



Government is paying special attention on agriculture sector to drive national economy on growth trajectory

Minister for Industries and Production  
**Rana Tanveer**

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Price Rs 8 | Pages 4

## Naqvi extends heartfelt message on International Youth Day

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi, extended heartfelt tributes to Pakistan's youth, highlighting their immense potential and contributions to the nation, on the occasion of International Youth Day.

He paid special homage to Arshad Nadeem, the Olympic champion in the javelin throw competition, who has become a symbol of hope and inspiration for the country's younger generation. "Arshad Nadeem, by winning the gold medal, has proven that Pakistani youth are not only hardworking but also fully capable of achieving greatness," stated Naqvi.

He emphasized that Nadeem's extraordinary performance at the Paris Olympics has infused new energy and enthusiasm among the youth, encouraging them to strive for excellence in all spheres of life. Naqvi underlined the crucial role of youth in shaping the future of Pakistan. "Youth are the greatest strength of Pakistan, and they possess the full potential to change the destiny of our nation.

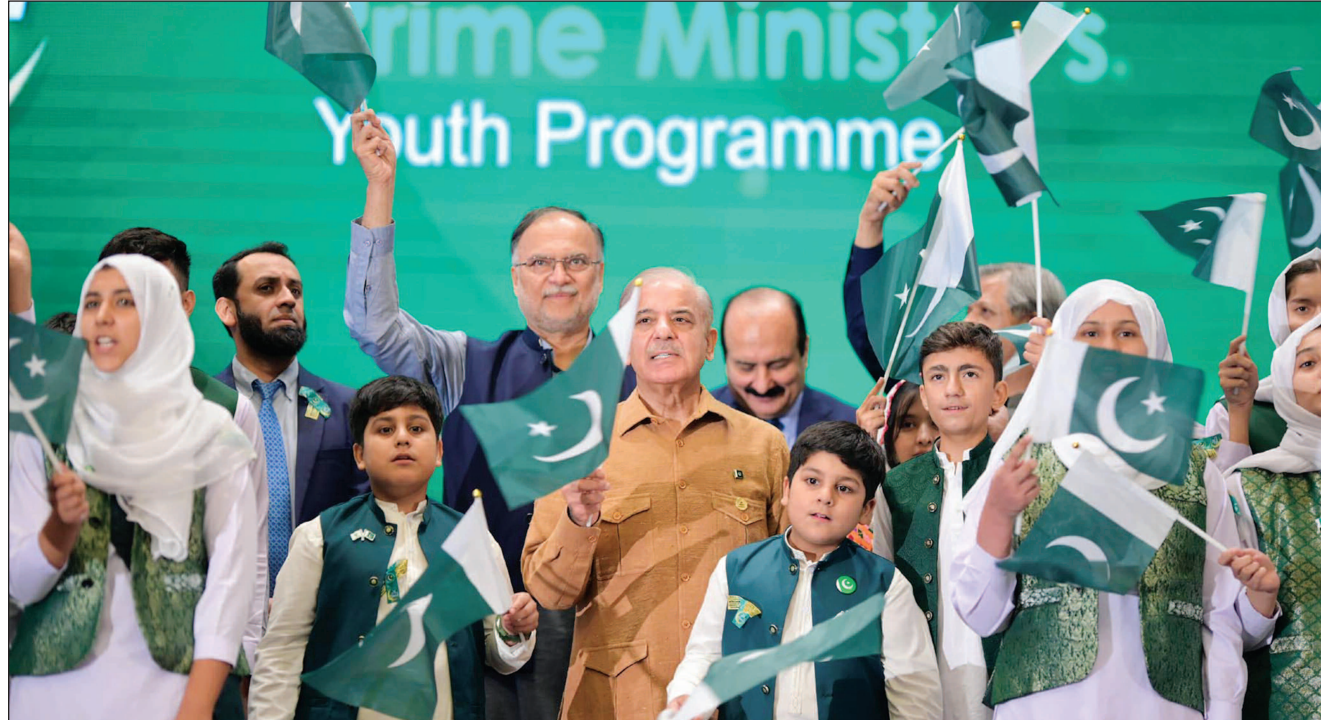
The talents bestowed upon our youth by God have brightened the name of Pakistan across every field," he remarked. He further added that the youth represent the bright future of Pakistan, and that investing in them is synonymous with investing in a prosperous and radiant future for the country. "Empower the youth as much as possible today, and our tomorrow will be just as beautiful," Naqvi urged.

The minister called for the creation of an equitable environment where young people can leverage their creativity for national development. He highlighted that a significant portion of Pakistan's population consists of youth, and emphasized the need for both the private sector and the government to collaborate in developing their skills.

Concluding his message, Mohsin Naqvi reaffirmed the government's commitment to implementing more effective measures to empower the youth. "On International Youth Day, we reiterate our dedication to taking further steps to ensure our youth are empowered and equipped to lead Pakistan towards a brighter future," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with JUP Secretary General Owais Noorani. INP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with students on the International Youth Day ceremony.

## PM Shehbaz Sharif pledges support for youth to transform Pakistan into a developed nation

PM grieved over mountaineer Murad Sadpara's death

### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday pledged to allocate ample resources to the nation's youth to help transform the country into a thriving, developed nation. Speaking at an event marking the International Day of Youth, organized by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, he recalled his service as Chief Minister of Punjab under the leadership of President Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. He aimed to provide opportunities for the youth to change the country's destiny as prime minister.

"The country's youth have the potential to elevate the nation to new heights, if given access to modern education and resources," he added. He expressed his vision of equipping talented youth with modern education, Information Technology, and Artificial Intelligence to spark a revolution in the country, similar to the progress seen in China. He highlighted his previous efforts in providing modern facilities to students at Danish Schools.

Shehbaz Sharif also lamented that, despite having abundant resources and 77 years of independence, the country remains heavily

burdened by debt. He noted that extreme poverty prevents many from affording basic needs, such as arranging marriages for their daughters, while the country's elite class enjoys significant privileges.

He stated that this year, the federal government will provide one million smartphones, tablets, and laptops to top-performing students across the country, including those from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and remote areas of Balochistan. Additionally, each province has its separate programs to support students, he added.

Additionally, the prime minister announced that he will personally fund the education of 1,000 agricultural graduates in China, aiming to equip them with modern technology to boost agri production. Huawei has also committed to sending 200,000 youth for IT training and advanced education, he said adding that he will unveil a comprehensive development plan for the country on August 14.

