



Our excellent and marvelous performance has also been appreciated by the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs  
Kaiser Ahmad Sheikh

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## Security forces eliminate 8 terrorists in North Waziristan IBO

ISPR says operation was conducted on "reported presence" of terrorists on night between September 25-26



RAWALPINDI: At least eight terrorists have been killed after the security forces conducted an intelligence based operation (IBO) in general area Razmak of the North Waziristan District, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday.

According to the military's media wing, the operation was conducted on the "reported presence" of terrorists on the night between September 25 and 26.

"During conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and Khawarij, as a result of which, eight Khawarij were sent to hell," read the statement.

The ISPR added that the security forces also recovered weapons and ammunition from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as target killing of innocent civilians.

"Sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other Khawarij found in the area as security forces are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country," the media wing added. PR

## Ambassador of Saudi Arabia calls on Ishaq Dar



ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy called on the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. A wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest were discussed. The DPM/FM underlined the importance of deep-rooted and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He extended warm wishes and heartfelt on the occasion of the 94th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The DPM/FM appreciated the Kingdom's unwavering support to Pakistan on various international platforms.

The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to further strengthening the strategic partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. SABAH



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the sidelines of the UNGA.

## PM Shehbaz meets with Bill Gates, founder and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Bill Gates, founder and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on the sidelines of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 2024) Session.

Recalling Gates' recent visit to Pakistan in June this year, the Prime Minister thanked him for the invitation to visit the Gates Foundation in Seattle in December 2024. He also appreciated the Gates Foundation's engagement and support to Pakistan on polio eradication, maternal and child health, nutrition, immunization, digitization, and financial inclusion.

The Prime Minister highlighted Pakistan's unwavering commitment to ensure complete eradication of polio from the country. He thanked the BMGF for its longstanding support in this effort and underscored the need for sustained efforts and supports to Pakistan, particularly for health system strengthening and maternal and child nutrition in this regard. Acknowledging Pakistan's efforts Gates stressed polio eradication was vital to protect its future generations from this crippling disease. He appreciated the Prime Minister's personal supervision and engagement of the Provincial governments in the polio vaccine program across the country. Gates shared updates on a comprehensive Health Dialogue with Afghanistan and requested support for the initiative. He also communicated his willingness to focus more on the pockets where the number of missed children or refusal of polio

vaccines is higher especially where the morbidity of children is higher. Gates also shared with the Prime Minister on King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre's support for polio and other health relief-related initiatives. He

also shared with the Prime Minister BMGF's work on nutrition especially the micronutrients for pregnant women and how it can be increased by providing them additional vitamins in support of UNICEF APP

## Pakistan-UK agree to promote bilateral ties in various sectors



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and United Kingdom PM Rt. Hon. Sir Keir Starmer on Thursday agreed to further strengthen bilateral ties in various sectors especially trade and investment. During a meeting on the sidelines of 79th

Session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the two sides discussed matters of mutual interests and bilateral relations between the two countries.

The prime minister apprised his British counterpart of the country's current economic situation and the government's measures being taken for the development and growth of the country's economy especially the efforts made in implementing the FBR tax reforms and expanding the tax base. Additionally, PM Shehbaz Sharif also informed about the challenges Pakistan faced due to the adverse effects of climate change. He highlighted Pakistan's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, emphasizing that terrorism was a global issue that required collective action from the international community. The prime minister noted that the UK was the third-largest investor in Pakistan and discussed the investment opportunities and projects available in the country.

## Pakistan Navy celebrates World Maritime Day 2024



KARACHI: Pakistan Navy celebrated World Maritime Day (WMD) 2024, with this year's theme 'Navigating the Future: Safety First'. The year 2024 marks 50 years since the adoption of the 1974 International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention, the key IMO treaty regulating maritime safety. This day is observed annually to highlight the maritime sector's contribution to economic development and to raise awareness about the importance of shipping safety, maritime security, and marine environmental protection. The theme is closely linked with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG-7, which focuses on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy by facilitating access to clean energy research. Safety has always been a core value for the

Pakistan Navy. PN has instituted measures to uphold the "safety first" principle onboard all seagoing platforms as well as ashore. In his message on World Maritime Day, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf emphasized the need to align national objectives with the ongoing global shift towards sustainable and green maritime practices, demonstrating determination, commitment, and resolve. He underscored PN's efforts toward maritime safety, which remain a testament to its unwavering dedication, and reiterated Pakistan Navy's commitment to ensuring maritime safety and upholding environmental mandates.

