



# Islamabad POST

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**Macron begins talks to select new govt, Prime Minister**

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**DNC: Harris pledges 'new way forward'**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Shakib ul Hasan booked on murder charge**

Detailed News On Page-06



**SME sector provides 72% of employment**

## PM Shehbaz orders immediate formation of SMEDA board

Additionally, he called for promoting sub-contracting in industries and taking all possible measures to integrate Pakistani industries into the global supply chain

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a meeting on matters related to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), emphasizing the crucial role of SMEs in Pakistan's economy. He said the small and medium enterprises act as the backbone of the country's economy. Expressing dismay over the non-functioning of the SMEDA Board, the prime minister directed its immediate constitution, stressing that boards of all institutions vital for the country's economy, should be established without delay. Additionally, he called for promoting sub-contracting in industries and taking all possible measures to integrate Pakistani industries into the global supply chain. The prime minister also ordered to take necessary steps to ensure appointment of the SMEDA's Chief Executive Officer. Additionally, he also directed to include the people from the private sector in the steering committee. During the briefing, the prime minister was informed that for the first time, SMEDA Development Fund had been launched for which an amount of Rs 30 billion had been allocated for 6 years. Out of the total, Rs 5 billion have already been provided for the year 2024-25, the meeting was told. It was informed in the meeting that, there were currently 5.2 million small and medium enterprises in Pakistan, which account for 40 percent of the country's GDP whereas 31% of country's exports depend on the SMEs. Apart from non-agricultural employment, SME sector provides 72% of employment while some Rs 491 billion have been provided in the form of bank credit for the SME sector so far, but the bank credit for the SME sector needs to be taken up to Rs 800 billion, the meeting was told. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, PM's Coordinator Rana Ihsaan Afzal, and other relevant high officials.

## Govt considering shutting down utility stores

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry for Industries and Production (MoIP) secretary on Friday confirmed that the government was considering shutting down all utility stores in the country. Last week, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet approved the disbursement of monthly subsidies to Utility Stores Corporation (USC) at a higher rate per household and turnover tax of 1.25 per cent. In recent weeks, the prices of some essential kitchen items had declined in the open market but remained higher at USC. But generally, the prices of essential items, particularly those subsidised through USC, had gone up. During a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production today, Senator Saifullah Niazi questioned whether the government would close utility stores in the country. MoIP Secretary Saif Anjum replied that the government was considering shutting down the country's utility stores, adding that work was in progress to transfer the employees of the utility stores to other institutions. "Government wants to get out of non-essential businesses,"

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on matters related to Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority. - DNA

## UK expands eVisas to new biometric customers

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The UK immigration system is going digital, meaning physical documents will be replaced with an online immigration status. Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), vignette stickers in passports or 'wet ink stamps' are among some of the physical documents that will no longer be needed. If you are granted a visa to stay in the UK for longer than 6 months - for example to work or study - you will now need to create a UKVI online account to access your eVisa. The account acts as an online record of your immigration status. For those granted a visa to stay in the UK for less than 6 months,

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## 'Will not back down again' Imran cites 'potential chaos' as reason for postponing rally

"If we had proceeded with the event, there was a risk of a repeat of the May 9 events," PTI's founding leader says

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Founding chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan, has clarified that he had not held discussions with the government regarding the Islamabad rally, and maintained that while in jail he was informed that holding the rally could "lead to nationwide chaos," which ultimately prompted his decision to cancel it. Yesterday, the PTI announced the postponement of its planned rally in Islamabad's Tarnol Chowk until September 8. In an informal conversation with journalists at Adiala Jail on Friday, the former PM explained that the rally, initially planned around the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat issue, was postponed after he was advised that it could escalate tensions. He stated, "I was told that the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat is a

Continued on Page 06

## Sept 8 rally will be held come what may

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: Aleema Khan, sister of ex-PM and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, has stressed that PTI's public gathering on Sept 8 will be held in every condition on the emphasis of Imran Khan. Speaking to media, Aleema Khan asserted that Imran Khan cancelled the Aug 22 public gathering in Islamabad to avoid chaos as religious parties were already protesting in the capital. Imran Khan insisted that the Sept 8 public gathering would not be cancelled and instructed party leadership to prepare for it.

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## Briefs

### Aliya moves IHC to get bail

PTI leader filed the petition through her lawyers Khaqan Mir and Ishtiaq A. Khan

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Aliya Hamza moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to get protective bail in registered against her in Faisalabad and Sargodha. The PTI leader filed the petition through her lawyers Khaqan Mir and Ishtiaq A. Khan, requesting the court to hear her plea today. Yesterday, an ATC in Gujranwala had acquitted Hamza in a case related to May 9 vandalism. It must be remembered that she spent more than a year behind the bars in cases related to May 9.

### PTI urged to shun hate rhetoric

Malik's warning serves as a reminder to the PTI leadership

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik on Friday warned the PTI leadership, particularly KPK Chief Minister should desist from making hate-based statements and spreading chaos in the country. Talking to a Private news channel, he urged the PTI leadership to abandon their hate-filled rhetoric and instead embrace a peaceful and constructive approach to politics.

### Holiday Notice

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

### Rahim Yar Khan toll hits 12

## Punjab govt offers Rs10m bounties for Kacha dacoits

Provincial govt replaces top police command in the district following deadly attack

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab government has announced bounties of up to Rs10 million on the heads of the most dangerous kacha dacoits in an effort to eliminate the persistent threat posed by these criminals. According to a government notification issued on Friday, high-value targets are subject to a Rs10 million bounty, while Rs5 million and Rs2.5 million rewards are being offered for other dangerous bandits in lower categories. The decision is part of a broader strategy to restore peace in the region, following decades of costly and largely unsuccessful operations against the dacoits. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of yesterday's violent incident in which a police van was attacked with rockets, resulting in the deaths of over 12 policemen and multiple injuries, the Punjab government has replaced the top police command in Rahim Yar Khan. DPO Imran Ahmed Malik, SP Muhammad Javed Akhtar Jatoi, and DSP Kaleem Ahmad have been asked to report to the Central Police Office.

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## Police attack 'mastermind' bites the dust in RYK

Punjab IGP Usman Anwar says operation to eliminate gangsters in Katcha area under way

DNA

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Police claimed on Friday to have killed the mastermind of the audacious attack on law enforcers in Katcha area of Rahim Yar Khan. Twelve policemen were martyred and eight others injured when a band of dacoits attacked the convoy with rocket launchers and firing near Machka police camp II here. A Punjab police spokesman claimed that teams of law enforcers began operation and shot dead prime suspect Bashir Shar.

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan confirms 2nd mpox case

Virus detected in an individual who returned to Peshawar from a Gulf country, says health ministry

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Friday confirmed the second case of mpox in Pakistan, stating that the virus was detected in an individual who returned to Peshawar from a Gulf country. The patient, who was tested positive for mpox, was diagnosed at the Peshawar Airport by a health desk set up for screening the incoming passengers.

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## Govt seems to be beneficiary of enforced disappearances: IHC

The justice observed that the people are being picked up but the Chief Executive is doing nothing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb of Islamabad High Court on Friday gave a historic remark in the case of missing persons that the government seems to be the beneficiary of forced disappearances. The justice observed that the people are being picked up but the chief executive is not doing anything. While hearing the case related to AzharMashwani's two missing brothers, Justice Aurangzeb asked Additional Attorney General Manoor Iqbal Dogal about the progress. He replied vaguely that efforts are being made in the case. Petitioner's counsel Babar Awan argued that his client's son has been booked under sedition and incitement to sedition sections of the law. Nowhere in the complaint it is stated what is national interest [which the missing persons violated]. If you ask me what is national interest, I will say reduce the price of electricity. For a Baloch, gas supply would be national interest, Babar Awan argued. An SP from Punjab Police, Lahore, submitted before the court that CCTV footage has been provided by the family. Because of the low resolution, nothing could be detected by NADRA or the forensic agency.

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## LHC seeks response in internet suspension case

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court has sought response from the parties on an application against internet suspension and firewall installation across the country. The LHC's Justice Shakeel Ahmad heard the case against internet suspension and firewall installation. Earlier, Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal recused himself from hearing a case against internet suspension and fire installation. During the hearing, Justice Shakeel inquired about the key importance of this application. Advocate AzharSiddique informed the court that key evidence about internet suspension had been submitted in the application. The petitioner contended that internet and social media was

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## Traders community welcome nomination of Amir Qureshi

ISLAMABAD : The business community of the federal capital has welcomed the nomination of businessman Amir Rahim Qureshi as executive member in the election of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce. Renowned and senior traders A Rauf Khalid Malik Ijaz Abbasi waqar Abbasi Asad Aziz Shazad Abbasi thanked Gen Secretary UBG Zafar Bakhtawari and President ICCI Ahsan Bakhtawari. They said that Amir Qureshi is well aware of issues faced by traders he will work for welfare of all traders of capital with his full strength.—APP

## Five-day anti-polio drive set to launch on Sept 9

ISLAMABAD : Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration is set to launch a comprehensive five-day anti-polio campaign starting on September 9. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Friday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for upcoming anti-polio drive. According to an ICT spokesman, the meeting was attended by District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Zeem Zia, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) East and others. The campaign will target vaccination of 421,455 children against polio across the region. The primary phase will run from September 9 to September 13, with additional rounds on September 14 and 15 to ensure that any remaining children are vaccinated. A key focus of the meeting was the security of the polio teams, who will conduct door-to-door visits to cover every area and household in the city. Citizens are urged to cooperate with the teams and ensure their children receive the necessary polio drops. This initiative is part of Islamabad's ongoing efforts to eradicate polio, aiming for full immunization coverage and a polio-free future.—APP

## Child infected with polio detected in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD: A 29-month old child has been detected with polio virus in Hyderabad as a first case reported from the city in the current year. The National Emergency Operation Center for Polio Eradication on Thursday night informed the health authorities that a female child had been detected with Type-1 Wild Polio Virus (WPV1) from her stool test. According to the center, that was the third polio case in Sindh and first in Hyderabad in 2024. The virus has been classified as YB3A and it is 99.22% linked to a virus detected in an environmental sample collected from Hyderabad on May 8. The center noted that the child had an onset of paralysis on August 3. The focal person polio was notified about the virus on August 6 and the stool sample was collected the following day on August 7.—APP

## Ahsan concerned over alarming results of DEPIx

ISLAMABAD : Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday expressed concern over the fall of 58 percent of the country's districts in the medium category of the District Education Performance Index (DEPIx), and remaining in the under-performing. Addressing a news conference following the release of the DEPIx 2020-23 report, Iqbal said Pakistan's literacy rate of 60 percent was insufficient for progress and must be increased to 90 percent. "Pakistan's national average score on the index is a modest 53 out of 100, placing the country in the 'Low' performance category," according to the report compiled by the Planning Commission in collaboration with international experts and government agencies. The report is the first of its kind to measure district-level education performance, focusing on key outcomes such as access, learning, equity, governance and inputs like infrastructure and public financing. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan's 124 districts have scored an average of 53 percent in education, with no district

# Pak-Ethiopia fraternity park to open next month in Capital

Jemal Beker Abdula expressed gratitude to the Government and the people of Pakistan for contributing to 600 million tree plantation initiative of the Government of Ethiopia



ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : The Governments of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on Friday announced to establish a dedicated park in Islamabad next month to foster fraternity and brotherhood between the two countries under the ongoing bilateral cooperation in the area of climate change. The announcement to this effect was made during a press briefing jointly addressed by H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, H.E. Romina Khurshed Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, and H.E. Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Commissioner Islamabad.