The prime minister stated that nothing was impossible in this world and emphasized the need to progress by learning from past mistakes. He assured that the country's hockey will be revived. Praising javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem, he noted that Nadeem had won a gold medal for the country after a drought of over 40 years.

At the beginning of the event, the prime minister

officially launched several key initiatives, including the Commonwealth Youth Alliance Secretariat in Islamabad, the Digital Learning Portal, the PM Green Youth Movement, and the AI for Youth Programme, which offers Intel-certified skills to young people. Other initiatives included Smart Youth, Smart Pakistan, and the distribution of one million tablets and mobile phones to high-achieving intermediate students. He also announced the registration of the National Volunteer Corps.

Later, the Prime Minister presented awards to successful young entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed his deep grief over the death of mountaineer Murad Sadpara.

"The services of late Murad Sadpara in the field of mountaineering will be remembered forever," the prime minister said in a statement.

He prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude. Sadpara was severely injured when he slipped at an altitude of around 5,000m on Sunday while working as a guide for a climber during her summit of Broad Peak. However, he succumbed to his injuries on Monday morning, a day after the Pakistan Army launched an operation to rescue him from the Broad Peak.

## Ishaq Dar reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye bilateral relations



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nuh Yilmaz called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday in Islamabad. Ishaq Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye bilateral relations with special focus on trade, investment, IT and defence cooperation.

## Process of Field General Court Martial has been initiated & Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd) has been taken into military custody: ISPR

Says complying with the orders of SC, a detailed court of inquiry, was undertaken by Pakistan Army, to ascertain correctness of complaints in Top City Case made against Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd)

RAWALPINDI: Complying with the orders of Supreme Court of Pakistan, a detailed court of inquiry, was undertaken by Pakistan Army, to ascertain correctness of complaints in Top City Case made against Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd). Consequently, appropriate disciplinary action has been initiated against Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd), under provisions of Pakistan Army Act. According to the statement issued by the ISPR, in addition, multiple instances of violation of Pakistan Army Act post retirement have also been established. The process of Field General Court Martial has been initiated and Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd) has been taken into military custody. PR

## Defence Minister visits Naval Headquarters



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Monday visited Naval Headquarters (NHQ) here and called-on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf. During the meeting, matters about the Regional Maritime Security milieu and operational readiness of the Pakistan Navy were discussed, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

The naval chief apprised the minister on maritime challenges and the Pakistan Navy's preparedness to meet them. The minister was also briefed on the Pakistan Navy's future capability enhancement and modernization plans.

The minister took keen interest in details of recent acquisitions of state-of-the-art platforms and equipment which will further strengthen the seaward defence of the country. The minister also acknowledged the importance of the Pakistan Navy in safeguarding the maritime interests of the country. He assured that his ministry would make all efforts to meet the requirements of the Pakistan Navy despite the prevailing economic constraints. APP

## Ahsan Iqbal stresses upon peace, stability, reforms for national success

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday emphasized upon the crucial role of peace, political stability, policy continuity, and continuous reforms in achieving national success. Speaking at an event marking the International Day of Youth, organized by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, he stressed that these interconnected factors were vital for driving growth and prosperity in Pakistan, urging the youth to recognize the importance of a stable and peaceful environment for the country's progress. "This is not a matter of political ideology, but a question of the future and well-being of 240 million people and youth of Pakistan," he added.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed his belief that a stable government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, working towards a single agenda for the next five years, would empower the youth to surpass India in the race for success. He highlighted the focus areas of economy, agriculture, technology, industry, and exports, saying that single agenda approach would ultimately lead Pakistan to winning the 'gold medal' in progress and development.

## Muhammad Aurangzeb appreciate the PepsiCo's seed lab initiative & its impact in driving agricultural & overall economic growth

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with PepsiCo's CEO for Africa, ME & SA Eugene Willemssen accompanied by CEO Pakistan and Afghanistan Muhammad Khosa at Finance Division on Monday.

The Finance Minister welcomed Eugene Willemssen and provided an update on Pakistan's economic progress. He highlighted recent improvements, including increased foreign exchange reserves, decreased inflation, and stable currency. The Minister attributed these positive indicators to the successful completion of the nine-month stand-by arrangement (SBA) with the IMF and mentioned that a staff-level agreement (SLA) has been reached to ensure continued economic stability. The Federal Minister also spoke about ongoing reforms in the energy sector, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and taxation, emphasizing the government's initiative to incorporate undertaxed and untaxed entities into the tax net. He appreciated the PepsiCo's



seed lab initiative and its impact in driving agricultural and overall economic growth. Talking about the digitization in FBR, the Minister discussed the integrating RAAST (the digital payment system) and NADRA (the national database and registration authority) to further improve efficiency. Eugene Willemssen expressed appreciation for Pakistan's positive economic indicators and noted the growth in the financial sector. The meeting underscored the commitment of both parties to foster continued economic development and explore collaborative opportunities in Pakistan. APP

## Pakistan's Parliament championed critical legislation on gender violence, women empowerment: Speaker

### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday said the path to sustainable and inclusive development sans women empowerment and gender equality was elusive whereas the Parliament of Pakistan had championed critical legislation barring gender violence and supporting women empowerment in the country.

In his keynote address at the inaugural session of the two-day meeting of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) on 'Gender Empowerment and Green Economy', the Speaker underscored that the presence of high-level dignitaries depicted great leadership and partnership of regional parliamentarians in achieving gender equality and women empowerment goals.

As many as 15 Asian countries' parliamentarians and others from Pakistan,

diplomatic community, high level political figures, government officials, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), members of international donor organisations, and academia participated the event.

Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq lauded PM's aide Romina Khurshid Alam for her tireless efforts in organizing the international meeting with a very timely and pertinent agenda synchronized with the national sustainable development goals.

The parliament of Pakistan has played a crucial role in ensuring well guided legislation on gender equality, reproductive health, and established women caucus, youth parliamentarians committee, and other parliamentary forums for inclusive engagement of all stakeholders in policy making initiatives, he added.