On this occasion, Pakistan Navy organized a series of activities to emphasize the significance of maritime sector. Major events included seminars at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore, under the auspices of the Maritime Centre of Excellence (MCE) and the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA). Other activities across PN units included Maritime Gala at Pakistan Maritime Museum, awareness walks, showcasing banners/panaflexes, maritime awareness lectures at Bahria Colleges/Universities, and essay competitions at Field Commands. These events play an important role in enhancing maritime awareness among the public. PR

## Pakistan has enormous tourism potential, beautiful coastlines: Zardari

ISLAMABAD: In his message on World Tourism Day, President Asif Ali Zardari said, "Today, on World Tourism Day 2024, we celebrate the theme Tourism and Peace. Tourism serves as a powerful bridge that connects nations and promotes understanding among people from diverse cultures around the globe. As tourists explore different countries, they come across diverse cultures and traditions that help promote peace, harmony and goodwill worldwide." He said Pakistan has enormous tourism potential as it is blessed with spectacular landscapes, majestic mountains and peaks, vast deserts, and beautiful coastlines. This part of the region has a rich historical heritage as well as has been home to the Indus and Gandhara civilizations, making Pakistan an attractive destination for spiritual exploration and cultural discovery. The true tourism potential of Pakistan needs to be highlighted and I urge the media to play its role positively in this regard. He said tourism is a significant source of revenue, and to maximize its potential, we must prioritize the development of roads and tourism infrastructure.

## Pakistan intends to direct trade route to Tajikistan, road access to Central Asia



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan intends to have direct trade route to Tajikistan and road access to Central Asian countries for which corridor of China and Afghanistan may be under consideration. In this regard, Kurakram Highway, Khunjarab, Kashgar, Murghab and Dushanbe route will be utilized for two-way trade. This was discussed in the meeting of Minister of Transport of Tajikistan Azim Ibrahim and Minister for Communications, Board of Invest-

ment & Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan at Beijing, China as sideline meeting on the eve of Global Transport Forum.

Aleem Khan observed that Pakistan is ready for the meeting of Joint Ministerial Committee and Joint Working Group with Tajikistan. He welcomed the starting of direct flight between the two countries as a positive impact of his recent visit to Tajikistan in May. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that Pakistan wants to promote bilateral trade with all Central Asian countries for which more initiative will be taken.

He discussed to solve the problems being faced by trawlers and drivers going to Tajikistan.

He appreciated the ongoing Global Transport Forum in Beijing, China and said that this platform will promote communication and cooperation among Asian countries, in particular Tajik Transport Minister Azim Ibrahim expressed his good sentiments towards the people of Pakistan and appreciated the meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee under the leadership of Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan in May at Tajikistan.

## National Urban Planning Framework to help transform cities into engines of growth: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said the National Urban Planning Framework would help transform cities into engines of growth by providing effective governance, modern planning, efficient mass transit systems and enhanced security. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting on the National Urban Planning Framework in Islamabad, attended by Parliamentary Secretary Wajaha Qamar, Additional Secretary for Planning, members of the Plan-

ning Commission and senior officials from various departments, a news release said. Addressing the meeting, the minister said the framework aimed to ensure that Pakistan's urban centers become "livable cities" that supported sustainable development.

Highlighting the growing challenges posed by rapid urbanization and population growth, Ahsan Iqbal stressed the need for improved land management, zoning and expert urban planning to address these issues.

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has called for fundamental economic reforms to make the current International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme the last one for the country. In an interview with Voice of America (VOA) after the approval of IMF loan

program, the finance minister said that transformation of the economy into an export-driven one necessitates structural reforms, only then could the country move forward in the next three years. It should be mentioned here that IMF board on Wednesday approved the 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme of \$7 billion for Pakistan and has authorized the immediate release of the first tranche of about \$1 billion.

Muhammad Aurangzeb said that the friendly countries have assured financial support to meet the financial needs through the new IMF program. The government had no choice but to implement economic reforms, which included bringing sectors currently

outside the tax net into the fold, he added. The finance minister said that the burden on salaried and manufacturing classes would be reduced and highlighted the need to bring into tax net the retailers, wholesalers, agriculture, and property sectors.

Despite a 29% increase in revenues last year, the tax-to-GDP ratio remained at 9%, which was insufficient to stabilize any country's economy, he observed.

Muhammad Aurangzeb mentioned that the government was abolishing the term "non-filer" and will impose restrictions on tax evaders, limiting their ability to conduct various activities. He noted that the government pos-

esses data on individuals' lifestyles, including the number of vehicles owned, international travel, and other expenditures. This information will enable the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to bring tax evaders into the tax net without arrest, he added.

The finance minister said Pakistan's undocumented economy has been valued at Rs.9 trillion, which needed to be documented.