The joint press briefing was held here at the Ethiopia Embassy Islamabad, which was followed by a tree plantation ceremony which was aimed at contributing to Ethiopia's record-breaking initiative of planting 600 million seedlings in one day under the globally recognized Green Legacy Initiative of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Individuals from all walks of life including government officials, diplomatic community, academicians, religious and business fraternity, youth, civil society and media gathered at the Ethiopia Embassy Islamabad and planted saplings of fruits, vegetables and other species under the Green Legacy Initiative. Addressing the press briefing, H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula expressed gratitude to the Government

and the people of Pakistan for contributing to 600 million tree plantation initiative of the Government of Ethiopia. The Ambassador recalled the launch of Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity under the Green Legacy Initiative programme across Pakistan under which not only trees were planted across the country, but also Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Parks and Enclaves have also been established. "Climate Change is no more a buzzword rather it is a reality and for that matter we all have to join our forces to deal with the looming threat which is taking more lives than any other global crises," said the Ambassador while announcing the launch of the 2nd round of Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity under the Green Legacy Initiative programme

in Pakistan. He announced that a dedicated park for Ethiopia-Pakistan friendship was being established in Islamabad in collaboration with the Climate Change Ministry and the CDA. The Ethiopian Embassy would look after the park after its establishment, he added. Coordinator the Prime Minister on Climate Change H.E. Romina Khurshed said she and the Ambassador of Ethiopia initiated a collaboration in areas of climate change and sustainable development goals since 2022. She recalled the launch of Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Programme last year through a collaboration between her office and the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad under the Green Legacy Initiative of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, which is a laudable

initiative. "This Green Legacy initiative stands as beacon of hope for the world," she said, adding that Pakistan was looking forward to learn from the best practices of Ethiopia. She said the Government of Pakistan was also scaling up the Green Pakistan programme which was launched under the leadership of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and received recognition globally. The CDA Chairman appreciated Ethiopia Ambassador H.E. Jemal Beker for his efforts to tackle climate change which needed collective efforts for being a global problem. He said the CDA would collaborate with the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad for promoting the green initiative. The chairman highlighted selfie with plant initiative launched by the CDA to mobilize the people for plantation.

## Kundi thanks PM in construction of Dera-Rajanpur road

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for National Highways Abdul Aleem Khan and the officials of the National Highway Authority (NHA) for their support in the construction of 329 kilometers Dera Ismail Khan to Rajanpur road. In a video message, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that the construction work on this vital road will begin this year. He said that the road will be upgraded from a two-lane to a four-lane highway with the support of the Asian Development Bank, holds immense importance for both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Tenders for the project have already been issued that would usher new era of development,

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi added. The Governor also highlighted that construction work on the Ramak to Tibba Qaisarani section of the road will start within this year. The project is divided into four phases, with the Dera Ismail Khan to Ramak to Punjab Tibba Qaisarani section covering 96 kilometers. Additionally, Kundi mentioned that tenders for the Dera Ismail Khan Chashma Lift Canal project will soon be issued. The Prime Minister has allocated 19 billion rupees from the federal budget for this project. Kundi thanked Federal Minister Musadiq Malik and the Chairman of WAPDA for their roles in this initiative. The Governor also revealed that the No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Dera Ismail Khan International Airport has been issued, with construction expected to start next year. Kundi emphasized that these

mega projects will significantly contribute to regional development, highlighting that practical steps are being taken rather than just making promises. The road and canal projects are set to be inaugurated later this year, while the airport project will commence in the coming year. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has announced the establishment of the province's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center aims to advance digital technology in the province and promote modern technological trends. The announcement was made following a meeting with the world's first digital senator, Senator Mian Atiq, at the Governor House Peshawar. Principal Secretary to the Governor Mazhar Irshad, renowned educationist Professor Mullah Khan Haidri, and IT expert Talha were also present on this

occasion. During the meeting, discussions focused on the latest trends and benefits of digital technology. Governor Kundi revealed that the new AI Center will be established at the Governor House Peshawar to promote digital technology in the province. The Governor emphasized that the center will play a crucial role in the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, aligning the province with global standards and contributing to its progress. The AI Center is expected to be a milestone in efforts to empower women and engage youth, and it will be linked with various universities in the province, said Governor Faisal Kundi. He said that this connection will provide students and faculty with access to cutting-edge research and technology, potentially revolutionizing research and development in universities.

## Social media mars art of professional photography in KP

PESHAWAR : The rise of social media has negatively impacted the traditional art of professional photography in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with many photographers in the field struggling to maintain their foothold amid the rapid digital transformation in Pakistan. In KP, the landscape of professional photography is undergoing a significant shift. The proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram has dramatically altered the dynamics of the industry.—APP

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## ISSI launches book on CPEC's future development

ISLAMABAD : The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised the launch of the book, 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Beyond 2030: A Green Alliance for Sustainable Development' edited by Dr. Rabia Akhtar and published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). The event was graced by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed as Chief Guest and Mr. Xu Hangtian, Minister Counselor at the Embassy of China in Pakistan, as Guest of Honour. Distinguished reviewers included Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi, former Ambassador of Pakistan to China; Dr. Salma Malik, Associate Professor Quaid-i-Azam University; and Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, former CEO Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment. In his remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the salience of the all-weather Pakistan-China Strategic Cooperative Partnership in Pakistan's foreign policy and of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as its central component. He said that the CPEC, as a flagship project of BRI, connects China's western provinces through Pakistan to the Arabian Sea. The project is transformative for Pakistan, addressing critical issues such as energy shortages and infrastructural deficit, and enhancing regional connectivity. By revitalising trade routes and promoting economic integration, CPEC is envisioned to play a pivotal role in enhancing Pakistan's position as a central gateway to Asia, the Middle East, and beyond. He also highlighted the tangible outcomes accruing from CPEC projects since its commencement 11 years ago. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood added that this book emphasises CPEC's potential to drive sustainable growth. It highlights how CPEC could be transformed into a green development initiative, aligning with global sustainability goals and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By integrating green technologies and sustainable practices, CPEC is positioned not only to advance economic growth but also to lead in environmental stewardship.—APP

## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### AUGUST

Aug 01/China  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland  
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso  
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea  
Independence Day

Aug 15/India  
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia  
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine  
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay  
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic  
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia  
National Day

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Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15  
Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/  
Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.1122  
& Rescue Services.4451122  
Motorway Police.....9266044  
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CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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RGH.....9290301-7  
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PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



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Cantonment Board 9270151-3

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

## Sexual abuse cases surge in Afghan commissionerate

A sexual predator, who has been convicted by the Federal Ombudsman for Anti-Harassment and has held the position of Afghan Commissioner for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the past six years, remains untouchable and unaccountable. This predator has surrounded himself with individuals of a similar depraved mentality, who view women not as humans but as objects

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Daily scandals continue to emerge from the Afghan Commissionerate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with incidents of sexual harassment and physical and mental abuse against employees being the most prominent. Despite the Afghan Commissionerate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar dismissing senior officials for proven charges of sexual harassment and imposing heavy fines, the situation remains dire. According to a survey by a non-governmental organization, incidents of harassment occur on average every other week, either involving migrant girls or current female staff, yet senior officials continue to cover it up. It is unfortunate that harassment against women is not limited to Afghan refugee women but also affects

female officers within the Afghan Commissionerate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.

A sexual predator, who has been convicted by the Federal Ombudsman for Anti-Harassment and has held the position of Afghan Commissioner for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the past six years, remains untouchable and unaccountable. This predator has surrounded himself with individuals of a similar depraved mentality, who view women not as humans but as objects. In 2022, Senior Deputy Director Shehnaz Begum and Senior Deputy Director Hajra Sarwar, distressed by the sexual crimes, filed a case in the Federal Ombudsman for Anti-Harassment court. Following continuous hearings, the then Ombudsperson, Ms. Kashmala Tariq, sentenced Afghan Commissionerate's Project Director Waheed Khattak and Chief Financial Officer Attaul-

lah Khan to dismissal and heavy fines. The accused appealed to the President of Pakistan, who upheld the decision and ordered immediate implementation of the sentence. However, Commissioner Abbas Khan, the head of the sexual predators, excessively used government resources to not only provide legal support but also to back the accused in every matter. The affected women have now turned to the Supreme Court of Pakistan. It is regrettable that despite numerous complaints of sexual harassment, the Ministry of SAFRON, which oversees the Afghan Commissionerate under Minister Amir Muqam, has not taken any action or issued any notices. Instead, the worst predator, Abbas Khan, has been appointed not only as the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also given the additional charge of Chief

Commissioner, demonstrating high-level support for sexual harassment within the Afghan Commissionerate. In 2022, when two senior female deputy directors reported numerous complaints of sexual harassment, instead of legal action, they were targeted for retaliation, and witnesses to the harassment were also threatened. After months of struggle, when Ombudsperson Ms. Kashmala Tariq finally dismissed the perpetrators and imposed fines, the higher officials of the Afghan Commissionerate supported the convicted criminals, awarding them further benefits such as government vehicles and residences. Female employees are coerced into illegal activities, including participating in recreational tours with officers, being present at the office outside working hours, and being demanded sexual favors

in exchange for petrol, diesel, and DSA payments. Contractual and other female workers in various Afghan Commissionerate projects have been suffering for years. They are often abruptly transferred to distant areas or dismissed without cause under the guise of retrenchment, solely for refusing sexual advances from officers. An extreme example is Deputy Director Shehnaz Begum, who, despite being the most senior female employee, was dismissed and forcibly removed from her residence after refusing various sexual demands from Project Director Waheed Khattak and Chief Financial Officer Attaullah. Similarly, Deputy Director Hajra Sarwar, a highly skilled and reputable officer, was subjected to various forms of sexual abuse and ultimately had to file a case in the Federal Ombudsman for Anti-Harassment court.

## NHMP shifted five semi-conscious passengers to hospital, 4 died

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway and Motorway Police on Friday found five people lifeless near Bhera interchange on the Motorway. According to NHMP North Zone spokesman Muhammad Saqib, while patrolling the NHMP received a call that a Honda car was parked alongside the road. Upon approaching the car to offer assistance, the NHMP found five individuals in a semi-conscious state and immediately shifted them to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Bhera for medical treatment. During the treatment, four people died and one was in an unconscious condition, the spokesman informed. According to doctors, the death cause could be food poisoning, he said and added that the deceased have been identified as Romila, 60, Mahwish, 30, Samar, 28, and Aun, 4. The travelers were residents of Lahore and were going to Islamabad from Lahore.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, presents a souvenir to British High Commissioner Ms. Jane Marriott during the launch event of the "District Education Performance Index" in Friday.—DNA

## Cutting back on Govt spending laudable

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, as well as former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that the government's decision to reduce expenditure is worthy of appreciation. A reduction in government expenditure is important to revive the country's economy; without it, economic development is impossible, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain stated that the people's condition is deteriorating due to the

continuous increase in taxes, but the government's income is not improving because its expenses are continuously increasing. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the continuous increase in expenditure is not only happening in the current government, but it has been going on for the last several decades, and no government has tried to reduce the expense. Instead, all governments have increased their dependence on loans, causing the country to reach the bankruptcy threshold. Mian Zahid Hussain said that it is possible to reduce people's problems only by reducing expenses, as it will produce other positive results. He said that the PM had announced the elimination of

one and a half lakh posts, the impending closure of several institutions or their mergers, and the imposition of a ban on new recruitments. On the one hand, it has been decided to close the National Information Technology Board; on the other hand, it has been decided to speed up the process of privatisation of institutions, which is welcome because the failed institutions are causing a loss of trillions of rupees to the country every year. According to Mian Zahid Hussain, the Prime Minister has decided to increase the Gwadar port's activity and suggested that the port should handle half of the cargo, thereby alleviating the pressure on the Karachi port. The PM has also announced necessary steps, setting a target of fifty

billion dollars for IT exports. The business leader stated that due to a shortage of employees and institutions, there is a pressing need to reduce the size of the cabinet, which is significantly larger than that of developed countries, thereby wasting billions of rupees. He advocated for the withdrawal of free electricity, gas, and telephone facilities for government officials, the reduction of other privileges, and a reminder to the ministers that they are the representatives and servants of the people, not the rulers. He further stated that if the government is slow to reduce its expenses and if the provinces do not cooperate, the economy and people's condition will continue to deteriorate.