"The Parliament of Pakistan became the first public building for securing net metering license to promote green economy and renewables. The Speaker



National Assembly's residence and the Parliament building were first converted over solar energy when there was no public building with solar power in the country," he mentioned. Pakistan, he said, had prepared billions of rupees project for solarization of Balochistan that would not only help reduce power leakages, but also ensure

renewable energy rollout in the biggest province of the country by territory. "Climate Change is a present reality affecting our day-to-day life. We are disproportionately affected due to increased intensity of disasters and violence against gender in the aftermath of climate catastrophes. The 2022 floods alone rendered \$30 billion in infrastruc-

ture losses and numerous precious lives lost in the devastation deluge," Speaker Ayaz Sadiq said. He underlined that women lack equal access to resources like land and finance despite generating 80% of the food globally, whereas the Parliament of Pakistan was mulling over a dedicated committee to look after women rights and develop-

ment status across the country. "Women have equal representation in parliamentary bodies where they are slightly performing well. However, there is zero tolerance against objectionable language against women and any other parliamentarian in the legislature," he said. He added that green economy was the pathway to economic justice and societal resilience and women were the stewards of environment and green initiatives at household levels. "We will use parliament's forum for youth and gender empowerment," he vowed. In her welcome remarks, Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam said the forum was a unique opportunity to redefine the region's approach towards sustainable development. development, she said was a transformation which was not possible without addressing societal inequalities mainly gender imbalance and women empowerment.

Continued on Page 4

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## Pakistan's youth power

DR LUAY SHABANEH

Three weeks ago, one of my colleagues introduced his son Talha to me; the 20-year-old with an otherwise slender frame, stood tall, eyes gleaming while telling me that he had just won a financial grant and student exchange program from the US embassy to pilot an innovative solution to save water in an era of climate change in Pakistan. Talha was one of six winners of an open call for innovative solutions for Pakistan's challenges. And he is one of 62 million young Pakistanis who hold immense potential and yearn for a chance to showcase their talent to help themselves and future generations in Pakistan if a proper chance is given to them.

Let us agree first that every young person in Pakistan has the potential for greatness, a revolution, and a dream beyond boundaries. But this very force might end up a potential threat to the country's current and future social fabric, security, and livelihood if Pakistan fails to harness their thriving potential. The current reality paints a bleak picture, where more than 26 million children in Pakistan remain out of school. This number represents a staggering 35 per cent of the population aged 5-16 years according to data from Census 2023; the Labour Force Survey 2020-21 further reveals that approximately 22 million youth are neither in education nor in training. A closer look at the situation of Pakistan's youth through the UN's global lens underscores a pressing need for development. The country ranks at 162 out of 182 countries on the Commonwealth Global Youth Development Index, and is 158th out of 177 countries on the Women, Peace and Security Index.

Comparing the 2017 and 2023 census statistics, with 70 per cent of Pakistan's population below the age of 30, the country adds roughly 3000 persons to the young population each day – three thousand opportunities, hopes, and challenges. Sadly, 27 per cent of these young people are illiterate with a stark gender gap as the illiteracy rate among women reaches 35 per cent. Education enrolment rates, with the gross intake at the primary level at 81 per cent, dropped considerably to 54 per cent in Balochistan.

The health landscape of young people in Pakistan is equally concerning where one in eight adolescent girls and one in five adolescent boys are underweight, and over half are anaemic. Only one in five married girls uses any form of family planning method; this is not by choice, but due to a lack of good services, autonomy, or knowledge. Statistics reveal that over 18 per cent of married girls below the age of 29 years have an unmet need for family planning and about a fifth of girls of aged 15 to 19 have already started childbearing. A distressing 26 per cent of girls (15-29 years) have been exposed to gender-based violence.

World leaders have long recognized the role young people play in building nations and driving global progress. The UN designated August 12 as the International Youth Day (IYD) to promote initiatives that foster peace, mutual respect and understanding by dedicating time and resources to empowering youth and equipping them with tools to address global challenges. The IYD serves as a forum for social education, encouraging youth involvement in politics, and facilitating the allocation of resources to address global concerns.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace, and security represents a landmark decision that shaped intervention to develop youth capacities, skills, and opportunities through five key pillars for action: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration. The UNSC 2250 resolution is a robust framework. The UNFPA's strategy, launched a decade ago, suggests that realizing the full potential of adolescents and youth shows a strong and unequivocal commitment to fulfilling the human rights of young people. In 2019, the UNFPA continued its commitment to the youth agenda through the landmark strategy of "my body, my life, my world" which puts young people – their talents, hopes, perspectives, and unique needs – at the heart of sustainable development. This is particularly relevant to the situation in Pakistan, where the social, economic, and environmental realities for young people have created one of the largest groups of marginalized and excluded people the world has ever seen.

UNFPA Pakistan, with the support of various donors, has supported several initiatives to empower and support young people. These initiatives include a comprehensive situation analysis of adolescents and youth and their reproductive health, embedding life skills-based education into the school curriculum, establishing a National Youth Helpline (0800 69457) in partnership with the Higher Education Commission, actively supporting youth-led platforms, and the development of youth-centred policies. The UNFPA is leading the coordination of the UN Country Team's collective approach to engaging and supporting the youth of Pakistan. If Pakistan chooses today to invest in its youth and adolescents, through their education, livelihoods, sexual and reproductive health, and civic participation, while upholding their human rights, the country will reap the fruits of a resilient, confident, and talented generation tomorrow. However, such investments require a collective commitment and the momentum of a united movement where everyone plays a part; government, youth-serving organizations, community-based organizations, parliamentarians, the private sector, international organizations, development partners, and most importantly young people themselves.

It is an opportune moment to rally communities, cities, and villages to work hand-in-hand with young people paving the way to a future where adolescent girls and boys seamlessly transition into productive adulthood. This path is built upon a foundation of education, good health, freedom from STIs and HIV, and protection from violence, unintended pregnancy, and unsafe abortions. Pakistan must become a nation where girls and boys are treated equally and where young people's human rights are championed and respected. This is the path toward a resilient, sustainable, and prosperous future for Pakistan.

The writer is the UNFPA representative in Pakistan.



Kamila Hyat

## Violence on the screen

We live in a violent society. There is little doubt about this given the number of crimes that take place on a daily basis. There have been incidents of violent crime across Karachi in particular and also in Punjab. In this situation, the addition of violence from computer games is a trend that simply adds to the violence in society and can in some cases lead to murder or abduction.

In February 2022, a teenage boy shot four members of his family, including his mother, two sisters and a brother according to police reports, after playing the battleground computer game PUBG, which is widely available on Xbox, computer screens, mobile phones and other devices. The game involves violence and has been said to cause psychological problems in some cases.