Senator Aurangzeb said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif believed that business should be handled by the private sector and not by the government. To achieve this, the cabinet's privatization committee has advanced the privatization process of government institutions to its final stages, he added. INP

## Finance Minister calls for reforms to make current IMF programme last one

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## Desi ghee, prayers, and Olympic glory

SANA MAHMUD AND ALI KHAYAM

Arshad Nadeem's historic Javelin throw stayed in the air for a few seconds, but it carried the hopes and aspirations of 240 million people. He has given Pakistan a victory of the century by winning the country's first-ever individual Olympic Gold Medal. But most importantly, he has given us a legendary Olympic story to tell the next generation of Pakistani children. "There was once a boy from a small village in Punjab, who decided to pursue his love for the game... never realizing that he would change the course of history along the way. For the first time in a long time, a nation crippled by despair was daring to dream..." This is the story that millions will grow up hearing. A story of resilience. A story celebrating hard work. A story of competition and friendship. Of brothers across borders. Of beating the odds. A story that makes people proud to be Pakistani. While awe-inspired by the tale of this young man, the children will interrupt the storytelling to ask why a nation of millions of people had to wait 40 years to win an Olympic medal. As we acknowledge and celebrate Arshad Nadeem's commitment, consistency and excellence in his sport, let's be careful narrating the story of a man who proved that desi ghee and a mother's prayers were greater than access to world-class training and equipment. Because while Nadeem did exactly that, this version of his story absolves the state and the sports governing bodies of their basic responsibilities towards athletes and the development of the game. As we let the simple, humble and likable Nadeem into our hearts, grateful for being a beacon of hope in dark times, let's not forget to ask the officials responsible why there aren't more Arshad Nadeems in the making. Because, as Nadeem and other Pakistani athletes have proven, it is their work ethic, courage, and passion to play, despite poor conditions and inconsequential financial incentives, that has led to their success. The country has been gifted with child prodigies and athletes who built themselves. Female athletes like squash champions Maria Toorpakai Wazir and Noorena Shams, or Karatekas Kulsoom and Nargis Hazara, paved their own paths where access to safe sports spaces and quality training for women was negligible. When Kiran Khan, the Olympian swimmer failed to qualify during the heats at the London Olympics, we criticized her abilities, while never taking a moment to look around and ask, "Where can Pakistani women swim?" The Pakistan Olympic Association's social media boasts that the swimmers in this year's Olympic contingent "have been training abroad, managing their training voluntarily, without public funding". Instead of asking why these athletes would feel the need to support their own training, we are glorifying their out-of-pocket expense, yet again absolving the state of its duties to develop talent. So, as we celebrate Arshad Nadeem's story, let's not forget about the many others who have been inspired to follow suit—the motivated Pakistani boys and girls asking: 'How can I become the next Arshad Nadeem?' And this is a critical moment in history to raise all these important questions. Owing to Arshad's miracle moment in Paris, there is a momentum where sport seems to be the priority of the state and policymakers. According to various news sources, the prime minister has announced a sports endowment fund of Rs1 billion. The Sindh and Punjab Governments have announced the establishment of athletics academies. While these are all welcome announcements, it is important not to become distracted by short-term pledges that may or may not be actualized and focus on how to purposefully guide this national frenzy into meaningful policymaking to transform the culture around sports in the country. This is critical so that we don't have to wait another 40 years for our next Olympic gold medal.

To start with, equitable and inclusive access to sports facilities for all children must be ensured at all levels. A chronic lack of public-sector spending on developing sports infrastructure at the school level has resulted in millions of children and young people growing up without playing any sports and developing the essential motor skills that are needed for athletic excellence at later stages. And if we look deeper, the problem is not the mere absence of sporting facilities but improper and inefficient management. The existing infrastructure, in most cases, becomes unplayable due to encroachments or poor maintenance and upkeep. Community ownership and participation are essential, a simpler and more practical way forward is to encourage public-private partnership to manage sports facilities. A fundamental change needed is to establish a progressive and broad-spectrum sports policy. Since sports is a devolved subject, sports and education ministries at the provincial level, must either be merged or work in close coordination, increasing their annual allocation of funds for grassroots-level sports, backed up by structured and robust coaching and physical education programs at all public schools. It is high time that the several sports federations and associations in the country are reformed and regulated. These federations, most of which have turned into fiefdoms of retired bureaucrats, are in dire need of reforms and restructuring. Coaching, nutrition, the emotional wellbeing of athletes—all these important subjects have become science and are to be taken accordingly. The right government investment would be to develop high-impact coaching programmes, engaging young people and creating a pool of highly trained and professional sports coaches. And lastly, and most importantly, no country can achieve excellence in sports without giving equal access and opportunities to women and girls. We must ensure inclusive and culturally appropriate sports facilities for all women and girls in this country. Women's sports should be seen and treated at par with men's sports which is not possible without intentional efforts and investment into the development of female sports. Arshad Nadeem has done his part. He deserves to be celebrated and should revel in the glory that he has brought to this whole country. It's time for the state to do its part.

