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Chinese citizens celebrate Arshad Nadeem's historic gold medal in Paris Olympics

The Stade de France witnessed Pakistani javelin star Arshad Nadeem's remarkable throw of 92.97 meters in the Olympic Games Paris 2024 men's javelin throw final.

In a thrilling performance, Nadeem secured the first-ever individual gold medal for his country, setting a new Olympic record to beat defending champion Neeraj Chopra from India. Nadeem's achievement resonated far beyond the stadium, capturing the hearts of sports enthusiasts worldwide, including Chinese netizens.

Chinese viewers expressed their joy and admiration for the "Ba Tie" – meaning "Pakistani Iron Brother" – on social media platforms.

A China Central Television commentator enthusiastically shouted out Nadeem's monster throw, and comments flooded in, saying, "He has given wings to the javelin", and "Incredible! He's a hero!" "92.97 meters! Bravo! Congrats Iron Brother! First gold! NEW OLYMPIC RECORD!"...

Chinese netizens on Weibo, China's version of X, even created a trending tag: "Nadeem surprises his coach's sunglasses off". The tag garnered tens of millions of views, with one user humorously remarking, "OMG the coach's reaction is adorable; he couldn't believe his eyes!"

Since its Olympic debut at the London Games in 1948, Pakistan has earned a total of 11 medals over 76 years. However, the last time Pakistan claimed gold was four decades ago, during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, when the men's field hockey team secured the top prize, CEN reported on Sunday.

Arshad Nadeem's remarkable victory in the javelin throw at the Paris Olympics finally breaks the country's 40-year wait for a prestigious gold medal in its Olympic journey.

Nadeem's throw shattered the previous Olympic record of 90.57 meters, set by the Netherlands' Andreas Thorkildsen at the Beijing 2008 Olympics. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took to social media to congratulate Nadeem, writing, "You've made the whole nation proud young man".

Furthermore, the Arshad Nadeem who won gold medal in javelin throw for Pakistan in Paris Olympics arrived in Lahore last night from Paris by way of Istanbul and received a grand welcome in Lahore. He left for his ancestral home Mian Channu Chak No. 101 via GT Road, then thousands of people from Lahore to Mian Channu were there to welcome Arshad Nadeem.

People were walking along with his car and expressing their love for Arshad Nadeem. People were eager to catch a glimpse of Arshad Nadeem and he was showered with flower petals. As soon as Arshad Nadeem's convoy, which consisted of more than 100 vehicles, reached the limits of Multan Division, On this occasion, on the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, Commissioner Multan Division, Mrs. Maryam Khan, Regional Police Officer Captain Muhammad Sohail Chaudhary, and district administration of Khanewal, Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner were also there to welcome Arshad Nadeem, Commissioner Multan Division. Commissioner Multan Mrs Maryam Khan and Regional Police Officer Captain Sohail Chaudhary garlanded Arshad Nadeem and after that his convoy was on its way.

Victory Has Many Fathers, but Defeat Is an Orphan

It was deeply disheartening and revolting to witness the way our politicians, bureaucrats, and elites swarmed around Arshad Nadeem like vultures, each trying to claim a piece of this unprecedented victory at the Paris Olympics. As soon as he landed, he was handed a prepared statement to read during interviews, and Mr. Rana Mashood whispered in his ear to praise the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister of Punjab. The Information Minister of Punjab held an exclusive press conference, attributing Arshad's success to the Youth Festivals organized by Shahbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz, claiming that the Punjab Government had sponsored him. The PTI social media brigade was quick to post pictures and videos of Arshad with Imran Khan, asserting their share in his triumph. The media seized the opportunity to use his arrival and victory to boost viewership, creating media products around him to mint money. Social media influencers also jumped on the bandwagon, eager to associate themselves with his success.

The Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (Sports Ministry) underscored their role in Arshad Nadeem's success. Similarly, the Sports Minister pointed to improvements in sports infrastructure and training facilities as pivotal to Nadeem's achievement. The PTI claimed that their administration's efforts in increasing sports funding and establishing new academies were instrumental. The PML(N) stressed that the groundwork for sports advancements was laid during their governance. The PPP emphasized their long-standing

support for athletes, focusing on their athlete-centric policies that have fostered talent across the nation. The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) and the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Pakistan both underscored their roles in providing training facilities. Corporate sponsors and private sports academies also highlighted their contributions.

Ironically, none of them had the courage to admit and own the defeat of our other forgotten players who participated in the Olympic Games but failed to secure any medals. They failed to acknowledge their lack of leadership, their inability to create a robust system in the country to promote sports and sports education, and their lack of vision to discover and nurture talent from an early age. They did not admit to their failure in continuously grooming athletes until adulthood, which would multiply their chances of showcasing top-notch performances.