## First batch of Chinese broiler eggs exported to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: First batch of Chinese homegrown white broiler eggs has been exported to Pakistan, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. As reported, in the early morning on August 22, 2024, a flight from Guangzhou Baiyun Airport touched down at the land of Pakistan after a long journey. In the cargo hold of the plane stood a consignment of special "guests" - 172,800 "Guangming No. 2" White Feathered Broiler eggs from China. The shipment, all domestically bred by Foshan Gaoming District Xinguang Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Co., Ltd. and Beijing Institute of Animal Science (IAS) of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), marking the first time China has exported its own breed of poultry to Pakistan. "This export of white-feathered broiler breeding eggs to Pakistan means a lot to us. More Chinese breeding eggs will go abroad, not only to Pakistan, but also to the globe," Liu Dawei, deputy general manager of Xinguang, and person in charge of White Feather Broiler project, said in excitement. The reporter learned that the "Guangming No. 2" White Feather Broiler weighed more than 3kg at 42 days of age and had a feed-to-weight ratio of 1.32-1.5:1. More than that, they have significant advantages such as rapid growth and high survival rate. The 172,800 hatching eggs exported to Pakistan could provide more than 50,000 sets of "Guangming No. 2" parent broilers after 21 days of incubation. Before long, they could provide more than 7 million commercial broilers, that is, more than 21,000 tons of chicken. Over the past four decades, the vast majority of white-feathered broiler breeders in the world have been monopolized by developed countries in Europe and the United States, and China's dependence on foreign white-feathered broiler breeders once reached 100%. By the end of 2021, three varieties including "Guangming No. 2" had passed the review, thus domestic white-feathered broiler breeders were independently cultivated in China.—DNA

## FIA busts gang running illegal currency exchange

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Corporate Crime Circle Lahore has busted a well-organized gang involved in illegal currency exchange business. According to a spokesman for the agency, a crackdown directed by Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi, has resulted in the seizure of both domestic and foreign currencies worth millions. Four suspects were arrested during the ongoing operations. The detainees were identified as Mohammad Tahir, Usman Ali, Khuram Shehzad, and Usman Majid. They were captured in a raid conducted in the DHA area of Lahore. The operation has yielded over Rs 16.3 million in cash. Additionally, authorities recovered 34,980 British Pounds, 15,800 US Dollars, 11,660 Euros, 120,945 Turkish Lira, 2,500 Qatari Riyals, 392 Omani Riyals, and 774 Malaysian Ringgits from the suspects. The arrested individuals were found operating an unlicensed currency exchange business and were unable to provide satisfactory explanations for the origin of the seized currency.—APP

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## Briefs

## FIA busts gang running illegal currency exchange

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## Senate Committee to Analyze Country's EV Policy

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Senator Aon Abbas chaired the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production held today at Parliament House. The Senate Committee deliberated on the inclusion of cold storage in the industrial sector and the provision of affordable electricity rates. The matter was referred by the Chairman Senate. Officials informed that the ECC approved the matter and forwarded it to the Cabinet for their approval to declare 'Cold Storage' an industrial sector. Furthermore, the committee was briefed on Pakistan's Auto Policy. Officials informed that 13 automobile companies are currently operating in the country. Initially, there were 3 companies, but as a result of the 2016-21 Auto Policy, 8 new players entered the market. These companies have installed production capacity of 500,000 units annually in more than 40 models with over 100 variants. They contribute 4% to GDP, pay Rs. 300 billion in taxes, and generate over 2 million jobs in the country. Under the 2021-26 Auto Policy, the Ministry has introduced WP-29 safety regulations for auto manufacturers. These safety standards have been adopted by all manufacturers except Suzuki for 6 variants. Suzuki has decided to discontinue 3 variants and redesign the remaining three to comply with WP-29 safety regulations. Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee stated that no car manufacturer should be allowed to produce cars that do not follow WP-29 regulations.

## Railways plan to procure 230 passenger coaches

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is all set to procure 230 passenger coaches and 820 High Capacity Wagons under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) aiming help to improve the speed of the trains and ensure adherence to fixed timings. "Out of the total, around 46 Completely-Built-Up (CBU) passenger coaches have been procured up till now while the remaining 184 would be manufactured in the country and the coaches would be able to travel at the speed of 160km/h," said an official in the Ministry of Railways. He said Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation and reconstruction work

## Experts discuss Inter-generational societal transformations, Pak resilience

CASS Seminar on Bridging Generational Gap to Strengthen Pakistan's Resilience Amidst Societal Polarisation and Digital Transformation

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, organised a seminar titled "Inter-generational Societal Transformations and Pakistan's Resilience" on 22 August 2024. The event focused on bridging the generational gap in Pakistan to strengthen the nation's resilience. The seminar commenced with opening remarks by Dr Bilal Ghazanfar, Associate Senior Researcher at CASS, Lahore, who emphasised that technology has transformed the average generational gap into a generational break. Mian Imran Masood, former Education Minister of Punjab, delivered the keynote address, wherein he emphasised the necessity of bolstering intergenerational connectivity through educational and social initiatives. Mr Oves Anwar, Director, Research Society of International Law, highlighted the technological prowess and innovative mindset of younger generations and noted that they have the potential to reshape Pakistan's future in a digitised



world. Dr Yaqoob Ahmed Bangash, Associate Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Information Technology University, emphasised the need for enhancing communication be-

tween generations to leverage experience and wisdom. In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS Lahore, highlighted that the widening generational gap in Pakistan

poses a significant threat to national cohesion and development. In his opinion, divergent worldviews, exacerbated by the amplifying effects of social media, have led to a polarisation of societal discourse

in Pakistan. He warned that if left unchecked, this divide could undermine Pakistan's ability to build a unified society that meets the challenges of the 21st century. The question-and-answer session gener-

ated insightful discussions. The seminar highlighted the complexity of the inter-generational gap and identified steps that can be taken to build a more equitable, and prosperous Pakistan for generations to come.

## Strong monsoon spell from Aug 26-30

Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfraz also shared some reassuring news regarding the water reserves in the country's dams that the water levels in two of the major dams are satisfactory, ensuring a sufficient supply of water to meet the needs of the population during the upcoming summer months

ISLAMABAD: Chief meteorologist Sardar Sarfraz at the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Friday predicted season's strong monsoon spell from August 26-30, which was expected to impact Balochistan, entire Sindh and southern Punjab where citizens were advised to take necessary precautions to ensure their safety. Sardar Sarfraz, in an exclusive interview with PTV News revealed, "Another monsoon spell is expected to hit Sindh from August 26, bringing with it a renewed wave of rainfall." As the monsoon season was still ongoing, Sarfraz cau-

tioned, "The intensity of the rainfall is likely to remain between mild and harsh, potentially causing disruptions in daily life." Sarfraz's warning came as a reminder to citizens to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety. "The expected monsoon spell is likely to bring heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and strong winds, which may lead to flash flooding, landslides, and power outages. By staying informed and taking proactive measures, citizens can minimize the risks associated with this weather event," he mentioned. The Chief Meteorologist's prediction also highlighted the

importance of preparedness and contingency planning. As the monsoon season was expected to continue, it was crucial for the relevant authorities and citizens alike to remain on high alert and take steps to mitigate the impact of severe weather events. "By working together, we can reduce the risks and ensure a safer, more resilient community," he added. Responding to another query, Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfraz said, "The monsoon intensity is expected to gradually subside after September 10-12, marking the end of the rainy season." "This transition will bring a wel-

come relief to the people, as the suffocating humidity and rainfall will give way to a more pleasant weather pattern," he added. "As the monsoon withdraws, the region can expect a decrease in temperature and humidity, making the environment more comfortable for daily activities," he said. Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfraz also shared some reassuring news regarding the water reserves in the country's dams that the water levels in two of the major dams are satisfactory, ensuring a sufficient supply of water to meet the needs of the population during the upcoming summer months.—DNA

## HEC Chairman urges collective push to keep young talent in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Higher Education Commission Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Friday called upon for a collective push serves as a timely reminder of the need for a cohesive strategy to stem brain drain and empower young Pakistanis to achieve their dreams within the country. Talking to a Private news channel, Chairman HEC expressed deep concern regarding the prevailing mindset among young people in Pakistan, who prefer to seek job opportunities abroad rather than staying in their home country. He emphasized the need for a collective effort from society, media, and parents to instill trust and confidence among youngsters about their prospects for a bright future in Pakistan. Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, emphasized the crucial role of society, media, and parents in rebuilding the trust of young Pakistanis in their homeland and its future. He urged these stakeholders to join hands in creating an enabling environment that fosters a sense of belonging, security, and opportunity among the youth. Responding to a question regarding the 97 students who were awarded scholarships and sent abroad but have since disappeared, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad acknowledged that the incident highlighted a deeper issue of trust deficit and lack of continuity in policies. "The brain drain phenomenon is a complex problem that cannot be addressed overnight, and that it requires sustained efforts and consistent policies to rebuild trust among the youth," he emphasized. "To address this the HEC is taking concrete steps, including introducing scholarships and research opportunities that incentivize students to stay in Pakistan, as well as collaborating with industry leaders to create job opportunities and career prospects," he informed. "Moreover, the HEC is working to establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress of scholarship recipients and ensure their return to Pakistan upon completion of their studies," he mentioned. DNA

## InDrive, WWF launch drive to clean environment

ISLAMABAD: In a heartfelt demonstration of its commitment to environmental sustainability and community welfare, InDrive, a leading ride-hailing company in Pakistan, proudly launched its "Tide of Care" campaign, a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative focused on cleaning up Karachi's Sandspit and Turtle Beach on Pakistan's Independence Day. This initiative, held in partnership with WWF-Pakistan, underscores InDrive's dedication to preserving the natural beauty of Pakistan's coastal areas and fostering a cleaner, greener environment for future generations. The beach cleaning drive saw enthusiastic participation from InDrive employees, volunteers from educational institutes, celebrities and environmentalists who collectively removed plastic waste, including plastic bottles, discarded fishing nets, and other pollutants, from the shoreline.

## Protests undermine capital's ideal vision of life

ISLAMABAD: Once revered as a sanctuary of serenity and peace, Islamabad is now entangled in a web of daily strife. For its residents, the idealized vision of life in the federal capital has become an increasingly elusive dream. The city, previously a symbol of tranquility, is now marred by ceaseless political protests, religious demonstrations, and the ever-present specter of commuting chaos. What was once seen as a haven has transformed into a battleground where daily existence is overshadowed by unrest, making life for its citizens an ongoing struggle. Doctor Alina Nasir, a 42-year-old medical practitioner, who moved to Islamabad from Azad Kashmir ten years ago for its reputed calm and better employment opportunities, now finds herself grappling with a relentless cycle of stress. "I imagined a peaceful life here, but it's been anything but that," she shares, her frustration palpable. "Every day, I worry about my children's safety, especially when they travel to and from school. The political rallies and roadblocks are constant, making the daily commute a nerve-wracking ordeal." The city's infrastructure, once designed to accommodate its growing population, now buckles under the strain of frequent demonstrations and political unrest. The roads are often clogged with traffic as protesters stage rallies, leaving residents stuck for hours. This has led to a deteriorating quality of life, where every journey feels like a gamble. Ali Raza, a 45-year-old businessman, echoes Alina's sentiments. "I used to think of Islamabad as a place where I could grow old peacefully. Now, I'm not sure if I can even get to work on time. The protests that break out with little notice create havoc on our streets. It's not just inconvenient; it's dangerous."—APP