In 2021, a young man in Islamabad was reported to have murdered two of his friends after a dispute that originated while playing PUBG. In 2020, a 20-year-old man in Quetta reportedly committed suicide after being scolded by his family for excessive gaming. The family alleged that his addiction to PUBG led to his depression. The same year in Lahore, a 16-year-old boy took his own life after missing a mission in the game. Authorities cited the game as a contributing factor.

Of course, not all those who play the game are affected, but the consequences can be serious for those who are in some ways influenced by the content they see before them and their access to the game, which also allows 'players' to speak to

each other. Perhaps the best example of this is the extraordinary case of the teenager Dua Zehra. The child, who according to her parents, was aged between 13 and 14, apparently spoke to one of her opponents while playing PUBG on the computer screen. Her father had requested her not to continue these conversations with the unknown man and Dua took the conversations to different games. A child cannot be blamed in any way for such acts. According to the account of events told by her family and their lawyer, Jibran Nasir, the girl was asked by the young man with whom she was speaking to come outside her house at a certain time. She had gone out

of her house and was taken into the custody of the girl. They were in June this year allowed full custody of the girl who the court notes can make her choice in marriage once she is an adult at 18. It should be noted that the right of a Muslim girl to choose her partner in marriage was declared by the Supreme Court in 1996 when Asma Jehangir took up the case of Saima Waheed, the daughter of an influential cleric, who had married of her own very will and decided to leave her home with the man of her choice. The victory in the case meant that Saima and her husband, Arshad, were able to unite and eventually be taken abroad for their safety. But of course, Saima was 22

its detrimental effects on youth. However, this ban was short-lived and was lifted after further review. PUBG, according to experts, is addictive and can lead to changes in mental behaviour as well as psychological changes which affect the ability of a person to think rationally and to act in a manner that a normal human being would choose. The ability now available to reach out to other players through speakers makes the whole affair even more dangerous. Dua Zehra, it seems, came under the influence of a fellow player after playing PUBG for many hours. Similarly, the teenager who committed murders is said to have remained locked in his room for hours playing the game and coming to believe that those he shot would come alive once again as happened in this violent video game.

While the decision by the Sindh High Court in the Dua Zehra case is welcome and it is reassuring to many that the child has been returned to her parents after stating freely that she wished to go with them, there is a need to watch what children in particular as well as teenagers are consuming on the screen. There is after all a difference between children or minors and those who have reached the age of majority. There is an argument that this age should be the same across the country to save situations where victims such as Dua are taken to a different province. But there are many complexities here.

What is not complex however is that violent video games are dangerous and that all those who act in a supervisory capacity in some way should look out for the damage they can cause or the effects they are having on younger people.

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### Addition of violence from computer games is a trend that simply adds to violence in society

side late at night. The parents say that at the time they thought she had gone to throw out garbage from their home in Karachi. Instead Dua Zehra was apparently kidnapped and taken to Punjab. It is thought this may have been done because the age of marriage in Punjab stands at 16 years for girls and 18 for boys while in Sindh it is 18 for both genders. The parents of Dua Zehra fought a long battle for her recovery and return to the safety of her home. Initially Dua Zehra had stated before the Lahore High Court that she had married of her own free will. A medical examination at that time showed her age to be between 14 and 15 years. Some reports suggest she was placed nearer to 16 or 17. This fact has been contested fiercely in court as well as the manner in which the relevant tests were conducted. There has been a new development in the case with the matter taken to the Sindh High Court by the parents who were allowed tempo-

years old at the time, an adult and able to make judgments about her own future. Dua Zehra was merely a child with the Sindh High Court ordering a new medical examination which put her age at closer to 14 rather than beyond this. The message here is the violence that can be caused by video games of various kinds which are accessible to children and of course older persons across the country. PUBG has been banned in China. The dangers of PUBG have been discussed in other countries as well. In response to multiple cases linked to PUBG, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) temporarily banned the game in July 2020, citing its addictive nature and adverse impacts on players' mental health. The ban was lifted after a few weeks following public outcry and promises by the game's developers to address concerns. In March 2021, the Lahore High Court ordered the PTA to ban PUBG again, referencing

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

## Today in History

### History of Pakistan



A number of paramilitary groups, such as the fabled Khyber Rifles, are officially part of the army but frequently engage in security work, such as combating terrorists. The Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate is the country's largest intelligence collection body, and it has often been extremely successful in influencing government policy. Although Pakistan has made progress in improving health conditions, a large part of the population does not receive modern medical care. There are insufficient numbers of doctors and nurses, especially in rural areas. Sanitation facilities are also inadequate; only a small percentage of the population has access to safe drinking water and sanitary

sewage disposal facilities. Malaria, tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases, and intestinal diseases are among the leading causes of death. Drug addiction is an increasingly serious problem; although drug use is reported most commonly among urban literate males, many others (for whom documentation is more difficult to compile) are also abusers. Pakistan was among the first developing countries to establish a state-funded family planning program, which began in the early 1960s. The program ran into political difficulties in the late 1960s as a result of opposition by Islamic groups. The regimes of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Zia ul-Haq, and Benazir Bhutto gave

family planning a relatively low priority. Consequently, Pakistan's total fertility and population growth rates are relatively high by world standards—this despite the fact that infant and maternal mortality rates are also relatively high. The zakat and ushr taxes are used to provide social welfare funds, which go to provincial, division, and district committees for distribution among organizations engaged in social welfare activities or directly to needy persons. Zakat funds are also used for scholarships. The development of a number of non-governmental organizations in the country and the increasing use of private religious endowments to assist the needy have been increas-

ing. Those efforts have been most notable in the fields of education and basic health care. Existing housing stocks do not meet national needs, and demands for housing have far outpaced the ability of the economy to produce more living space. Sufficient housing, in fact, has not traditionally been a high priority of the government, although in 1987 it did establish a National Housing Authority with the goal of developing housing units for the country's burgeoning low-income population. However, such attempts were abandoned in the 1990s for want of adequate resources.

To be continued....