Contrary to the grandstanding, in a press conference held at the Embassy of Pakistan in France, Mr. Arshad Nadeem highlighted that his journey to the Paris Olympics was fraught with challenges, impediments, and a severe lack of resources. His story is a reflection of the government's total failure and our society's inability to support and nurture talent adequately.

This is the ripe moment for civil society to come forward and compel the government, instead of capitalizing on the hard

work of others, to benchmark the best practices of a successful country like China and build a diverse and all-inclusive sports ecosystem in the country.

Pakistan can significantly enhance its sports development by emulating China's successful strategies. China's remarkable transformation from an underdeveloped nation to a sports powerhouse is largely due to strong government support, effective policy implementation, and substantial investment in sports infrastructure and athlete development programs.

Civil society should pressure the government to prioritize sports in its national agenda, ensuring sustained investment and creating policies that support long-term athlete growth. Establishing grassroots development programs similar to China's, with a focus on early talent identification and specialized coaching, can provide young athletes with the necessary support to excel.

Civil society should also press the government to invest in professional coaching and provide athletes with international exposure through competitions and training camps abroad. Additionally, developing a comprehensive athlete support system, including access to sports science, nutrition, psychology, and medical care, is essential.

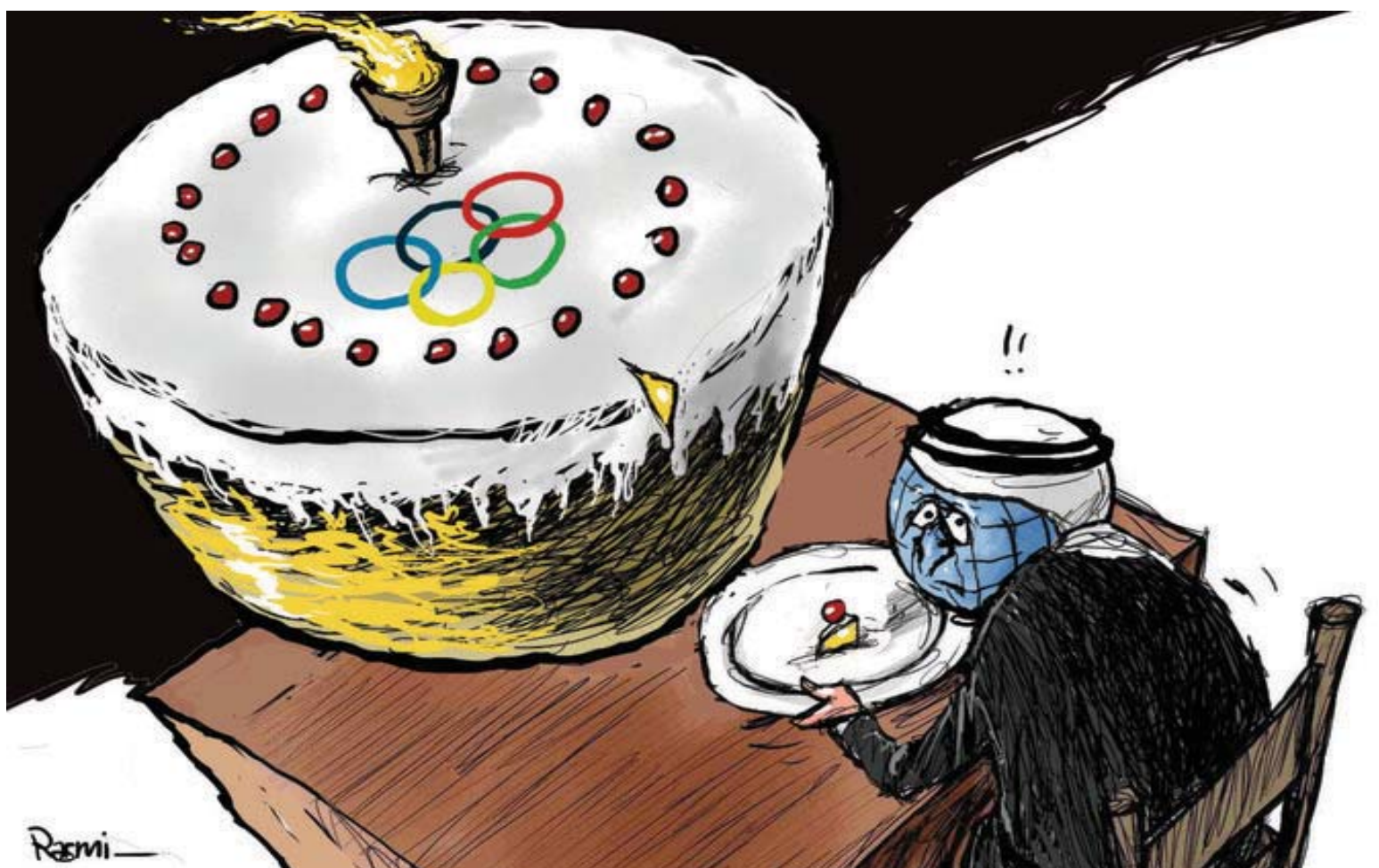
The government must be urged to provide the best possible care and resources to maintain peak physical and mental

condition for athletes in diverse sports, not just cricket and hockey. Establishing a well-structured competitive sports system with regular local, regional, and national competitions will help athletes hone their skills and prepare for international events.