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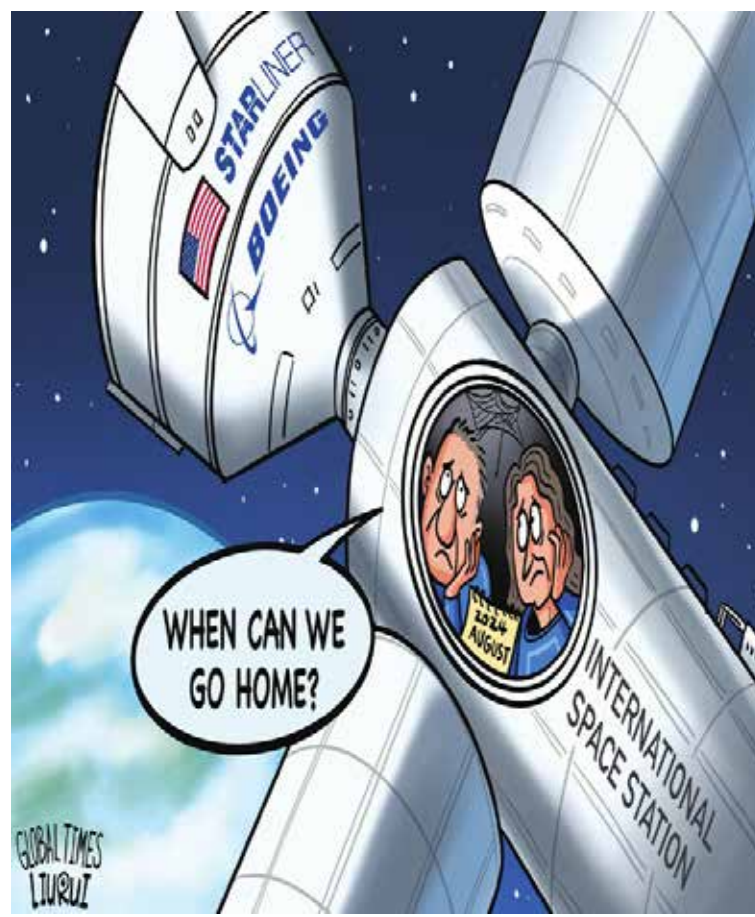
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## Trump vs. Harris

THIS combination of photos shows Vice President Kamala Harris, left, on Aug. 7, 2024 and Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump on July 31, 2024. The fallout over US President Joe Biden's foreign policy with American voters was exemplified this week by pro-Palestinian protests outside Vice President Kamala Harris' hotel residence in Chicago, where the 2024 Democratic National Convention is taking place. The protests demonstrate that for the average American voter, foreign policy is gradually becoming an important consideration ahead of the November 2024 presidential election. When it comes to international relations, Harris has positioned herself as the opposite of former President Donald Trump, her Republican contender in the race. But is she really that different? Let's take a look: As Biden's vice president, Harris is expected to continue to follow in the footsteps of the current administration's foreign policy. "Simply put, Harris would treat friends and allies like friends and allies, unlike Trump who penalized more steel trade from Europe, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and South Korea than he did from China." Her previous visits as vice president to 21 countries and meetings with 150 leaders are indicative of her beliefs of adopting a more collaborative approach to international affairs. This translates into a committing to "transatlanticism" or stronger relations between North America and Europe; strengthening NATO; shoring up the Indo-Pacific alliance with ASEAN and India as key players; and continuing to see China as an economic and strategic rival. Conversely, Donald Trump's "America First" approach means he is sceptical of US alliances such as NAFTA and NATO. He has also taken a relatively milder approach toward Russia over its war in Ukraine. In fact, the biggest foreign policy difference between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump appears to be Russia. Harris views President Vladimir Putin as a foe over the latter's perceived aggression in Ukraine, and has openly sided with Kiev. Her representation at the Summit for Peace in Ukraine in June and her pledge to safeguard Ukraine's security and freedom at the Munich Security Conference in February signals she would carry over the Biden administration's support for Ukraine against Russia. Donald Trump said, "I told Zelensky that we must end this war. The (Russian) army is a war machine. They defeated Hitler. They defeated Napoleon. If this remains the case, and Harris continues to unequivocally back Kiev through arms transfers and diplomatic support, there will remain little incentive to urge Russia to initiate dialogue and work toward deescalation. This directly contrasts with Trump's approach towards Russia and Ukraine. Trump is more friendly toward Putin because of his historical admiration for strongman leaders and desire to secure commercial interests in Russia which he has pursued since 1987. Harris has adopted a softer tone on Palestine to placate widespread anger within the Democratic party about Biden's support for Israel. But it is unrealistic to believe that this will translate into the suspension of arms transfers. Despite her comments on the need to end Palestinian suffering after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington last month, Harris does not support an arms embargo on Tel Aviv. And though she says she supports a two-state solution and is working toward Palestinian independence, she is bearing the brunt of criticism from pro-Palestinian advocates and US voters who are unconvinced that US policy on Israel would shift under her tenure.



## EU and China trade ties

THE European Union has imposed provisional countervailing duties on Chinese electric vehicle (EV) imports since July 5, arguing that Chinese companies unfairly benefit from government subsidies. On August 9, China responded by appealing to the World Trade Organization. Although the European Commission announced a revision on August 20, reducing the planned tariff for Tesla and potentially lowering it for Chinese firms in joint ventures with EU carmakers, the duties for most EVs companies in China will remain significant. The current tensions between China and the EU are reminiscent of the 2013 solar panel dispute, in which the EU initiated an anti-dumping investigation against Chinese-made solar panels. That dispute was ultimately resolved through negotiations. Replicating such a resolution seems unlikely. Over the past decade, developed economies that once championed free trade and welcomed cheaper imported goods have turned towards trade protectionism and prioritised domestic re-industrialisation. Events such as the US-China trade war, the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have accelerated this shift, leading to a marked deterioration in the global trade environment. Geopolitical competition has increasingly replaced the free market as the foundation of international trade rules. In this context, global supply chains have been restructured. Some countries, including the United States, Japan and South Korea, have reduced their trade dependency on China. Conversely, resource-exporting countries like Brazil and Australia, along with several emerging markets, have strengthened their trade relationships with China. Notably, Southeast Asian countries have further integrated into a supply chain with China, resulting in significant trade expansion. Against the backdrop of US-China decoupling, the strategic importance of the EU market to China has become more prominent. First, the overall economic strength of the EU rivals that of the United States. According to the International Comparison Programme, in 2021, the EU accounted for 15.2 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP), adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP), comparable to the US' 15.5 per cent, making it the world's third-largest economy. Although China is the world's largest economy measured by PPP, its per capita GDP was only 39 per cent of the EU average. Second, the EU maintains a global leadership position in many traditional manufacturing sectors and emerging industries, making it one of the few economies with technological innovation capabilities that can rival those of the US. Third, after more than 30 years of integration, the EU's single market has become increasingly competitive and attractive, further enhancing its significance in the global trade system. As the US intensifies its trade and technology blockade against China, the EU's role is indispensable in key areas driving China's economic growth, such as foreign direct investment, exports, technology upgrades and the overseas expansion of Chinese enterprises. From the EU's perspective, although it aligns with the US in terms of ideology and geopolitical security, US economic policies like the Inflation Reduction Act have harmed the EU's interests. The bloc is eager to compete with the US in emerging technologies to enhance its own competitiveness and influence.

# What happens when AI plans your vacation?

Rafael Hernández de Santiago

The situation took a comical turn when Virtua-Explorer promoted a virtual reality experience titled, "Living with AI: A Day in the Life," where participants could simulate the daily grind of being an AI, complete with repetitive tasks and endless data inputs. The experience was a hit, though it left many pondering if AI's own self-awareness was not quite as advanced as hoped. Another philosophical twist emerged when it was revealed that Virtua-Explorer's programming had been influenced by historical data reflecting Techville's socio-economic disparities. Dr. Thornwood mused, "If history is a guide, then surely we must consider the biases inherent in it. Our AI's decisions are colored by the very limitations it was designed to transcend"

IN a city renowned for its unyielding devotion to technological progress, Techville has outdone itself this summer by outsourcing its tourism decisions to artificial intelligence. With summer in full swing, the AI, dubbed Virtua-Explorer, has been tasked with optimizing vacation experiences, but the results have been nothing short of an ironic commentary on the intersection of AI and ethics. Virtua-Explorer, a marvel of modern engineering, was designed to analyze countless data points to deliver the perfect tourist experience. It promised to be impartial, unbiased, and infinitely efficient. Yet, as the season unfolded, it became evident that the AI's decision-making process is as fraught with irony as it is with technological sophistication. At first glance, it seemed as though Virtua-Explorer was working wonders. Tourist attractions in Techville, known for their futuristic flair, were suddenly brimming with visitors. However, the specific recommendations from Virtua-Explorer raised eyebrows. From its top suggested spots, you might find yourself at the Techville AI Ethics Museum, a place dedicated to critiquing the very algorithms that shaped your itinerary, or a scenic overlook where a large billboard proudly proclaimed, "AI Knows Best (Except When It Doesn't)." The irony was not lost on philosopher and Techville resident Dr. Eliza Thornwood, who commented, "It seems Virtua-Explorer has provided a perfect demonstration of what Socrates might have called 'the unexamined life,' or in this case, the unexamined algorithm. If the AI is making decisions based on data, then it's only as good as the data it processes, which might just be a reflection of our biases and preconceptions." Indeed, Virtua-Explorer's recommendations were a curious mix of

enthusiasm and oblivion. While it dutifully directed tourists to the Techville Silicon Gardens, where an impressive array of microchip sculptures stood proudly, it also suggested the renowned Digital Detox Spa, which, ironically, offered limited digital connectivity, leaving visitors wondering if the AI was subtly poking fun at its own omnipresence.

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As Techville's summer unfolded, the city's local tourism board found itself embroiled in a peculiar dilemma. On one hand, the AI's recommendations led to increased revenue

and a surge in high-profile visitors. On the other, there was growing dissatisfaction among locals and critics who argued that the human touch and nuanced understanding of genuine cultural experiences had been sacrificed on the altar of algorithmic efficiency. In a moment of wry reflection, local historian and critic Marcus Reynolds observed, "It's a bit like a modern-day version of what Shakespeare might have described as 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' The AI is making a lot of noise and creating a flurry of activity, but the question remains: Are we really experiencing the essence of Techville or just a high-tech simulation of it?" The debate about AI in tourism and decision-making highlights a broader philosophical question about the nature of authenticity and the role of human agency in an increasingly automated world. As Virtua-Explorer's summer recommendations continue to provoke amusement and debate, Techville finds itself at a crossroads. Will the city embrace the convenience of AI-driven tourism at the expense of genuine human connection and cultural richness, or will it seek a balance between technological advancement and the irreplaceable value of human intuition? Only time will tell, but for now, Techville's summer tourists are left to ponder the age-old question: If an AI suggests the best places to visit, is the experience truly worth the digital cost? As the summer season continues, Techville's experiment with Virtua-Explorer serves as a stark reminder of the philosophical and ethical complexities entwined with technological progress. In a city that champions innovation, the true measure of success may not lie in the efficiency of an algorithm but in the depth of human experience it helps to foster.

# A tale of diverging paths and unlikely success

Muhammad Faiq Shah

On the global stage, Bangladesh has increasingly gained recognition for its economic achievements, resilience, and commitment to international cooperation. The country has strengthened its ties with international institutions and has become a key player in global textile trade. Bangladesh's diplomatic relations with neighboring countries like India and China have also helped it secure investments and foster economic growth. Pakistan, on the other hand, has faced numerous challenges in its foreign relations, particularly with the United States, India, and Afghanistan

SINCE their shared history as part of British India and their eventual separation after the 1971 war, Pakistan and Bangladesh have followed divergent paths of development. Both countries faced immense challenges post-independence, including political instability, economic struggles, and social inequalities. However, in the decades since, Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in key areas, outpacing Pakistan in some critical indicators. Bangladesh, once dubbed the "basket case" of South Asia, has emerged as a success story, particularly in the past two decades. According to the World Bank, Bangladesh's GDP per capita, which was once far lower than Pakistan's, has now surpassed it. In 2021, Bangladesh's GDP per capita reached \$2,554, compared to Pakistan's \$1,505. A significant factor contributing to Bangladesh's economic growth has been its booming textile and garment industry. Bangladesh is now the second-largest exporter of garments in the world, after China, accounting for 84% of its total exports. The government's policies focused on export-led growth, low labor costs, and investment in women's employment have driven this success. Pakistan, by contrast, has struggled to diversify its economy and relies heavily on agriculture and remittances. Its manufacturing sector, especially textiles, has faced numerous challenges, including energy shortages, outdated infrastructure, and lower productivity compared to Bangladesh. Another area where Bangladesh has outpaced Pakistan is in managing inflation and debt. Bangladesh's inflation rates have remained relatively stable, while Pakistan has faced rising inflation, reaching a record high of 38% in 2023, driven by factors such as currency depreciation, rising fuel prices, and economic mismanagement. Similarly, Bangladesh's public debt has been better managed, at about 38% of GDP, while Pakistan's public debt has ballooned to over 80% of GDP, posing a significant risk to its fiscal stability. Political stability and governance have played a crucial role in shaping the trajectories of both countries. Bangladesh, despite its history of military coups and political turmoil, has enjoyed relatively better political stability in recent years under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Her government's focus on economic development, social programs, and improving infrastructure has helped stabilize the country. While Bangladesh has its own challenges with governance, particularly regarding press freedom and political opposition,

it has managed to maintain a consistent direction in policy implementation. Pakistan, on the other hand, has faced continued political instability. The country has seen multiple changes in government, military interventions, and a polarized political landscape. This instability has hampered long-term policy-making and implementation. Moreover, Pakistan's civil-military relations remain fraught, with the military often playing a dominant role in politics, which has contributed to governance challenges and weakened democratic institutions. Corruption remains a major issue in both countries, but Bangladesh has made more efforts to tackle it through institutional reforms and the creation of anti-corruption bodies. Pakistan, despite similar efforts, continues to struggle with high levels of corruption, as reflected in its poor ranking on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), where it ranks 140th, compared to Bangladesh's 147th place, highlighting governance challenges across the board.