## Showbiz

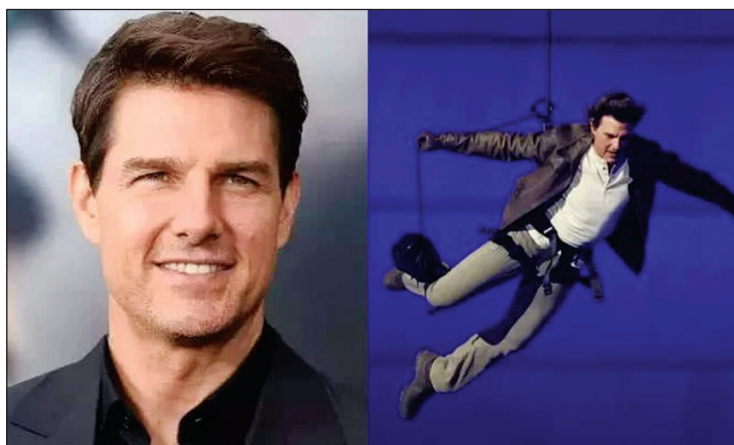
### Tom Cruise skydives into Olympic history during Paris 2024 closing ceremony

Tom Cruise performed a daring stunt to officially hand the flag over to Los Angeles for the 2028 ceremony

Tom Cruise brought his signature flair to the 2024 Paris Olympics closing ceremony that symbolised the transition to Los Angeles for the 2028 Games.

In a daring skydiving stunt on Sunday, August 11, the action star, 62, descended from the top of Stade de France before landing gracefully on the field. He was greeted by athletes and a rocking performance by H.E.R., who had just delivered the national anthem.

After receiving the Olympic flag from Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and gold-medal-winning gymnast Simone Biles, Cruise strapped it to the back of a motorcycle and sped off.



The Mission: Impossible actor then embarked on a cinematic journey to Hollywood via a pre-recorded video. The video showed Cruise weaving through the roads of Paris, driving past landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, and boarding a plane bound for Los Angeles.

Once in the City of Angels, Cruise skydived towards the iconic Hollywood sign, replacing its "O"s into Olympic rings before handing the flag off to Olympic cyclist Kate Courtney. Courtney, along with Olympians Michael Johnson and Jagger Eaton, continued the journey through L.A., eventually arriving at a Red Hot Chili Peppers concert on Venice Beach.

## Tech

### Elon Musk's X hit with data privacy concerns across Europe

Tech billionaire Elon Musk's social media platform, X, faces complaints over "unlawfully" feeding the personal data of users into its artificial intelligence (AI) technology without their consent.

The complaints were lodged against the social media platform on Monday by a Vienna-based privacy campaign group, called the European Center for Digital Rights which is also known as "None of Your Business" (Noyb), AFP reported.

The complaints come after Ireland's Data Protection Commission (DPC), earlier this month, took court action against X over its data collection practices to train its AI. According to Noyb, X had recently started "irreversibly feeding" the personal data of more than 60 million European users into its Grok AI technology, "without ever informing them or asking for their consent".

Noyb slammed X for "never proactively informing" its users that their data is being used for AI training, saying many people appeared to have "found out about the new default setting through a viral post on 26 July".

Last week, the DPC, acting on behalf of the European Union (EU), said that X had agreed to suspend its controversial processing of users' personal data for its AI technology.

However, Noyb founder Max Schrems criticised the DPC for not addressing the legality of the actual data processing and taking action "around the edges, not at the core of the problem". Noyb also warned about the fate of EU data that had already been processed. Calling for a "full investigation", Noyb has filed complaints in Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

## Health

### Colorectal cancer linked to 'western diet'

Colorectal cancer in young adults is increasing as scientists examine how high fat diets, which are low in fibre, can bring about changes in the digestive system raising the risk for early-onset colorectal cancer.

Leading to inflammation that ages cells faster and makes them more vulnerable to cancer. "Western diet" can disrupt the delicate balance of bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract, as per the researchers from Ohio State University, according to New York Post.

"Western diet" can disrupt delicate balance of bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract, say researchers

At the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in Chicago, they presented

their findings over the weekend.

The OSU scientists discovered that people with early-onset colorectal cancer were biologically 15 years older on average than their chronological ages. Moreover, late-onset colorectal cancer patients had similar biological and chronological ages.

Young people continue to get diagnosed around the world at startling rates, as researchers try to learn more about what causes early-onset colorectal cancer.



# لاہور ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب کا انعقاد

## لاہور ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب کا انعقاد

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) لاہور ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب کا انعقاد لاہور میں ہوا۔ وزیر اعظم عمران خان نے پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔ وزیر اعظم نے پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔ وزیر اعظم نے پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔ وزیر اعظم نے پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔

## چیف جسٹس کو توسیع اور مخصوص نشستوں کا فیصلہ نہ ماننے پر احتجاج کریں گے، بانی پی ٹی آئی

ہمارے حالات جنگلادیش سے زیادہ برے، ایکشن سے پہلے 9 مئی کے نام پر ہماری پارٹی کی مخالف کریک ڈاؤن کیا گیا۔ لاہور ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔ وزیر اعظم نے پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔ وزیر اعظم نے پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔

## بشری بی بی کی 12 مقدمات میں ضمانت کی درخواست خارج

راولپنڈی (پبلک رپورٹر) بشری بی بی کی 12 مقدمات میں ضمانت کی درخواست خارج کر دی گئی۔ بشری بی بی کی 12 مقدمات میں ضمانت کی درخواست خارج کر دی گئی۔ بشری بی بی کی 12 مقدمات میں ضمانت کی درخواست خارج کر دی گئی۔

## کسی کو اداروں کے خلاف منفی مہم چلانے کی اجازت نہیں دیں گے، محسن نقوی

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) وفاقی وزیر محسن نقوی نے کہا ہے کہ ریاست اداروں کے خلاف منفی مہم چلانے کی اجازت نہیں دیں گے۔ محسن نقوی نے کہا ہے کہ ریاست اداروں کے خلاف منفی مہم چلانے کی اجازت نہیں دیں گے۔

## جماعت اسلامی کو اتنے ووٹ نہیں ملے جتنے ہرنے دینے، علی بخاری

لاہور (پبلک رپورٹر) جماعت اسلامی کے سربراہ علی بخاری نے کہا ہے کہ جماعت اسلامی کو اتنے ووٹ نہیں ملے جتنے ہرنے دینے، علی بخاری نے کہا ہے کہ جماعت اسلامی کو اتنے ووٹ نہیں ملے جتنے ہرنے دینے۔

## راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار

راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار۔ راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار۔

## راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار

راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار۔ راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار۔

## راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار

راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار۔ راولپنڈی پولیس کی جرائم پیشہ افراد کی مختلف کارروائیوں میں 22 ملزمان گرفتار۔

## لاہور ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب کا انعقاد

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) لاہور ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب کا انعقاد لاہور میں ہوا۔ وزیر اعظم عمران خان نے پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔

## ملکی ترقی کیلئے نوجوانوں کو مواقع فراہم کرنا ہمارا فرض، صدر مملکت

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) صدر مملکت آصف علی زرداری نے کہا ہے کہ ملکی ترقی کیلئے نوجوانوں کو مواقع فراہم کرنا ہمارا فرض ہے۔



نوجوانوں کو ملکی ترقی کیلئے مواقع فراہم کرنا ہمارا فرض ہے، صدر مملکت آصف علی زرداری نے کہا ہے۔

## ایران کے نائب صدر جواد ظریف 10 روز بعد ہی مستعفی ہو گئے

تہران (پبلک رپورٹر) ایران کے نائب صدر جواد ظریف نے 10 روز بعد ہی مستعفی ہو گئے۔

## پاکستان کا اتوار متحہ کو خط لکھنے کا فیصلہ

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) پاکستان نے اتوار متحہ کو خط لکھنے کا فیصلہ کیا ہے۔

## غیر قانونی ہجرتوں کا رٹائرمنٹ، شاہد خاقان سمیت تمام ملزمان بری

لاہور (پبلک رپورٹر) لاہور ہائیڈرو پاور پراجیکٹ کی افتتاحی تقریب میں شرکت کی۔

## فیصلہ میں آئینی قہر نہیں کما عدالت کی جگہ چھٹیں عقیل کا اختیاراتی نوٹ

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) فیصلہ میں آئینی قہر نہیں کما عدالت کی جگہ چھٹیں عقیل کا اختیاراتی نوٹ۔

## اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) فیصلہ میں آئینی قہر نہیں کما عدالت کی جگہ چھٹیں عقیل کا اختیاراتی نوٹ

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) فیصلہ میں آئینی قہر نہیں کما عدالت کی جگہ چھٹیں عقیل کا اختیاراتی نوٹ۔

## اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) فیصلہ میں آئینی قہر نہیں کما عدالت کی جگہ چھٹیں عقیل کا اختیاراتی نوٹ

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) فیصلہ میں آئینی قہر نہیں کما عدالت کی جگہ چھٹیں عقیل کا اختیاراتی نوٹ۔

## یوم آزادی، صدر مملکت نے قیدیوں کی سزائیں 90 روز کی کر دی

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) صدر مملکت آصف علی زرداری نے یوم آزادی کے موقع پر قیدیوں کی سزائیں 90 روز کی کر دی۔



اسلام آباد، وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف نوجوانوں کے عالمی دن کے موقع پر منعقدہ تقریب میں نوجوان طلباء سے بات چیت کر رہے ہیں۔

## نوجوان کل کے رہنما، ہمارے ملک کا روشن مستقبل تشکیل دینگے، شہباز شریف

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف نے کہا ہے کہ نوجوان کل کے رہنما، ہمارے ملک کا روشن مستقبل تشکیل دینگے۔

## بااختیار نوجوان انفرادی ترقی کیساتھ ملک کی وسیع تر سماجی اور اقتصادی ترقی میں اپنا کردار ادا کریں گے، وزیر اعظم

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف نے کہا ہے کہ بااختیار نوجوان انفرادی ترقی کیساتھ ملک کی وسیع تر سماجی اور اقتصادی ترقی میں اپنا کردار ادا کریں گے۔

## کوہ پیامرد اور پارہ بڑاؤ بیک سر کرنے کے بعد چان کی بازی ہار گئے

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) کوہ پیامرد اور پارہ بڑاؤ بیک سر کرنے کے بعد چان کی بازی ہار گئے۔

## مری میں داخلے کیلئے ڈرائیونگ لائسنس، فٹنس سرٹیفکیٹ ہونا لازمی، بینش فاطمہ

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) مری میں داخلے کیلئے ڈرائیونگ لائسنس، فٹنس سرٹیفکیٹ ہونا لازمی، بینش فاطمہ نے کہا ہے۔

## 750 سے زائد ٹریفک انصران واپس لے کر ترقی دہلی کی سڑکیں

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) 750 سے زائد ٹریفک انصران واپس لے کر ترقی دہلی کی سڑکیں۔

## انٹرویو شروع، 20 ستمبر تک کیلئے حکومت آسٹری، شیخ رشید

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) انٹرویو شروع، 20 ستمبر تک کیلئے حکومت آسٹری، شیخ رشید نے کہا ہے۔

## اسلامی ترقیاتی بینک سے پاکستان کو 50 کروڑ ڈالر قرض ملے گا

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) اسلامی ترقیاتی بینک سے پاکستان کو 50 کروڑ ڈالر قرض ملے گا۔

## اسلامی ترقیاتی بینک سے پاکستان کو 50 کروڑ ڈالر قرض ملے گا

اسلام آباد (پبلک رپورٹر) اسلامی ترقیاتی بینک سے پاکستان کو 50 کروڑ ڈالر قرض ملے گا۔

## Consul General Al-Romaithi praises Arshad Nadeem's success, calls it source of pride for Muslim community



ISLAMABAD: United Arab Emirates (UAE) Consul General Bakheet Ateeq Al-Romaithi in Karachi praised the victory of Pakistani athlete Arshad Nadeem, terming his success a triumph for the entire Muslim community and noted that Arshad's achievement brought joy not only to Pakistan but also to the people of the UAE. In an interview with a private news channel on Monday, he highlighted the strong bonds of solidarity and shared celebration between the two nations. The two countries have a long history of cooperation and mutual support, with the UAE being one of Pakistan's largest trading partners and a significant source of foreign investment, he remarked.

He underscored the deep cultural and people-to-people ties between the two nations, which go beyond mere diplomatic relations.

Responding to a query, he explained that Pakistan has played a pivotal role in the UAE's development and progress, with Pakistani professionals and workers contributing significantly to the country's growth and prosperity. From the early days of the UAE's formation to the present day, Pakistanis have been instrumental in shaping the country's infrastructure, economy, and society, he acknowledged.