Sana Mahmud is the former captain of Pakistan's national football and basketball teams. She currently works as the Global Program Manager at the international non-profit 'Free to Run'. She can be reached at: sanamahmud113@gmail.com. Ali Khayam is a Sport for Development practitioner and works as the Pakistan country director of the Right To Play International. He can be reached at: akhayam@righttoplay.com



Abdul Sattar

# Did reason fail or 'men of reason'?

The age of reason, rationality, and science, a gift of the European Renaissance, seems under attack from critics who argue that the modern world has not lived up to mankind's expectations. Despite major advancements, anti-modernity intellectuals point to ongoing hunger, starvation, and senseless conflicts that lead to humanitarian crises, environmental destruction, and disease. Meanwhile, those who condemn the Medieval Age as one of ignorance and superstition cite the debauchery of the Papacy, the Crusades' fanaticism, the Inquisition's horrors, and the clerics' and kings' tyrannies. They argue that modernity rescued humanity from barbarism, promoting science, technology, and exploration. The modern age drastically reduced hunger and disease, wiping out plagues like the Justinian plague and the Black Death, which had annihilated over one-third of Europe's population in the 14th century. This is not the first time the Age of Reason has faced criticism. Many intellectuals have questioned the rationality behind romanticizing modernism. For instance, Christian priests who witnessed the brutalities of Latin American colonization were among the first to highlight the greed of the colonizers. Jean-Jacques Rousseau condemned the rising bourgeoisie's destructive appetite, which intensified class divisions across Europe. The Frankfurt School also challenged the belief that modernity solely brought blessings. Critics argue that the modern age also brought horrors, including geno-

cides, subjugation, and brutal slavery. According to Howard Zinn, over 45 million indigenous people were killed, and American scholar Roy Casandra claims the toll could exceed 115 million. Even conservative estimates suggest over 80 per cent of the population was decimated by genocide and diseases, for which explorers' policies are often blamed. They did not stop there but expanded this brutal model of colonial subjugation to other regions, bringing Africa, Asia, and beyond under their control. Their policies are said to have caused over 135 million deaths in places like India, the Belgian Congo, Algeria, and China. Between 1937 and 1945, Japan is accused of killing over 10 million in China, Indonesia, Korea, and the Philippines, including Western POWs. The desire to dominate led Western elites to control over 35 per cent of the world pre-Industrial Revolution, and by 1945 to control 85 per cent. This race for land, resources, and markets triggered the Napoleonic wars, the scramble for Africa, and two world wars. World War I took over 20 million lives, while the apocalyptic World War II resulted in the death of more than 70 million. Such appalling killings by 'men of reason and enlightenment' can only be compared with the massacres of over 37 million people, who were slaughtered by the barbarian Mongols. The Mongols, who decimated 10 per cent of the world's population through these brutal onslaughts, can be dismissed as hordes of savages, devoid of all civility and principles of civilizations. But what would we say about the scientists of the modern world who invented nuclear bombs that not only incinerated hapless souls in Hiroshima and Nagasaki but threaten to wipe us out today? What rational arguments can we offer to justify this self-annihilation or collective suicide of humanity and humankind? As if the destruction in these two wars were not enough, since 1945 the world has witnessed more than 280 wars, civil conflicts and military skirmishes—killing three million in the Korean War, five to seven million in Vietnam while several other millions were also slaughtered in the killings fields of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Bosnia, Laos, Cambodia, Rwanda and other parts of the world. It is not surprising that many tribes that we consider barbarians or savages did not even have the very words for private property, war, greed and subjugation in their dictionary while several other tribes in the Americas and other parts of the world managed to maintain peace for a long time. For instance, the Iroquois tribal confederation managed to live in peace for 300 years through talks and dialogues while we are even finding it hard to douse the flames of war in Ukraine and the Middle East. This is despite the fact that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has prompted scientists to fear the specter of a nuclear holocaust. It might be argued that perhaps it is not science or the Age of Reason that is to be blamed but the use of these modern phenomena that should be held responsible for problems like hunger and starvation which should have been a thing of the past by now. It is asserted that the Age of Reason basically talked about the larger good of humanity. The age wanted us to be rid of the shackles of superstition that was the order of the day during the Middle Ages. It wanted to universalize knowledge by putting everything at the door of common sense. But where do we see the common sense of the 'modern man' when the US and other powers pumped trillions of dollars into arms and militaries just to ensure the mutual annihilation of the countries involved? Does our reluctance to come up with 50 billion euros to mitigate the consequences of the damage to the ozone layer reflect any common sense when at the same time we are spending close to \$2 trillion on military and defence? We don't have five billion dollars to wipe out extreme poverty from Africa but can spend trillions of dollars on marketing and advertising, private jets of the elites and weddings of the super-rich. We are doling out trillions of dollars in bailout packages but cannot provide millions of people with decent housing, free education and sources of livelihood. The goal of the Enlightenment was to extend prosperity and progress to the vast majority of humanity but prosperous states worldwide can still be counted on our fingers with the wealth of 5000 rich people of the world greater than what over four billion people own/possess. So, if reason has not failed, then at least the 'men of reason and rationality' must be in the dock and answer these crucial questions.