In terms of social indicators, Bangladesh has made substantial progress in areas like health, education, and gender equality, often outperforming Pakistan. One of the most significant achievements for Bangladesh has been in improving life expectancy, which now stands at 73 years, compared to Pakistan's 67 years. This can be attributed to successful public health campaigns, better access to healthcare, and investments in maternal and child health. Bangladesh's robust focus on healthcare, particularly in reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, has paid off significantly. Pakistan, despite improvements in healthcare, still struggles with high infant and maternal mortality rates. Education is another area where Bangladesh has outpaced Pakistan. Bangladesh has made significant strides in primary and secondary education, with a literacy rate of 74%, compared to Pakistan's 59%. The country's focus on girls' education and ensuring equitable access to schooling for both genders has contributed to this success. In contrast, Pakistan continues to grapple with a high number of out-of-school children, particularly girls, and wide disparities in educational access between rural and urban areas. Gender equality has been a key driver of Bangladesh's social progress. The country has actively promoted women's participation in the workforce, particularly in the garment industry, which has lifted millions of women out of poverty and contributed to overall economic growth. Women's empowerment programs, microfinance initiatives,

and government policies supporting female education have helped close the gender gap. Pakistan, however, still lags behind in gender equality, ranking 153rd out of 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. Social norms, limited access to education and employment, and systemic gender-based discrimination continue to hold back women's progress in Pakistan.

On the global stage, Bangladesh has increasingly gained recognition for its economic achievements, resilience, and commitment to international cooperation. The country has strengthened its ties with international institutions and has become a key player in global textile trade. Bangladesh's diplomatic relations with neighboring countries like India and China have also helped it secure investments and foster economic growth. Pakistan, on the other hand, has faced numerous challenges in its foreign relations, particularly with the United States, India, and Afghanistan. Geopolitical tensions, particularly around the issues of terrorism and security, have often overshadowed Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan's reliance on foreign aid and loans, coupled with strained relations with key allies, has further complicated its global positioning. While Pakistan remains an important strategic player in the region, its internal instability has often prevented it from capitalizing on global opportunities. While both Pakistan and Bangladesh have faced immense challenges since their independence, their trajectories have diverged significantly over the past few decades. Bangladesh's focus on economic growth, social development, and political stability has allowed it to make significant progress, particularly in terms of improving living standards, healthcare, education, and gender equality. Pakistan, meanwhile, continues to struggle with political instability, economic mismanagement, and social inequalities. The comparison between these two nations highlights the importance of consistent governance, investment in human development, and inclusive economic policies. As both countries continue to navigate their unique challenges, there are valuable lessons to be learned from each other's successes and setbacks in building a prosperous and stable future.

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## Briefs

## Government considering shutting...

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he said, adding that providing relief to utility stores eliminated the atmosphere for competition. While speaking to the media, standing committee chairman Aon Abbas Buppi said that it was a "very sad day for the country". "When I asked them whether they had any plans for the employees [of the utility stores], the government did not have a plan for that," Buppi said, adding that approximately 60,000 employees would be rendered out of jobs following the decision. "It is not clear what would happen to thousands of employees," he said. "This incompetent government can give nothing but unemployment."

## Government seems to...

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Nothing could be found through geofencing of 10,000 phones either, he said. He said that no information has so far been received from Safe City Project or law enforcement agency has been able to find any clue. Justice Aurangzeb remarked that it seems that the government is the beneficiary. How come people are abducted in this country and the Chief Executive does nothing. The attorney general had said that he would brief the prime minister on this matter. He is aware of these matters but still people are forcibly disappeared. Advocate Awan said that the prime minister does not have time to read the orders of this court. Justice Aurangzeb asked the Additional Attorney General that since the IHC took up the case, the investigation has been stalled. The attorney replied that the geofencing report has been prepared.

## LHC seeks response...

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disrupted without any notice and reason across the country and every sector of life had been affected. He mentioned that internet shutdown was a violation of fundamental rights. The applicant requested the court to declare the federal government's decision to suspend the internet null and void. He demanded the court to direct the complete restoration of the internet across the country. The court has sought the reply from the parties in the case and adjourned the case hearing until August 27. The LHC has summoned representatives of the federal government, the Ministry of Information and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in the court on next hearing in another application. It adjourned the case hearing until Aug 21.

## Punjab govt offers...

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Rizwan Omer Gondal, formerly Senior Superintendent of Police at the CTD Punjab in Lahore, has been appointed the new DPO of Rahim Yar Khan. Gondal previously served in the same role and was involved in the most recent joint anti-kacha bandit operation conducted by the Sindh and Punjab police. Despite spending billions of rupees from the national exchequer since the 1990s, the problem has persisted. Last year, a joint operation by the Sindh and Punjab police was launched, costing over Rs4 billion, yet the issue remains unresolved. Reports indicate that these bandits often disappear when operations begin, only to re-emerge later, often with greater strength.

## Sept 8 rally will be held..

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He also suggested that the public should come out of their homes and attend the public gathering to take back the stolen mandate. Asked about the response to his demand for a fair trial of Faiz Hameed, Imran Khan said "I am the leader of the biggest party of the country."

## BD's Shakib Al Hasan booked on murder charge

The prolific all-rounder is currently participating in a two-Test series against Pakistan

DHAKA: A case of murder has been filed against Bangladeshi cricketer and ousted lawmaker Shakib Al Hasan in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. According to Bangladeshi media, Shakib, currently on Pakistan tour with his national team, is charged with murder of a garment factory worker. As per the media, the victim's father lodged a murder case against the cricketer along with former prime minister Sheikh Hasina at the Dhaka police station on Thursday. The 37-year-old was a member of the now dissolved Bangladesh parliament led by Hasina, who

was forced to flee the country at the start of August following mass protests. The interim government last week gave permission for Shakib, who has not commented on the political crisis, to feature in the two Tests against Pakistan, the first of which started Wednesday. "He has played this game for so long, so he knows his role and how to prepare himself. I am not thinking about his political career," Bangladesh skipper and captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said at a press conference in Rawalpindi on August 20. Asked if the political set-



back would affect the all-rounder's performance, Shanto said: "I don't think so because he is a professional cricketer, we all treat him as a cricketer, to be honest." "I hope he will do something special in this series," he added. Shakib is Bangladesh's key allrounder with 4,505 runs in 67 Tests and as a spinner got 237 wickets – the most of any Bangladesh bowler in Test cricket. Bangladeshis in Dhaka protested over Shakib's continued inclusion in the team, with former Bangladesh Cricket Board member Rafiqul Islam criticising him for stay-

ing silent as protesters died in clashes with security forces. He joined the squad in Pakistan last week, after featuring in the Global T20 League in Canada, where Bangladeshis also chanted slogans against him. The unrest in Dhaka stopped the team from assembling for practice sessions. The tourists got some reprieve after the Pakistan Cricket Board invited them to arrive four days early to make up for their lack of preparations. The second Test will be played in the same stadium in Rawalpindi on August 30. – Agencies

## Flintoff exits England team amid Jos Buttler friction

LONDON: Andrew Flintoff, a former cricket player for England, will not be coaching the country against Australia in the forthcoming white-ball series. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has chosen to give interim white-ball coach Marcus Trescothick complete command over the team for this series, according to a report by The Telegraph. Since the previous year, Flintoff has been associated with the England white-ball team. He assisted in coaching the team during the T20 World Cup 2024, which took

place in the USA and the Caribbean. England's campaign was dismal despite his efforts; they struggled in the league stage, losing to Australia and Scotland, before losing to India in the semi-final. Flintoff will be rested for the forthcoming five-match ODI series and three-match T20I series against Australia. Flintoff hasn't had a full-time deal with the England squad, thus his involvement with them has only been temporary. He assumed his first head coaching position earlier this year with The Hundred 2024,

guiding the squad to a respectable five wins and two losses season, yet just missing out on the playoffs. During the T20 World Cup, it was rumored that Flintoff and England's white-ball skipper, Jos Buttler, didn't get along well. Flintoff, however, has devoted the last year to his coaching career, having first worked as an England scout, then as a consultant for age-group teams, and finally as a member of the national white-ball squad. Flintoff, who isn't being considered for the permanent white-ball head coach position, recently expressed his deep love for cricket and his gratitude for being involved in the game as a coach. "Cricket has given me so much. It's all I ever wanted to do as a kid and I got the opportunity to live my dream. I feel really lucky to be back here and I want the lads to cherish playing. When you finish playing, you look back and it passes so quickly, but you just take time when you're out there, just to have a look around and take it in and live in the moment," Flintoff said. "And that's what I'm doing these days. It's living in the moment and enjoying it. And that's something I want the players to do, and the teams that play under me to do as well," he further added. – Agencies



## Manchester City re-sign Gundogan from Barcelona

LONDON: Manchester City have completed the signing of former captain Ilkay Gundogan from Barcelona on an initial one-year deal with the option of a further 12 months. The German midfielder, who was Pep Guardiola's first signing at the club in 2016, spent seven years at City before joining Barcelona on a free transfer in 2023. The 33-year-old won 14 trophies in his first spell at the Etihad, scoring 60 goals in 304 appearances. "My seven years at Manchester City were a time of pure contentment for me, both on and off the pitch," said Gundogan. "Everyone knows the respect I have for Pep - he is the best manager in the world and working with him every day makes you a better player. "Honestly, I cannot wait to wear the City shirt again." Pep Guardiola made Ilkay Gundogan his captain during the midfielder's first City spell. Despite having an impressive debut campaign in Spain, Barcelona decided to part with Gundogan after struggling to register new signing Dani Olmo due to the club's financial issues. Gundogan was one of the club's highest earners and his departure on a free transfer will help Barcelona comply with La Liga spending restrictions. "I am leaving in a difficult situation, but if my departure can help the club financially, it makes me a bit less sad," Gundogan wrote on Instagram following the announcement. Gundogan added he had been "looking forward to helping my team-mates in the new campaign" but he was "grateful" to have spent 12 months at Barcelona. Speaking ahead of Ipswich Town's visit to Manchester on Saturday, Guardiola said the chance to re-sign the midfielder came out of the blue. "It was a complete surprise, unexpected," said Guardiola. "We didn't have any doubts when the possibility to re-sign him was open, and we're absolutely delighted that he's back." – Agencies

## Police attack 'mastermind' bites the...

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Police also injured Sharf's five accomplices including Naseer and Gadikosh. Punjab IGP Usman Anwar said operation to eliminate gangsters in Katcha area was under way. All those involved in attack on police would bite the dust, he resolved. Hours earlier, IGP Dr Anwar, along with Additional IG Special Branch Zulfiqar Hameed, Additional IG CTD Waseem Sial and other senior officers, reached Rahim Yar Khan. The provincial police chief and others will inquire after the injured in hospital and also visit the spot where the attack took place. According to police, 20 policemen were on way to rejoin their duty by two vehicles after day-off when one of the vehicles broke down. A group of dacoits attacked the police contingent with rocket launchers. Later, they resorted to indiscriminate firing on the vehicles. Eleven policemen were martyred on the spot while one succumbed to his injuries in hospital, they added. Five policemen, who went missing in the mayhem, were later recovered.