He said that the Pakistan-UAE trade volume has surpassed a record \$8 billion, a testament to the robust economic ties between the two countries. This significant milestone highlights the growing bilateral trade and investment cooperation, with the UAE emerging as one of Pakistan's largest trading partners, he added. He highlighted that the increasing trade volume results from the strong economic bonds and strategic partnerships between Pakistan and the UAE, with both countries exploring new avenues for collaboration and mutual benefit. To another query, he said the UAE has consistently demonstrated its commitment to supporting the Pakistani nation, with the country always opening its doors to welcome Pakistani citizens.

## Gilani mourns tragic death of mountaineer Murad Sadpara

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Monday expressed profound sorrow and grief over the tragic death of renowned mountaineer Muhammad Murad Sadpara. In his condolence message, the Chairman acknowledged the significant contributions of Muhammad Murad Sadpara to the field of mountaineering, said, "We deeply mourn the loss of a national hero who brought immense pride to Pakistan on the world stage." Gilani extended his heartfelt condolences to the family of Muhammad Murad Sadpara, offering prayers for the elevation of the late mountaineer's soul and for patience and strength for his loved ones to endure this immense loss. APP



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police and law enforcement agencies conducting a flag march in connection with Independence Day security. Flag march started from the sports complex and passed through different areas of the city and ended back at the sports complex in the Federal Capital. ONLINE

## Pakistan committed to protection of minorities' rights, ensure equal opportunities: President

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday reiterated that Pakistan was committed to protection of the rights of minorities and provision of equal opportunities to them to excel in every walk of life as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan.

Addressing a ceremony to mark the celebrations of Minorities' Day at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said, "Under the Constitution and under the onus of oath of my office, I have the duty to protect all rights of the minorities and provide all kind of facilitation".

He said that the objective behind the observance of Minorities' Day at the official level was to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the members of different communities living in Pakistan.

The president further stressed upon enhancement of jobs opportunities for the minorities in different government's departments on merit basis besides, increasing the existing jobs quota. Lauding the role of the minorities in the national progress and prosperity, he said that they were the equal citizens of Pakistan and future builders of the nation.

upon the significance of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision, the president said they were required to fully emulate his



message aimed at fostering unity, brotherhood and religious tolerance in society. The event arranged by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony was attended by members of parliament, ulema, religious leaders, members of the diplomatic corps, media and representatives from different minorities. Comparing the current situation in India, the president said "Modi's India is not a safe haven for the minorities," and lauded Quaid's farsightedness and leadership who had realized the future fate of minorities in India. President Zardari said the people of Pakistan always felt the pains of sufferings of humanity and for those lying lowly in society and accorded due respect and space to all the minorities living here because such a message of human consideration had been embedded in their religion and culture. He also recited a verse of famous Sindhi poet, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, in this regard

to emphasize his point of view. While recollecting the events of Pakistan Movement, he said that his father in his youth took active part for the creation of Pakistan. President Zardari referring to the ongoing Israeli aggression in Gaza, said that atrocious and indiscriminate strikes were targeting all Palestinians and people from different faiths. Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain felicitated the minorities on the observance of national day and said that all communities living in the country enjoyed religious freedom and were bonded with affection, tolerance, peace and brotherhood. He underlined that they were ought to spread this message across the globe. Citing different constitutional articles, he said minorities' rights had been guaranteed under the constitutional provisions, besides the Islamic teachings had also laid emphasis upon such rights.

## BISP, PSDF discuss progress on skill training programme

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and Punjab Skill Development Fund (PSDF) held an important meeting at BISP Headquarters to discuss the progress of the BISP Skill Training Programme.

The meeting was attended by Chairperson of BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid, Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad and CEO of PSDF, Ahmed Khan.

The meeting focused on the progress of the Skill Training Programme, which aims to provide skill development opportunities to BISP beneficiaries and their family members across various trades.

Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the importance of offering top-quality training courses that are recognized internationally.

She pointed out that such training could help beneficiaries find jobs abroad, improving their economic situation and allowing them to contribute to the country's economy.

She also mentioned the increasing need for skilled workers in areas like hospitality management, home care, and receptionist roles. She stressed that trainees should learn basic work ethics and hygiene practices. Ahmad Khan assured full support from PSDF in providing assistance for the skill training of BISP beneficiaries and their family members. He reiterated PSDF's commitment to ensuring the success of this programme.

## OGDCL announces commencement of production from Pakistan's first-ever tight gas project

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Monday announced the successful commencement of early commercial production of Tight Gas from Pakistan's first-ever Tight Gas project, Nur West Well-1 at the Nur Development & Production Lease (D&PL), located in the Sujawal district of Sindh.

According to press release, the Nur West Well-1 is currently producing 1.5 million Standard Cubic Feet per Day (MMSCFD) of gas with a wellhead flowing pressure of 1050 PSI.

The gas is sourced from the Lower Guru formation ('A' Sand) and has been seamlessly integrated into the Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) network. This integration will strengthen the national gas supply infrastructure and contribute to the stability of Pakistan's energy supply.

During drilling, initial conventional testing methods did not provide favorable results, consequently, the hydraulic fracturing technique was employed to achieve production viability.

This innovative approach underscores OGDCL's commitment to exploring and developing advanced techniques to maximize resource potential. OGDCL has formulated a comprehensive Tight Gas exploration and development roadmap, which is currently under implementation.

This roadmap reaffirms the company's commitment to expanding energy resources, securing national energy requirements, and promoting sustainable development across Pakistan. APP



ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Yahya, United Nations Residence Coordinator in Pakistan calls on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema. INP

## Pakistan's Parliament championed...

Continued from Page 1

"It's imperative to recognize women's dual role as the most impacted due to climate change and the main driver of sustainable development. We will have to move towards more equitable and sustainable society," she added. Romina Khurshid highlighted that Pakistan has developed a new reformed agenda under its green vision with out of the box initiatives like Living Indus Initiative and Recharge Pakistan. Recharge Pakistan, she said, involved women through training and employing for managing wetlands. "Pakistan is working on managing GLOFs, integrated resource management, climate smart agriculture that are generating millions of jobs particularly for women in the rural areas," she added.