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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



But while Sharif was prepared to honour the more devout members of the religious community, he could not ignore his dependency on Pakistanis in the commercial and banking world. In the end, the prime minister could not meet the expectations of his different constituencies, and his coalition crumbled. Sustained civil disobedience, acts of lawlessness, and failed economic policies produced dissatisfaction. Despite the collapse of the communist regime in Kabul in 1992, conditions in Afghanistan remained unstable, and the Pakistani military sought to restore order by supporting an ultraconservative religious regime—soon known as the Taliban—that came to dominate most

of strife-torn Afghanistan. Relations between the prime minister, president, and army remained problematic. Nawaz Sharif had replaced army chief of staff Baig with Gen. Asif Nawaz in 1991; but when Asif Nawaz died suddenly and somewhat mysteriously two years later, Ishaq Khan took it upon himself to appoint Lieut. Gen. Abdul Waheed Kakar his successor, without consulting the prime minister. A struggle ensued between Nawaz Sharif and Ishaq Khan, with Sharif arguing the need to eliminate the viceregal powers of the president. In April 1993, before Sharif could act, Ishaq Khan struck back. Using his constitutional powers, the president dismissed the Sharif government and again dissolved the national assembly. Sharif appealed to the Supreme Court, claiming the president had acted arbitrarily and contrary to constitutional principle. The court unexpectedly agreed with Sharif's petition and ruled that the prime minister should be reinstated. Challenged by the unprecedented court action and acknowledging that both Sharif and Ishaq Khan had lost their credibility, the army again intervened and convinced both men that it would be in the country's interest for them to resign their respective offices in July. With both the presidency and the prime minister's office vacant, it was the army that ensured a smooth transition to still another caretaker government. Senate chairman Wasim Sajjad assumed the office of president, and Moeen Qureshi, a former World Bank official living in New York City, agreed to act as caretaker prime minister. The Moeen Qureshi administration proved to be a unique experience in the history of Pakistan. With full support from the country's armed forces, the caretaker prime minister moved quickly to implement reforms that included devaluing the Pakistan rupee (the national currency), exposing corrupt practices in and outside government, and demanding that monies owed the government be paid forthwith. Qureshi cracked down on the granting of public land to politicians, on the failure to pay utility bills, and on loan defaulters, who were estimated to number in the thousands.

To be continued....

## Showbiz

### Katy Perry shares surprising encounter with Madonna

Katy Perry credits Madonna for inspiring her latest album



Katy Perry recently opened up about her experience meeting Madonna on the Australian TV show The Project. Perry recalled, "Madonna was super nice, but it wasn't easy to get her tick of approval." She explained, "Well, it took a minute because she was testing me. And then she became super nice to me." Although Perry didn't elaborate on the specifics of Madonna's "test," she expressed gratitude for the Queen of Pop's eventual support. "She just does her Madonna thing," Perry said. "She would invite me to a party and we had to do a photoshoot together, which was amazing. She's the greatest." Perry credited Madonna as an inspiration for her latest album, 143. "I owe this album to her," Perry stated, highlighting Madonna's influence on her work.

## Tech

### OpenAI top exec Mira Murati bids farewell to ChatGPT maker

OpenAI's former chief technology officer, Mira Murati, announced her departure from the ChatGPT maker on Wednesday, followed by the departure of two other top executives of artificial intelligence firm. According to media, Murati stated in a written statement that she made the "difficult decision" to step away from Sam Altman's tech firm "to create the time and space to do my own exploration." Last year, Murati also served as the ChatGPT maker's interim CEO for a brief period as the firm experienced unprecedented changes in its leadership. Following Murati's announcement, Altman took to social media and revealed that two other top executives were also leaving the company. The decisions by Murati, as well as OpenAI's Chief Research Officer Bob McGrew and another research leader, Barret Zoph, were made "independently of each other and amicably," Altman said in a note to employees he shared on social media.