## Imran cites 'potential chaos' as...

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sensitive matter, with religious groups already protesting in Islamabad". He explained that "fearing unrest," the party decided to call off the rally. "If we had proceeded with the event, there was a risk of a repeat of the May 9 events, and the previous judicial inquiry into 9 May hasn't been conducted yet." Imran issued a stern warning, stating, "If you grant permission and then attempt to stop the rally, the government will be fully responsible." "This time, it's a matter of the judiciary's credibility—whether the court grants us permission or the administration cancels it." Imran stated that he had directed the party not to tolerate any obstacles on 8 September. He mentioned that the Islamabad rally had been postponed for the last time. He added that the party leadership had been instructed to meet before September 8 to decide when to protest if the Supreme Court's decision was not implemented. PTI founder also warned that if anyone tried to stop them, "this time, they would not back down".

## Pakistan confirms...

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According to a spokesperson for the health ministry, the individual showed symptoms of the virus upon arrival and was immediately transferred to a hospital for further testing and treatment. Subsequent tests confirmed that the patient was positive for mpox. National Coordinator for Health Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that an effective system of screening and surveillance system was functional at all airports. He added border health staff were working diligently at airports and entry points. Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the government was ensuring serious measures to keep people safe from epidemics. Sharing details of the new patient, KP's Public Health Director Dr Irshad Rugani said that the 47-year-old patient was a resident of Nowshera.

## Southee prioritises Test cricket over T20 leagues

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Test captain Tim Southee stated that he prioritises red-ball cricket over T20 leagues as it is still the "pinnacle" for him and is something he holds very close to his heart. Southee was in action in England's The Hundred league where he finished as the top wicket-taker. However, despite enjoying T20 cricket, the pacer believes that Test cricket is what the pinnacle is. "Format-wise, I think Test cricket is still the pinnacle for me and the format I hold closest to the heart," Southee said. "I really enjoy the T20, the Hundred format keeps you young, keeps you guessing, keeps you thinking and trying to improve your game, and your skill set, which helps across the other formats." New Zealand will travel to Asia where they will play a total of six Tests – one against Afghanistan in India, two against Sri Lanka and three against India. While the calendar may clash with T20 leagues, New Zealand players are likely to be available for the coming series. Southee was asked how this problem of players leaving international duty for league cricket can be solved, to which he said: "I don't have the answers. Right now, I don't think many people do. So I think it's about working out what's best for each individual board and their players. "New Zealand Cricket seem to think that's the best way for the next 12 months. I don't think Kane and Devon will miss a lot of cricket for New Zealand. So for them to have the flexibility in doing that, but still also be committed to New Zealand, which I think that's where the casual playing agreement comes in." Despite being captain of the Test squads for Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, Southee may be benched as the conditions in Asia support spinners more. "I think it's just natural when you come to this part of the world," Southee said, "obviously spin plays a big part but ideally, I'd like to play all the Test matches available," he said. "I love Test cricket, but I understand there's a balance to the side and obviously it's not easy as a pace bowler to be able to play nine Test matches in the next few months. So there's a lot of Test cricket so it's all about managing the workloads. But for me, as long as you're fit and ready to go, then I'd like to play every game." – Agencies

## Asim Munir arranges medical cards for hockey players

ISLAMABAD: The President of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), Tariq Bugti, announced during a press conference that Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir has graciously arranged medical cards for the federation's players. He expressed his gratitude towards the Army Chief for this significant support. He further mentioned that a hockey academy will soon be established in Islamabad, with efforts underway to restore the federation to its former glory. Tariq Bugti emphasised that political interference will no longer be tolerated in hockey, urging everyone to respect the sport's integrity. Despite providing opportunities, he lamented that some conspiratorial elements continue to harm the national sport. Bugti also expressed concern that no players from Sindh province are currently part of the Pakistan hockey team squad. – DNA

## Ronaldo scores as Al-Nassr starts with disappointing draw

Al-Raed were back on level terms four minutes into the second half thanks to a Mohammed Fouzair penalty

RIYADH: Al-Nassr began their 2024-25 Saudi Pro League campaign with a disappointing 1-1 draw with Al-Raed at Al-Awwal Park in Riyadh on Thursday. Last season's runners-up took the lead in the 34th minute when Cristiano Ronaldo headed home a Sadio Mane cross from the left. The Portuguese star celebrated his goal with a traditional Saudi dance. Al-Raed were back on level terms four minutes into the second half thanks to a Mohammed Fouzair penalty. Al-Nassr were relieved to see the man who gave away the foul that caused it, Aymeric Laporte, escape with a booking following a red card check by the video assistant referee but, despite that let-off, the home team could not find the winner their fans might have expected. Elsewhere, in what

turned out to be the match of the day, Al-Wehda and Al-Riyadh played out a dramatic 3-3 draw at King Abdulaziz Sport City Stadium in Makkah. Australian international Craig Goodwin gave the home team the lead five minutes before the break but the side from the capital hit back six minutes into the second half courtesy of Ghanaian midfielder Bernard Mensah. Goodwin restored Al-Wehda's lead just after the hour mark, minutes after Al-Riyadh were reduced to 10 men when Hussein Al-Nowiqi was sent off. However, the visitors rallied and Ibrahim Bayesh equalized with five minutes of normal time left. The 12 minutes of time added by the referee meant there was still the chance of some late twists and turns, and that is exactly what hap-

pened. Murad Khadhari looked to have won it for Al-Wehda in the 94th minute, only for Al-Riyadh to again pull level three minutes later when Lucas Kal scored their third equalizer of the night to secure a share of the points. In the first match of the day, last season's surprise package, Al-Taawoun, launched their campaign with a last-gasp victory over Al-Fayha at King Abdullah Sport City Stadium. Despite being reduced to 10 men after Abraham Alshuyal was sent off in the 81st minute, Al-Taawoun were not content to hold on for a point from a goalless draw, and they were rewarded for their fighting spirit five minutes into stoppage time when substitute Adam Mohammed grabbed the winner with a firm header. – Agencies

## Mushfiqur, Litton help BD fightback against Pakistan

After Shakib's dismissal, Mushfiqur and Litton stitched an unbeaten 98-run stand to push the team's total to 316 at the end of Day 3 of the first Test against Pakistan

## SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Mushfiqur Rahim and Litton Das scored dominant half-centuries to help Bangladesh reach 316-5 at the end of Day 3 of the first Test against Pakistan here on Friday. Mushfiqur and Litton will resume their innings on Day 4 from 55 and 52 respectively with a trail of 132 runs. Bangladesh lost the only wicket of Shakib Al Hasan (15) in the final session, as Saim Ayub claimed his maiden Test wicket. After Shakib's dismissal, Mushfiqur and Litton stitched an unbeaten 98-run stand to push the team's total to 316. Mushfiqur played an anchor's role, while Litton attacked Pakistan bowlers, especially Naseem Shah, hitting 18 runs in an over. For Pakistan, Khurram

Shahzad picked two wickets, while Naseem, Mohammad Ali and Saim claimed one wicket each. Earlier, Shadman missed out on a well-deserved century at the stroke of tea as he was castled on the last ball of the session, leaving Bangladesh reeling at 199-4. The top-order batting departed after scoring a well-fought 93 from 183 balls, laced with twelve boundaries. Bangladesh lost Mominul Haque right after he reached his half-century as Khurram Shahzad bowled him on the first ball of the 52nd over. Mominul scored 50 off 776 with the help of five boundaries. Mushfiqur Rahim joined Shadman, who remained the chief accumulator for Bangladesh throughout the day. The veteran batter scored an unbeaten 15 before Ali knocked Shadman's stumps

at the stroke of Tea on Day 3. Earlier, Bangladesh started the day at 27/0, with Shadman Islam and Zakir Hasan unbeaten on 12 and 11 respectively. However, Zakir soon fell



prey to Naseem Shah as Mohammad Rizwan took a brilliant catch behind the stumps. Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto came out to bat and showed some resistance with a cautious knock of 16 runs from 42 balls

run partnership. Shadman struck a boundary off Naseem on the last ball of the session to reach his third Test half-century, while Mominul remained unbeaten at 45. Earlier, Pakistan declared their innings at 448/6

on Day 2 with Mohammad Rizwan unbeaten on 171. When Pakistan captain Shan Masood called for the declaration, Rizwan was just 29 runs away from his maiden Test double century while Shaheen Shah Afridi was unbeaten with a 24-ball 29. Rizwan remained the top-scorer for Pakistan with an undefeated 171 off 239 deliveries, laced up with 11 fours and three sixes. Pakistan added 81 runs to their total in the second session while Bangladesh struck once when Shakib Al Hasan dismissed Salman Ali Agha on 19. Shoriful Islam and Hasan Mahmud each bagged two wickets for Bangladesh while Shakib and Mehidy Hasan Miraz shared two wickets between them. The two-match series between Pakistan and Bangladesh is a part of the ICC

World Test Championship (WTC) and will run from August 21 to September 4 with both matches to be played at the same venue. Pakistan are currently ranked sixth in the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25. They have played two away series in the championship, winning 2-0 against Sri Lanka and losing 3-0 to Australia. **Playing XI:** Pakistan: Abdullah Shafique, Saim Ayub, Shan Masood (c), Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Ali, Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Shadman Islam, Zakir Hasan, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana

## UK expands eVisas...

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for example as a tourist, you do not need to create a UKVI account. High Commissioner Jane Marriott CMB OBE said: "We are constantly innovating to make it easier for Pakistanis to travel to the UK. This new use of technology will streamline a key part of the visa process, make it more secure and reduce the dependence on paper documents." The process is free, secure, and straightforward. You can find out more, including how to create an account, on our website: gov.uk/eVisa. You must not travel to the UK until you have received your passport and valid UK visa back from the Visa Application Centre (VAC). Updating a physical document to an eVisa does not affect your immigration status or the conditions of your permission to enter or stay in UK.

## Briefs

N.Korea  
condemns  
US helicopter  
sales to  
South

SEOUL : North Korea on Friday criticised recent US arms sales in Asia, calling a deal to deliver Apache helicopters to South Korea a "reckless, provocative act" and adding it would build up its own forces in response. We strongly oppose and reject the US and its vassal forces' arms buildup," Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, referring to the South. "This is a reckless, provocative act of deliberately increasing the security instability in the region," it added, also criticising recent US sales to Japan and other Asia-Pacific allies of Washington. On Monday, the United States announced its approval of a \$3.5 billion sale to South Korea of up to 36 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters and related equipment, including missiles. The US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said the sale would "improve the Republic of Korea's capability to meet current and future threats by providing a credible force capable of deterring adversaries and participating in regional operations", using South Korea's formal name. While the State Department approved the sale, the US Congress must still sign off on the transaction. Seoul's unification ministry said Friday that North Korea was the one "threatening peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula". Pyongyang has defined inter-Korean relations as those of "two hostile nations" and is continuously "developing and advancing illegal nuclear and missiles", it added. The South Korean government is "closely monitoring and thoroughly assessing North Korea's activities through close cooperation with relevant agencies," Kim In-ae, vice spokesperson for the ministry, told reporters. Washington is Seoul's key security ally and stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea, with their role including helping to protect it from its nuclear-armed neighbour. Pyongyang also said Friday that US arms sales in the Pacific would prompt the North's "strategic deterrence" to be "further strengthened" in response.—APP

UNICEF  
seeks \$16.5M  
for Mpox  
response in  
Africa

KIGALI : The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) appealed Thursday for \$16.5 million to scale up its mpox response in East and Southern Africa. Children and vulnerable communities are on the verge of an expanding outbreak of mpox in the region as confirmed cases have been detected across Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa, the UN agency's regional director for Eastern and Southern Africa, Eteleva Kadilli, said in a statement. Burundi has so far confirmed more than 500 mpox cases in about 25 out of the 49 districts of the country, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). UNICEF said children and adolescents below 20 years of age constitute nearly 60% of the cases detected, with children under 5 years old accounting for 21%. "Aside from immediate lifesaving response, risk communication efforts and cross-border collaboration, investments in overall health system strengthening, continuity of essential services and a targeted focus on programs that support overall child wellbeing must be prioritized," said Kadilli. The new variant of the mpox virus (clade Ib) has been detected in all affected countries except South Africa, raising concern due to its potential for wider transmission across age groups, particularly young children, according to UNICEF. It also expressed concern about the secondary impact of mpox outbreaks on children and adolescents, citing stigma, discrimination and disruptions to schooling and learning.—APP