The legacy of late Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto for the AFPPD forum held in Cairo 1994 served as a proactive policy for Pakistan, she added. "When women are empowered then communities are more resilient. It's our duty to legislate and ensure opportunities for women in green economy. Our government is working to provide education for women to benefit green economy. Pakistan is committed to play active role in this regional dialogue," she said. Secretary General, AFPPD, Dr Jetn Siranthurant and Member of the Parliament, Thailand in his special remarks said the Assembly of AFPPD have been playing an active role in SDGs implementation role with a priority focus on gender equality which was not the fundamental need of human life but also crucial for sustainable development and green society.

He added that traditional stereotypes were leading to gender inequalities for women and special groups, whereas countries with greater gender equality perform well in the development goals. "Gender equality and women empowerment are a catalyst to development. Women in politics, economy, gender equality

and other areas need equal representation and Thailand has developed great models in this regard," he added.

Minister of State for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan, Toshiko Abe in her guest remarks said the ICPD programme of action and sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030 agenda could not be achieved without gender equality and women empowerment.

"Worldwide gender equality and diversity are recognized as beneficial for economy and departments. But women lack role in decision making forums globally, whereas access to education and girls' empowerment is important," Abe underscored.

She added that the Asia Pacific region made progress in addressing gender equality but it was uneven. However, the AFPPD has important role in gender equality improvement through better legislations in the member states, she said.

Deputy Representative UNFPA Pakistan, Latika Maskey Pradhan said since the member states and partner organisations were celebrating 30 years of Cairo Programme framework of ICPD 1994, the crises and risks indicated then were still relevant as girls and women still faced violence and discrimination in different areas of life. "Investing in youth, women education, skill development, and economic empowerment of women is essential for enhancing women's autonomy and role in decision making which is the only roadmap for leaving no one behind," Pradhan said.

In her closing remarks, Dr Tabinda Sarosh, interim CEO Pathfinder said women vulnerability in the frame of climate change was growing as 2022 Floods alone affected over 600,000 pregnant women. "Today is the international day of youth and the independence day is also ahead. We vow to increase our preparedness in enhancing resilience of women with active youth engagement," she added.

## CDA Chairman for early completion of Margalla Road, Jinnah Convention Center project

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Mohammad Ali Randhawa, on Monday conducted a site visit to the ongoing construction and widening project of Margalla Road (Bari Imam) portion and the renovation work at Jinnah Convention Center. During his visit to Margalla Road, Chairman Randhawa was briefed on the project's progress, which has been affected by the recent heavy monsoon rains.

Despite the challenges, 70% of the base work on the southern carriageway has been completed, while 1 km of base work on the northern carriageway has been finished. Randhawa directed the concerned authorities to accelerate the pace of work on the project. The Margalla Road project, which had been stalled since 2008, was restarted on the instructions of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. Once completed, the construction of this portion of Margalla Avenue is expected to significantly improve traffic flow in the city.

## Dutch envoy calls on Defence Minister, express willingness for constructive bilateral ties

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Henny Fokel De Vries called on Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif here Monday and expressed her willingness to promote constructive bilateral ties in various sectors. The Federal Minister emphasized that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Republic of Netherlands and wants to further enhance defence collaboration, a news release said.

Latest security situation along Pak-Afghan border and Pakistan's commitment to peace and stability in the region came under discussion. He also impressed upon Pakistan's commitment to eradication of terrorism in all its forms



and manifestations. Both sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and explored various possibilities of further strengthening political, economic ties with focus on global and regional issues.

## SC reinstates ECP's decision for re-counting in NA-154, 81, 79

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday reinstated the decision of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for vote re-counting in three constituencies of National Assembly (NA).

A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justices Naem Akhtar Afghan and Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi announced the verdict pertaining to recount in three constituencies including NA-154, NA-81, and NA-79. The judgment was announced with a majority of 2 to 1 with a dissenting note by Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi.

In a 47-pages judgment authored by the CJP, the court said "the judgments/orders passed by the LHC in the aforesaid writ petitions do not suffer from any factual errors or legal infirmity, therefore, don't require any interference by this court, under Article 185(3) of the constitution. Accordingly, the above civil petitions are dismissed and leave to appeal refused.

The detailed judgment said, "It is also admitted that in respect of three of the constituencies applications to recount

the ballot papers were submitted on 9 February 2024 and in respect of one on 10 February 2024."

It said, "The legislature, however, had made a significant change (on 5 August 2023) in section 95(5) of the Elections Act, which was to take away the discretion vesting in the Returning Officer when considering an application seeking recount of the ballot papers."

The court said, "When the writ petitions were filed before the High Court the amended section 95(5) was in place. However, the significance of the changes made in section 95(5) were not considered by the learned Judges of the High Court."

It said that the court has already declared in its judgments that the election conflicts could only be challenged before election tribunal and that generally in an election process the High Court cannot interfere with by invoking its Constitutional jurisdiction in view of Article 225 of the Constitution. However, this is subject to an exception that where no legal remedy is available to an aggrieved.

The verdict said, "The Returning Officer of one constituency noted on the

application on 10 February 2024 that, "The application regarding recount the votes is not maintainable but without stating the reason why it was not maintainable."

The petitioner challenged the RO's order by filing a petition on 11 February 2024 before the Commission. The RO in its report stated that "the application for recount was received at my office before consolidation," but he could not recount the ballot papers 'because of law and order situation created by the returned candidate.'

The order said, "In respect of another constituency, the RO acknowledged receipt of the application to recount on 9 February 2024, but stated he could not undertake a recount because 'a huge number of political workers gathered outside the office of the undersigned and climbed the walls of the premises. A similar response was given regarding the third constituency. Regarding another constituency, the RO responded that he had rejected the petitioner's application because 'the difference between the returned candidate and the applicant is 3557, the court noted.

The judgment said, "The ROs cannot

surrender their powers to mob rule nor can forego their statutory duty to recount. If this is accepted it would create a very dangerous precedent and render the law regarding recounting meaningless by those resorting to lawlessness. This would also deprive the candidate seeking recount of the ballot papers of this statutory right/remedy. The rights and remedies which the law grants cannot be negated."

The order said, "The High Court's jurisdiction under Article 199 of the Constitution can only be invoked if a petitioner is an 'aggrieved' person. It is not understandable how anyone can be stated to be aggrieved if the ballot papers are recounted."

The verdict further said, "Its Article 218(3) mandates that it is the duty of the commission to organize and conduct elections, and to conduct them honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with the law." It said, "The Election Commission is a constitutional body and its Chairman and Members are entitled to respect. Unfortunately, at places some learned Judges of the High Court lost sight of this and passed derisive remarks." APP