### Sam Altman announced two other top executives were also leaving his tech firm

Murati, McGrew, and Zoph mark the latest high-profile departures from the San Francisco-based tech firm after the company's co-founder, John Schulman, left in August to join its rival, Anthropic, which was founded in 2021 by a group of ex-OpenAI leaders. Additionally, the company's president and co-founder, Greg Brockman said in August that he was "taking a sabbatical" through the end of the year. Before him, another co-founder, Ilya Sutskever, who led a team focused on AI safety, left OpenAI in May to start his own AI company.

## Health

### PMD issues dengue virus warning for October after monsoon rains

KARACHI: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Thursday issued a nationwide alert warning about the spread of dengue fever in 10 major cities by October after monsoon rains.

The dengue outbreak is expected to spread in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Hyderabad, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Larkana and Multan, said the PMD in its statement. Dengue fever may also occur in areas affected by rains after monsoon, said the PMD, adding that the fever has badly affected the health of people across the country.

Dengue outbreak is expected to spread in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, six more cities

Moreover, the infection has been spreading since mid-September. The department also revealed that an increase in dengue virus was observed from September 20 to December 5 after the monsoon in 10 years. The meteorological department said the vector-borne disease becomes active if the tempera-

ture is between 26°C to 29°C and it gets favourable environment when humidity is close to 60%.

"All stakeholders should take proactive measures to prevent the spread of dengue," the PMD said in its statement.

Pakistan, especially Punjab, has been gripped by dengue virus with hundreds of cases being reported on a weekly basis.

In response to the rising number of cases, the Health Department has issued an advisory urging the public to maintain clean and dry surroundings to prevent the spread of virus.





## Pakistan inks contract for selling JF-17 Block-III fighter jets to Azerbaijan



RAWALPINDI: As part of Pakistan's efforts to enhance defence cooperation with friendly countries, a contract for the sale of JF-17 Block-III fighter aircraft to bolster air power capabilities of Azerbaijan has been recently signed.

During his recent visit to Pakistan, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev was briefed on the combat capabilities and versatile employment options of JF-17 BLOCK-III fighter aircraft, an Inter Services Public Relations news release said on Thursday. Pursuant to President Aliyev's visit and on the request of Government of Azerbaijan, Pakistan deployed a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) contingent at Baku to participate in ADEX-2024 showcasing the aerial prowess and static display of Pride of Pakistan JF-17 Thunder Block-III.

During deployment, JF-17 carried out air-to-air refuelling from the PAF Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft deploying in a single hop to Baku, demonstrating long haul capability and reach of the PAF's fighter jet.

President Ilham Aliyev visited the static display of JF-17 BLOCK-III and later witnessed its enthralling aerial demonstration, showcasing the agility and maneuverability of the fighter jet alongside the professional competence of PAF pilots.

The JF-17 Thunder Block-III is an AESA Radar and Long Range BVR equipped 4.5 generation Multi-Role fighter aircraft which is capable of undertaking wide array of combat missions providing contemporary air power employment options thus strengthening the National Security Paradigm of Azerbaijan.

President Ilham Aliyev said that the support extended by Pakistan would go a long way in consolidating the existing military cooperation, fostering closer defence collaboration and strengthening the warm brotherly ties between the two nations. APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Ambassador of Tajikistan's, to Pakistan Sharifzoda Yousuf Toir and others stands on Tajikistan handmade items Stall during inauguration ceremony of 2nd International Tourism Expo, at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital. ONLINE

## Kamal reviews transshipment policy; seeks proposals for E-Commerce development

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan here on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to revamp the country's transshipment policy.

According to press release issued by the ministry, the meeting was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, FBR, Customs, Railways, Commerce, and other key stakeholders.

Discussions focused on addressing various issues such as alternative routes, transshipment modes, and regulatory measures to remove obstacles, with the goal of making Pakistan a regional transshipment hub.

The revised policy aims to facilitate cargo movement for both intra-regional and inter-regional trade, with a special focus on serving landlocked countries in the region.

The initiative is expected to boost revenue for the FBR, create employment opportunities for skilled workers, and spur overall development in the country.

Jam Kamal Khan directed all stakeholders to expedite pending matters to ensure the timely

implementation of the policy, and emphasized the importance of consulting the private sector for their input. Meanwhile, the minister also chaired the first meeting of the IT & E-Commerce Council, aimed at accelerating the growth of Pakistan's IT and e-commerce sectors.

Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja also participated in the meeting virtually. During the session, Minister Jam Kamal Khan asked council members to submit proposals for further review by the Executive Committee of Commerce, chaired by the Commerce Minister himself.

These proposals would then be forwarded to the National Export Development Board (NEDB), chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, for comprehensive decision-making on key issues.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja highlighted the government's target to increase IT exports from \$3.223 billion to \$25 billion by 2029, as directed by the Prime Minister. She assured that all necessary support to enhance IT

exports would be provided.

