but has not provided evidence. Nearly 85 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes, fleeing multiple times across the territory.

## Pakistan reports 1st monkeypox case

ISLAMABAD: Just a day after an alert was issued to stop the potential spread of diseases via international travellers, Pakistan on Thursday reported this year's first case of monkeypox diagnosed in a Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) citizen who recently returned home from Saudi Arabia. The officials from the federal health ministry said that the young man belongs to Dir and is currently residing in Mardan. The infected man was detected with Mpx following his return from kingdom on August 3, they added. The health ministry's officials further said that they collected more samples of people who came in contact with the affected man. Subsequently, the ministry also ordered the Border Health Services to commence strict monitoring of all entry points. Taking further measures to stop its spread, an important session was held at the Health Ministry under the chair of DG Health in which advisory and guidelines were issued regarding Mpx. The provinces have been directed to appoint focal persons to monitor and report developments regarding the detection of the disease. It is noteworthy to mention here that the World Health Organisation (WHO) had declared the recent spread of monkeypox a global emergency a day ago. In the past year, Pakistan has confirmed nine cases of Mpx, all among travellers returning from the Middle East and other countries. Tragically, one patient, who was co-infected with HIV and Mpx, later died in Islamabad. During the special session of the NCOC on Mpx, it was noted that around 15 African countries are currently reporting Mpx cases, with a total of 2,030 confirmed cases. Four countries - Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda - previously unaffected by Mpx, have reported cases since mid-July 2024. - DNA

## Increased 'surveillance' blamed for internet slowdown in Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: As internet users in Pakistan continue to reel under prevailing access and speed issues, the Wireless and Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan (WISPAP) has blamed the phenomenon on increased security and surveillance whose adverse repercussions might lead to severe economic repercussions. "It's a very discouraging situation for our customers [...] Many are leaving the smaller ISPs because they cannot sustain the poor service quality anymore. If this continues, we will see a mass exodus of businesses from Pakistan," said WISPAP Chairman Shahzad Arshad on Thursday. Elaborating on the prevailing issue, the WISPAP chairman revealed that internet speeds witnessed around 30% to 40% reduction which has had a devastating effect on businesses and individuals who depend on reliable internet connectivity. Highlighting the adverse effects of internet-related issues on online and electronic-related businesses, the WISPAP chairman warned that these sectors, an essential pillar of the country's digital economy, are now "struggling to maintain operations, and the slowdown is threatening their very survival". His remarks come as the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government and the country's top cyber regulator the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) have remained quiet as millions across the country continue to face trouble accessing internet services due to limited connectivity.

## Deif is 'fine': Hamas rejects Israeli claims on assassination

GAZA: A senior member of Hamas has categorically dismissed Israeli reports on the assassination of the Palestinian resistance movement's military leader, Mohammed Deif, in the occupying regime's barbaric aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip. Osama Hamdan, who represents the movement in Lebanon, made the assertion in an interview with the Associated Press (AP) published on Thursday. Hamdan said Deif, the commander of al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, is "fine" after the Israeli officials and media outlets claimed he had been assassinated. This is the first time a senior Hamas official has addressed the Israeli claim, first made on August 1, that the top Palestinian commander was killed in an airstrike last month. Hamdan told AP that Hamas believes Israel mentioned Deif as the target of the July strike to "justify the massacre" that day, in which 88 Palestinians were killed in a bombing of the so-called humanitarian zone. Deif is among the founders of al-Qassam Brigades in the 1990s and has led the force for more than 20 years. Israel has identified Deif and Yahya Sinwar, Hamas's newly appointed head of political bureau, as the chief architects of the large-scale and surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the regime on October 7. Sinwar was Hamas's Gaza leader before he replaced Ismail Haniyeh who was killed in an Israeli attack in Tehran last month. The high-profile Hamas military commander became the head of the al-Qassam Brigades in 2002 after Israel killed his predecessor, Salah Shahada. Deif is believed to have helped expand Hamas's labyrinth of tunnels that run beneath Gaza, with the occupying regime describing the underground network as "highly complex." Israel launched the aggression after Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, a retaliatory operation staged by the Gaza-based resistance groups in reprisal for the regime's decades-long crimes against Palestinians. The US-backed bloody onslaught has so far killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 92,294 others. Thousands more are also missing and presumed dead under rubble. - Agencies

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