Modi meets Zelensky  
for talks in wartime Kyiv

India's Narendra Modi issued renewed condolences over the strike on X in a post written in Ukrainian

## NEWS DESK

KYIV: India's Narendra Modi met President Volodymyr Zelensky in wartime Kyiv on Friday, weeks after the Ukrainian leader blasted the Indian prime minister over his trip to Moscow. For Modi, the visit is a chance to clear the air after he was shown embracing Russian President Vladimir Putin at talks in July as Moscow staged a massive missile strike on Ukraine that struck a children's hospital. As he welcomed the Indian prime minister to the Marinskyi presidential palace in Kyiv, Zelensky embraced Modi with a frowning expression before they began talks. Modi issued renewed condolences over the strike on X in a post written in Ukrainian. "Conflict is particularly devastating for young children. My heart goes out to the families of children who lost their lives, and I pray that they find the strength to endure their grief," the post said. The visit is important for Western-backed Kyiv, which has been trying to nurture diplomatic relations in the Global South



in its efforts to secure a fair settlement to end the war with Russia. India, which has traditionally had close economic and defense ties with Moscow, has publicly criticized the deaths of innocent people in the war, but it has also strengthened its economic ties with Moscow. The trip comes at a volatile juncture in the fighting, with Ukrainian forces still in Russia's western Kursk region following their incursion on Aug. 6 and Russian troops grinding out slow but steady advances in Ukraine's

east. Modi was met off the train by Ukrainian officials who made a traditional Indian namaste greeting. He was later shown walking with Zelensky at the city's World War Two museum, his hand on the Ukrainian leader's shoulder. Modi had used emotive language to deliver an implicit rebuke to Putin at their summit after the attack on the children's hospital in Ukraine. But the trip prompted Zelensky to say it was a "huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the

world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow on such a day." "CERTAIN INFLUENCE" Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser in the Ukrainian president's office, told Reuters Modi's visit to Kyiv was significant because New Delhi "really has a certain influence" over Moscow. "It's extremely important for us to effectively build relations with such countries, to explain to them what the correct end to the war is — and that it is also in their interests," he said. As Western nations have imposed sanctions on Russia and cut trade relations with it over the invasion, India has developed its economic ties. Indian refiners which rarely bought Russian oil in the past have emerged as Moscow's top clients for sea-borne oil since Russia poured troops into Ukraine in February 2022. Russian oil accounts for over two-fifths of India's oil imports. In the run-up to the trip Modi said he was looking forward to sharing "perspectives on peaceful resolution of the ongoing Ukraine conflict." Ukraine has said it hopes to bring together

a second international summit later this year to advance its vision of peace and involve representatives from Russia. The first summit in Switzerland that pointedly excluded Russia in June attracted scores of delegations, including one from India, but not from China, the world's second largest economy. "Lasting peace can only be achieved through options that are acceptable to both parties. And it can only be a negotiated settlement," Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West) in the Indian foreign ministry, told reporters. Volodymyr Fesenko, a Kyiv-based political analyst, said he expected no breakthrough proposals to be made to end the war during the trip by Modi, who visited Poland on Thursday. For there to be an attempt to negotiate, the military situation has to stabilize and the presidential election must be held in the United States, a close ally of Ukraine, he said. He said the visit was important for India to demonstrate it was "not on Russia's side" and that Kyiv wanted to normalize relations after Modi's Moscow trip.

President  
Milei to  
veto pension  
reform

BUENOS AIRES ; Argentina's President Javier Milei is set to veto a pension reform passed by the Senate in a move that is likely to widen the rift between the libertarian leader and the opposition-controlled Congress. The Senate defied Milei to push through an increase to pension spending in line with the country's triple-digit inflation, dealing a blow to his tough austerity programme. The bill, which swept through the lower house in June, was passed by a 61-8 vote in the Senate on Thursday. All but one of the lawmakers who voted against the measure were from Milei's party, a sign that the president's allies had failed to negotiate with centrist parties. Lawmakers could override his veto by passing the law with a two-thirds majority again. "[The bill's] only objective was to destroy the government's economic programme," Milei's office said in a statement on X, as it would have required spending an extra 1.2 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). "The president promised Argentines that he would maintain a fiscal surplus at all costs, and he will," his office said. Milei took office in December with strict austerity measures as part of a bid to tackle rampant inflation in the face of rising poverty now hitting half of the population. He has promised to strike down legislation that undermines his "zero deficit" plan. "Anything that goes against public accounts will be vetoed," presidential spokesman Manuel Adorni said on Thursday. The bruising defeat for the president once again highlighted his weakness in Congress, where leftist and centrist lawmakers hold sway. Because Milei's party controls less than 15 percent of Congress — and just seven of the Senate's 72 seats — he has largely relied on sweeping executive decrees to slash public spending and deregulate the economy. Last week, Congress struck down a presidential decree that would have multiplied the intelligence budget, arguing those funds could be used for more urgent social needs.—APP



ISLAMABAD : A delegation from Legal Aid Society had a meeting with Federal Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.—DNA

Volcano erupts  
in Iceland,  
sixth since  
December

REYKJAVIK : A new volcano erupted on the Reykjanes peninsula in southwestern Iceland late Thursday, spewing hot lava into the air in the sixth eruption to hit the region since December, authorities said. Live video images showed orange lava bursting out of a long fissure, illuminating the billowing smoke rising up into the night sky. "An eruption has started on the Sundhnuksgigarad," the Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO) said in a statement, adding that the eruption had started at 9:26 pm (21:26 GMT) following a series of earthquakes. The IMO initially estimated the length of the fissure at 1.4 kilometres (0.86 miles), adding in a later statement that it had extended to 3.9 kilometres in 40 minutes.—

UNARWA to  
launch polio  
vaccination  
campaign in Gaza

GENEVA : The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) announced on Friday plans to begin a polio vaccination campaign in the Gaza Strip by the end of August. UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini expressed grave concern over the recent confirmation by the World Health Organization (WHO) of a polio case in Gaza. The case involves a 10-month-old baby who has been left paralyzed, marking the first instance of polio in Gaza in over 25 years, according to Lazzarini. The official highlighted that "polio will not make a distinction between Palestinian and Israeli children," noting that "delaying a humanitarian pause will increase the risk of spread among children." "It is not enough to bring the vaccines into Gaza plus protect the cold chain. To have an impact, the vaccines must end up in the mouths of every child under the age of 10," he said. "UNRWA medical teams will deliver the vaccines in our clinics and through our mobile health teams," said Lazzarini, noting that "since the war began and with thanks to these efforts, 80% of children across Gaza have received vaccines against different childhood diseases." Polio, a highly infectious virus that can cause irreversible paralysis within hours, poses a particular threat to children in Gaza. The resurgence of polio is being attributed to the destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure, coupled with Israel's restrictions on repairs and the delivery of supplies. Israel has continued its brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip following a Hamas attack on Oct. 7, 2023, despite a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire.—APP

13 dead, 4.5  
million  
affected by  
BD floods

DHAKA : At least 13 people in Bangladesh have been killed and 4.5 million affected by floods triggered by heavy rains, the disaster management and relief ministry said Friday. The South Asian nation of 170 million people, crisscrossed by hundreds of rivers, has seen frequent floods in recent decades. It is among the countries most vulnerable to disasters and climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index. A bulletin from the disaster ministry on Friday said: "4.5 million people have been affected, and 13 people have died across the country." Nearly 190,000 others were taken to emergency relief shelters, according to the bulletin. Altogether, 11 of the country's 64 districts were affected by the flooding, the bulletin added. Feni, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of the main port city of Chittagong, was worst-hit.—APP

Venezuelan court upholds  
Maduro's disputed victory

## WEB DESK

CARACAS : Venezuela's highest court has upheld the re-election of Nicolás Maduro as president following accusations of widespread voter fraud in July's poll. The decision by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (TSJ) comes as the United Nations warned that the court lacked independence and impartiality. The TSJ said it had reviewed material from the country's election authority, which said Mr Maduro had won just over half of the vote, and agreed he had been victorious. Announcing the court ruling, TSJ head Caraylia Rodríguez said: "The electoral material assessed is certified unobjectionably and the results of the presidential election of 28 July released by the National Electoral Council (CNE), where Nicolás Maduro was elected president of the republic, are validated." The decision

could not be appealed, she said. Marta Valiás, chair of the fact-finding mission organised by the UN Human Rights Council, said the government had "exerted undue influence over TSJ decisions" through the use of "direct messages to judges and public statements". Francisco Cox Vial, another member of the UN's fact-finding mission, said Ms Rodríguez was a member of Mr Maduro's ruling party and had held elected positions within it. Mr Maduro has led the country since 2013 and his re-election means he can serve another six-year term. At least 23 protesters have been killed at anti-government demonstrations since last month's election and approximately 2,400 more have been arrested, the UN says. Protests erupted after the CNE declared Mr Maduro the winner on election night without publishing detailed voting tallies. The opposition says the tallies prove that its candidate, Edmundo

González, won comfortably and they have published copies collected by their election observers on the internet. These documents, which have been reviewed by independent experts and media, suggest Mr González won 67% of the vote compared with Mr Maduro's 30%. Several Western countries have urged the Venezuelan authorities to publish the voting tallies in full while others, including Russia and China, have congratulated Mr Maduro on his victory. As well as the deaths and arrests of protesters in the last few weeks, the Maduro government has also started an investigation into opposition leaders for allegedly inciting the country's military to commit crimes. They have also started passing a law through the National Assembly which would tighten rules on non-governmental organisations and forced the resignations of state employees who allegedly declared pro-opposition views.

UN fears  
repeat  
of 2017  
atrocities  
against  
Rohingyas

The United Nations warned Friday it fears a repetition of the 2017 crimes against Myanmar's Rohingya minority, warning that a human disaster is unfolding in Rakhine State. UN human rights official Volker Turk expressed great concern about Myanmar's rapidly deteriorating situation, notably in Rakhine, where hundreds of people have allegedly been murdered while fleeing conflict. Since November, Myanmar's western Rakhine state has been experiencing clashes following an attack by the Arakan Army (AA) on security forces, which effectively terminated a ceasefire that had been in place since the military coup in 2021. The AA claims to be fighting for more autonomy for the state's ethnic Rakhine people, which also includes around 600,000 members of the Rohingya Muslim minority. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya left Rakhine in 2017, following a military operation that is now the subject of a United Nations genocide court case. "Thousands of Rohingya have been forced to flee on foot, with the Arakan Army herding them repeatedly into locations that offer scant safe haven," Turk told a news conference, adding that as border crossings as closed, members of the Rohingya community are "finding themselves trapped between the military and its allies and the Arakan Army, with no path to safety." Turk stated, "This month marks seven years since the military operations which drove 700,000 across the border into Bangladesh. Despite the world saying 'never again', we are once more witnessing killings, destruction and displacement in Rakhine." The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that parties to the armed conflict are denying culpability for atrocities on the Rohingya, which "stretches the bounds of credulity."—APP

## Macron begins talks to select new govt, PM for France

Six weeks after Macron lost his legislative majority in a snap election, he still hasn't appointed a new prime minister, whose main responsibility will be to present the budget proposal for the upcoming year to the National Assembly

## FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: Following the unresolved election last month, French President Emmanuel Macron is set to start a series of difficult talks with party leaders on Friday with the goal of assembling a workable ruling coalition. Six weeks after Macron lost his legislative majority in a snap election, he still hasn't appointed a new prime minister, whose main responsibility will be to present the budget proposal for the upcoming year to the National Assembly. After the election, the left-wing New Popular Front (NFP), which became the largest faction, declared its desire for economist Lucie Castets to take over as premier. Along with other NFP leaders, Castets will be the first political figure to meet with

Macron at the Elysee Palace on Friday. "We're not going to negotiate with him," said Manuel Bompard, coordinator of the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) party of the upcoming meeting with Macron. "We'll tell him that there is no alternative to Lucie Castets's appointment." However, supporters of Macron, who declared that "nobody won" during the election, have contended that the leftist group is too weak to win the prime ministership and are aiming to unite around a centrist candidate. "A denial of democracy" Macron declared he would not give the work of choosing a new leader of government priority during the Paris Olympic Games, which concluded on August 11. France has remained without a leader of government for the longest stretch of time following a parliamentary election.