Representatives from leading e-commerce platforms such as Alibaba, Daraz, and P@SHA attended the meeting. The presentation by P@SHA outlined significant challenges in the sector, including payroll taxes, internet connectivity, and global perceptions about Pakistan's security, all of which hamper growth. The council also discussed potential strategies to enhance regional trade, address the brain drain, and develop a robust local IT ecosystem. Minister Jam Kamal Khan appreciated the efforts and presentation of the stakeholders and assured the government's full support. He also directed all parties to expedite pending matters to ensure timely implementation of the new IT and e-commerce policies and recommended consultation with the private sector for a broader perspective. The e-commerce sector aims to reach \$5 billion in exports by 2030, and the council emphasized that achieving this target will require strategic improvements in logistics, digital payments, and infrastructure development.

of retired government employees) would continue then no one else would be able to get a government job.

Earlier, the Additional Attorney General told the court that the Punjab Government had already abolished the job quota of retired employees' children by amending the service rules.

The Additional Advocate General Sindh informed the bench that there was a law to give jobs to the children of retired government employees in the province.

## SC reserves verdict about jobs quota of govt employees' children

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its verdict in a case regarding the quota of children of government employees in jobs. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heard the case. During the course of proceedings, the

chief justice asked that whether there was any law or logic to give jobs to the children of government employees, who after retirement got pension. He observed that under Article 27 of the Constitution, all citizens of Pakistan were equal. If the practice (of giving jobs to children

## National Urban Planning Framework...



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He underscored the importance of preventing fertile agricultural land from being unnecessarily converted into housing schemes, urging the development of comprehensive policies to safeguard these vital resources.

Furthermore, he emphasized the need to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation measures into urban planning to protect cities from climate-induced threats.

During the meeting, it was revealed that 54% of Pakistan's urban population resides in just 21 major cities, with 34.5% concentrated in megacities such as Karachi and Lahore. The rapid urban expansion is contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements and informal housing, which violate planning regulations and adversely affect city functions.

Ahsan Iqbal called for greater collaboration between the Federal and Provincial governments to make cities safer, more resilient and livable through the National Urban Planning Framework.

He highlighted the urgent need to address key urban challenges, including environmental pollution, housing shortages, and the inefficient use of land resources, which are degrading the quality of urban life.

The minister also stressed the importance of improving urban transportation systems and providing adequate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to make cities more environmentally friendly and youth-centric.

He directed all relevant agencies to prepare a comprehensive and sustainable urban planning framework that could serve as a model for other provinces and help transform Pakistan's major cities into engines of economic growth.

## Pharmaceutical sector is one of the key pillars of our economy: Gilani

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that the pharmaceutical sector is one of the key pillars of our economy and it is highly promising that the sector is expanding its reach into high-value markets such as Europe, the USA, and emerging markets in Asia and Africa. He made these remarks while addressing the 3rd Pharma Export Summit & Awards (PESA) at a local hotel in Islamabad as Chief Guest. "Despite the smaller scale, Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry is expanding, with local companies increasingly capturing market share from multinational corporations", Gilani said while addressing the participants. He highlighted few key areas where industry can strategically focus to increase exports and compete on a par with regional players in global market. He called for investing in innovation, building partnerships, and embracing digital transformation as the world is changing rapidly, and the pharmaceutical sector is no exception. He suggested to focus on expanding our research and development capabilities, improve regulatory frameworks, foster international collaborations with renowned peer companies and strengthen public-private partnerships to enhance our competitive edge and lastly investing in the production of generic drugs and biosimilar that can help Pakistan tap into the growing global demand for affordable medications. SABAH

## One dead, 18 wounded in blast at Swabi police station

Explosion apparently occurred "due to a short circuit" inside police station's depot, according to initial report

SWABI: At least one person was killed and 18 sustained injuries in an explosion inside a police station in Khyber Pakhtunkwa's Swabi district, Commissioner Mardan Division Javed Marwat said on Thursday.

As per an initial report received by the Central Police Office, the explosion apparently occurred "due to a short circuit" inside a depot on the first floor of the police station.

Rescue and firefighting teams rushed to the scene immediately and started shifting the wounded cops to the Bacha Khan Medical where emergency has been imposed.

The power blast affected the building which caught fire, however, it was doused following an immediate response from firefighting teams. According to rescue officials, 15 wounded policemen have been shifted to the hospital.

KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur took notice of the incident and ordered the inspector general and chief secretary to immediately reach the Swabi police station. He also ordered them to present a report after



ascertaining the genre of the explosion. He also asked authorities to ensure timely medical assistance to the injured. District Police Officer (DPO) Haroon Rashid told the media that 33 wounded persons were shifted to different hospitals. He added that nature of the explosion was being ascertained. Dr Asif, medical superintendent of the District Headquarters Hospital, confirmed that 26 injured have been brought to the DHQ hospital. Subsequently, BKMC spokesperson Raham Khan said that eight injured persons were receiving medical treatment at the health facility. Agencies

## Speakers for bold climate action, global unity to ensure resilience against global warming impacts

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at an international climate conference in run-up to COP29 on Thursday called for bold climate action and global unity on key agendas like climate finance availability and access to ensure resilience among communities of less developed countries against global warming impacts.

The Centre for Strategic Perspective (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), convened the international conference titled "Navigating Pakistan's Climate Action Path: Adaptation, Finance, and Technology". The conference, organized ahead of the COP29 summit, brought together leading experts from Pakistan and abroad to deliberate on the country's climate strategy, focusing on key areas like adaptation, climate finance, and technological advancements.

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov, in his keynote address at the inaugural session, emphasized the urgent need for global unity in tackling climate change.

He highlighted Azerbaijan's commitment to promoting peace, climate finance, and adaptation efforts at COP29, stressing that international cooperation was essential for achieving a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Senator Sherry Rehman, speaking as the chief guest, stressed the urgency of bold climate action at the upcoming COP, referencing the encouraging statements made by the Ambassador of Azerbaijan on renewable energy and financing.

She highlighted Pakistan's unique climate challenges, which were both local and global, emphasizing that no country could face such crises in isolation.

As a developing country on the frontlines of climate change, she said, Pakistan was experiencing increasingly extreme weather events, including successive record-breaking summers over the last four years.

Sherry Rehman stressed that Pakistan's economy, natural resources, and people were all at risk, yet the country remained underprepared for an unpredictable future.

She pointed out that while global discussions, such as the Summit of the Future, aimed to set ambitious climate goals, they often fell short of the necessary



commitments. She said Pakistan, having led the G77 during COP27, continued to advocate for developing countries to unite on a common agenda.

However, she warned that the clock was ticking faster for vulnerable nations like Pakistan, with the current decade being crucial for achieving climate targets – not the distant 2050.

Sherry Rehman also called for improved climate reporting, noting that many developing countries lacked the capacity to measure emissions accurately.

She criticized the slow pace of climate finance and underscored the vital importance of accelerated operationalization and increased capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund. She also stressed that global North-

South financial transfers must accelerate, underlining the need for focusing on 'Internationally Determined Contributions' as well.

Sherry Rehman underscored the need for enhanced citizens' involvement and local climate action, urging Pakistan to strengthen its environmental protection agencies.

Climate justice, she emphasized, must be at the forefront of global discussions, ensuring no country or community was left behind, and Pakistan should play a leadership role in that regard.

ISSI Director General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his remarks, welcomed the participants and highlighted the critical importance of the dialogues in shaping Pakistan's climate strategies. He expressed gratitude to HSF for its

partnership and acknowledged the distinguished speakers, including government officials, civil society representatives, and international experts for their contributions.

He recognized Senator Sherry Rehman for her relentless advocacy for climate justice and her leadership role in securing a global outcome on the creation of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 at Sharm-el-Sheikh in 2022.

He emphasized Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change, despite contributing less than 1% to global emissions, referencing the devastating 2022 floods and the urgent need for adaptation measures.

Pakistan's leadership at COP27, particularly in the creation of the Loss and Damage Fund, was a pivotal moment for climate-vulnerable nations, he added.

Looking ahead to COP29, Ambassador Mahmood stressed the importance of securing additional climate finance from developed countries and ensuring greater transparency.

He also underscored Pakistan's commitment to a renewable energy transition, while balancing energy security for developing nations. CSP Director Dr Neelum Nigar, in her introductory remarks, emphasized Pak-

istan's urgent climate challenges, highlighting the need for investment in green technologies, climate finance, and adaptation measures to build resilience and promote sustainable development.

Stefan Burkhardt, Head of Division HSF Asia, highlighted the global climate crisis, emphasizing the need for accelerated action following COP27 and COP28.

He praised the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 but stressed the importance of effective implementation, particularly for vulnerable countries like Pakistan.

He urged Pakistan to strengthen its climate action strategy to access resources and attract international climate finance.

Burkhardt also noted the severe impact of climate change on Pakistan's economy and its critical role in global climate efforts. Dr Fariz Ismailzade, Vice Rector at ADA University in Baku and member of the Azerbaijan Parliament, praised ISSI for fostering Pakistan-Azerbaijan relations and highlighted ADA's leadership in uniting experts for COP29 climate change discussions in Baku. The inaugural session concluded with Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors ISSI, presenting shields to the chief guest and keynote speaker.