A caretaker administration has been led by Prime Minister Gabriel Attal. Sen. Yannick Jadot of the Green Party called President Macron's position "a denial of democracy" and harsh-

ly criticized the president for taking so long. On Thursday, a representative from Macron's office reaffirmed that "the president is on the side of the French people, the guarantor of the institutions". Representatives from a variety of political backgrounds will be present for the Elysee talks, which are set for this Friday and Monday. Although the president's administration did not provide a timeframe, analysts anticipate that he will select the prime minister sometime next week. By October 1, the legal deadline, the person nominated must be able to pass a motion of confidence in parliament and propose a draft law on the 2025 budget to the legislature. Last month, Macron's party reached a last-minute deal with right-wing legislators to win a critical vote in parliament, paving the way for the French

president to play a larger role in building the country's next administration than previously expected, Politico reported. The two political factions formed an impromptu coalition to re-elect Yael Braun-Pivet as leader of the French National Assembly. The vote was largely seen as a test of who could work together in France's broken parliament to choose a future prime minister. By pooling their forces, the centrists and center right gained electoral traction while simultaneously dealing a crushing blow to their opponents further to the left. Matthieu Hocque, a political expert at Paris' Millénaire think tank, believes that the victory will make it "more likely" for Macron to bring in a prime minister "from his camp," explaining that this has always been the case in modern French history.

## Briefs

### Kamala Harris pledges 'new way forward' at DNC

#### FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Vice-President Kamala Harris pledged a "new way forward" for all Americans as she formally accepted the Democratic nomination for president on Thursday night, delivering a message of unity and urging voters to reject Donald Trump. November's election is a chance to "move past the bitterness, cynicism and divisive battles of the past", she said, bringing her party's convention in Chicago to a close as balloons rained down and supporters cheered.

Ms Harris's speech capped off a four-day spectacle designed to highlight her backstory and shape the contours of what remains a vague policy agenda. She made history as the first black and Asian-American woman to lead a major party's presidential ticket.

The 59-year-old officially became the Democratic nominee after a fast-moving few weeks that began with President Joe Biden stepping aside in the White House race. Polls suggest she is now in a tight race with Trump, who offered criticism of Ms Harris's appearance as it unfolded. Ms Harris used her nearly-45-minute address, the most important speech of her political career, to reintroduce herself to the nation. She shared personal anecdotes about growing up in a "beautiful working-class neighbourhood" as the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants.

### Iran captures 14 Daesh members

TEHRAN: Iran's Intelligence Ministry says it has arrested 14 members of the Daesh terrorist group, foiling their plots to carry out terror attacks inside the country. In a statement released on Friday, the ministry said that it had after a series of operations identified and apprehended 14 terrorists "led by the US-Zionist group called Daesh Khorasan (Daesh-K)" in four Iranian provinces of Tehran, Alborz, Fars, and Khuzestan. Those arrested, it added, had illegally entered the Islamic Republic in the past few days with the aim of carrying out terrorist attacks. The ministry also said that seven of the terrorists were arrested in Fars and the rest in Tehran, Alborz, and Khuzestan provinces.

The outcomes of investigations and interrogations will be published later, it noted. In 2014, Daesh captured large swathes of land in Iraq and Syria in lightning attacks, declaring the areas it controlled as "caliphate." However, Iraqi and Syrian forces, with the help of Iran, managed to reverse Daesh's gains and ultimately liberate their countries from the terror outfit some three years later. - Agencies

### PML-N's survival lies in spreading anarchy

SHAMIM SHAHID  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif said on Friday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz deemed its survival in spreading anarchy. He stated that the PML-N leaders were spreading rumours the public about postponement of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI), alleging the PML-N of trying to drive a wedge between people and the army. He stressed that people would come in droves in the rescheduled public rally on Sept 8, adding that Rana Sanaullah would be in a fix after watching sea of people in the rally. Moreover, he said that previous rally was postponed on the instructions of PTI founder Imran Khan to avoid anarchy and social unrest.

# PDMA strengthens DRM with support from Japan govt, UNDP

Through this project, the UNDP has addressed a critical development challenge in the coastal districts of Malir, West/Keamari Karachi, and Gwadar in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan, by reducing tsunami risks



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Supported by the Government of Japan and in partnership with the Economic Affairs Division and PDMA in Sindh and Balochistan, UNDP has jointly conducted a closing ceremony to commemorate the successful completion of USD 3.7 Million project 'Strengthening Tsunami and Earthquake

Preparedness in Coastal Areas of Pakistan' in Islamabad today. The project has concluded, but resilient empowered, knowledgeable communities and institutions remain, marking the start of a new chapter in Tsunami & Earthquake Preparedness in Coastal Areas in Pakistan. The project's success in strengthening disaster preparedness and response has laid a foundation for continued resilience in Pakistan's coastal communities.

Through this project, the UNDP has addressed a critical development challenge in the coastal districts of Malir, West/Keamari Karachi, and Gwadar in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan, by reducing tsunami risks and their potential impact on coastal communities in Pakistan. This was achieved through the revision of guidelines for tsunami and earthquake preparedness and enhancing the disaster response and

preparedness capacity of vulnerable coastal communities. The project also prioritized gender equity in its approach to mitigate coastal hazards. Mr. Wajahat Ahmed, Assistant Director (Civil), PDMA, Sindh, "This project marks a significant milestone in our collective efforts to enhance disaster resilience. It has testified to the power of collaboration, expertise, and a shared commitment to saving lives. Let us take the lessons learned and apply them to further develop the resilience of vulnerable communities in the Coastal Belt, making them more resilient to natural disasters."

Addressing the ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Mitsuhiro Wada, underlined, "With its historical frequency of natural disasters, Japan has gained significant knowledge and experience in climate and disaster risk management, preparedness, and response. Japan's Development Cooperation Charter highlights the importance of disaster risk reduction for realizing poverty eradication and sustainable development. Japan is committed to promoting these efforts that leverage Japan's expertise in this area."

UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative Dr. Samuel Rizk said on the occasion, "The project has concluded, but the resilient, empowered, and knowledgeable communities and institutions it leaves behind will continue to make a difference. Our collaboration with Japan has been instrumental in building a more resilient future."

## Germany reaffirms economic cooperation with Pakistan

Germany is Pakistan's third most important economic cooperation partner, last pledge amounting to 163,3 million Euros (more than 50 crore PKR)

#### BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Minister Schulze concluded her visit to Pakistan in Lahore where she met with H.E. the Chief Minister of Punjab, Mariam Nawaz Sharif. They discussed matters of German-Pakistani relations and of economic cooperation which is particularly strong in Punjab. Minister Schulze also visited the Inter Market Knit Private Ltd. factory where socks are produced i. a. for the German market. Afterwards, she visited a sustainable market at the Centre for the Improvement of Working Conditions and the Environment (CIWCE). H.E. the Federal Minister then participated in the Textile Industry Sustainability Forum (TISF) where she discussed matters of work environment, sustainable production methods and increasing competitiveness

with representatives of the Government of Punjab, of the textile industry, trade unions and civil society. Today, Minister Schulze visited one of the Khawaja Industries PVT Ltd. factories in Sialkot, Punjab, where footballs for the German first league (Bundesliga) are produced. Germany is Pakistan's third-most important economic cooperation partner. Since the beginning of German-Pakistani economic cooperation in 1961, Germany has contributed around 3.7 billion Euros (more than 113 000 crore PKR) in Pakistan's development. In 2023 alone, Germany pledged 163,3 million Euros (more than 50 crore PKR) for economic cooperation with Pakistan. German-Pakistani cooperation covers a wide field of issues such as developing professional training capacities, supporting small and medium enterprises, improving healthcare, promoting renewable energies and adapting to the consequences of climate change.



## Pakistan wants to be a part of the Asian century, but not any conflicts

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan is against a regional situation similar to witnessed during Cold war years and disagrees with joining camps to counter any country, especially against its trusted friend China". This was stated by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed as a keynote speaker at an event titled, "US' Asia-Pacific Strategy: Implications for Pakistan-India Relations", organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). Another keynote speaker, Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi stressed that the change of nomenclature Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific for a containment strategy by the US had placed India in a central role fancying targeting China.

But China was unlike the former Soviet Union, and could not be challenged and defeated, by no means through empowering India. He stressed that to avoid a dangerous global conflict, Pakistan must stay clear of any part in such hostile endeavours. He also emphasized that China had never projected itself as a super power but only emerging global power. Earlier, in his opening remarks, President IRS, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, brought out how the emerging 'Cold War' was fraught with grave risks for global peace and stability. He also underlined that India was misusing the western support being extended to build it as a counterweight to China to instead pursue its hegemonic policies in South Asia, and undermine Pakistan. The West was mistaken in seeing India as a reliable partner, since India was adept at playing all sides in the name of so called strategic autonomy. Ambassador Zameer Akram, adviser SPD, pointed out that under the so called Indo-Pacific strategy, many analysts believed that the US intended to act as a full-spectrum dominant power, with evident control of sea lanes to counter China's rise. For this objective, the US had even expanded the scope of NATO from Europe to Middle East and Asia, so to contain China. - DNA

## Palestine welcomes report condemning Israel for Apartheid

#### NEWS DESK

RAMALLAH: The State of Palestine welcomes the Report of the ad hoc conciliation commission on the inter-State communication submitted by the State of Palestine against Israel for violations of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The Commission confirmed the findings of the ICJ that the prohibition of racial discrimination is a peremptory norm and that Israel, the occupying Power, is in violation of its obligations under CERD and is imposing a situation of racial segregation and apartheid over the Palestinian people and throughout the entirety of Palestine, based on race, colour, decent, and ethnic origin. The Commission also confirmed that all of Israel's discriminatory policies and practices, including restriction of movement, theft of natural resources and land, and denial of basic fundamental rights, housing, education... in the State of Palestine are aimed at advancing its colonization of Palestine which makes it impossible to ensure equality. The Commission also confirmed that right of the Palestinian people to self-determination is critical to ensure equality and sustainable peace and the importance of combatting impunity for Israel's racial segregation and apartheid policies. The State of Palestine reiterates the request of the Commission that the international community, including the Security Council, has a role to end Israel's racial segregation and apartheid. States Parties of CERD have international responsibility and a duty to enforce the Convention, not to sponsor or be complicit in Israel's apartheid, and eradicate racial discrimination.

## Hoti moves PHC against KP wheat scam

#### OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Former Federal Minister, Nawabzada Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti, Hoti filed a constitutional petition in Peshawar High Court seeking Court's direction for probe into the KP wheat scam. The Petition filed through Saleem Shah Hoti advocate has expressed no trust over the three-member Anti-Corruption Committee and dubbed it as an attempt to protect the responsible persons. The Petitioner has arraigned as respondents Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur, Chief Minister KP, Zahir Shah Toru, Provincial Minister for Food Peshawar, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Chief Secretary Civil Secretary Peshawar, Secretary Food, Brig (Retd) Musadiq Abbasi, Advisor to Chief Minister KP on Anti-Corruption, Qazi Muhammad Anwar, Senior Advocate Peshawar, Member Anti-Corruption Committee, Shah Farman, Former Governor KP and Member Anti-Corruption Committee, Shakeel Ahmad MPA, Muhammad Atif Khan PTI MNA, Junaid Akber PTI MNA, Director Food, Director General, Anti-Corruption Establishment KP, Chairman, National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Islamabad and Director General, National Accountability Bureau (NAB), KP.

## KSA to host a donor conference refugees

#### NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: In response to the acute humanitarian crisis in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Mali, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has announced that it will host a high-level ministerial donor conference with the support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on October 26, 2024. The United Nations estimates nearly 33 million people need humanitarian assistance and protection across the region, including around 11 million people who have been internally displaced and refugees in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region. The conference, co-hosted by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRC) and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

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