The private sector in Pakistan can significantly enhance the sports ecosystem to produce world-class Olympic players by investing in high-quality infrastructure, providing financial support through sponsorships, and establishing talent identification and development programs. Partnerships with educational institutions can integrate sports into the educational system, while bringing in professional coaches and sports experts can elevate training standards. Additionally, investing in sports science and medicine will ensure comprehensive athlete support. Organizing local and national competitions can create a competitive environment, and media and marketing efforts can raise public awareness and interest. Incorporating sports development into corporate social responsibility initiatives and collaborating with the government and NGOs can further strengthen these efforts, creating a synergistic approach to fostering athletic excellence in Pakistan.

Let us work together to create a system where not only victories are celebrated and capitalized, but defeats are also acknowledged and transformed into triumphs through collective national efforts.

Writer is Former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC, CEO, ATV



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

AJK Excels in Key Indicators Compared to IIOJK and Pakistan - II

In times of natural disasters, the army has led rescue and relief efforts, providing vital assistance to affected communities. It has also established educational institutions and medical facilities, contributing to human development in the area. Through various civil action programs, the army has engaged in community development initiatives that empower local populations.

Some anti-state elements propagate misleading information suggesting that AJK lags behind both Pakistan and IIOJK in several key indicators, which is completely inaccurate. The data clearly demonstrates that the conditions and statistics for AJK are significantly better than those for IIOJK and Pakistan. With a population of 241.49 million in Pakistan, AJK's population stands at approximately 4.45 million, accounting for 1.8% of the total, and 2.45 million, or 1.01%, when excluding the diaspora. A population growth rate indicates a more favorable economic and educational profile, although it also places additional pressure on the economy, job market, and housing. The existing road network spans 8,865 km, giving AJK a road density that is double that of Pakistan and superior to that of IIOJK. The 13th Amendment (2018) transferred financial and legislative powers from the AJK Council to the AJK Legislative Assembly, enhancing autonomy in alignment with other provinces. While the population of AJK is smaller than that of District Rawalpindi, its administrative structure and civilian government are comparable to those of a province. AJK has a road density of 0.66, compared to 0.32 in Pakistan and 0.52 in IIOJK. The literacy rate in AJK is 76.8%, in contrast to 62.3% in Pakistan and 67% in IIOJK. The school-to-pupil ratio in AJK is 1:49, while it is 1:16 in both Pakistan and IIOJK. The teacher-to-student ratio stands at 1:7 in AJK compared to 1:44 in Pakistan and 1:20 in IIOJK. The tax-to-GDP ratio in AJK is 7.77%, compared

to 10.4% in Pakistan. The poverty/unemployment rate is 22% in AJK, 23.1% in IIOJK, and 43% in Pakistan. AJK has a 7% employment quota in the army. The price of 40 kg of wheat flour is Rs 2000 in AJK, Rs 4680 in IIOJK, and also much lower than in Pakistan. Approximately 3.24% of the population is employed in the Army/CAFs. Thirty percent of the population holds government jobs, which accounts for a significant portion of the annual budget. The per-unit electricity tariff is Rs 3-6 in AJK, compared to Rs 3.95-42.70 in IIOJK and Pakistan. AJK and GB are the only regions with 100% telecom density. Independent quality of service surveys show that over 90% of residents have confidence in 3G/4G signal strength in AJK, with SCO and Zong providing the best webpage loading times. AJK has a significantly higher number of telecom towers compared to IIOJK and Pakistan. Although AJK's population is smaller than that of District Rawalpindi, its administrative structure is equivalent to a province, constraining financial resources for priority sectors. Approximately 35.24% of the population is employed in the Army, Civil Armed Forces, Federal, and AJK Government, demonstrating the state's commitment to its people. Modern-day AJK was liberated by local Kashmiris rebelling against the Maharaja's exploitative and cruel governance, primarily targeting Muslims. The relationship with Pakistan has always been vital, with Kashmiris deeply committed to unification with Pakistan. The narrative of an 'Independent Kashmir' is not supported by facts.

The stark contrast between Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is a testament to the stark differences in governance, human rights, and overall quality of life. While AJK, under Pakistani administration, has made significant strides in development and democracy, IIOJK continues to grapple with

oppression, human rights violations, and a stifling atmosphere. Azad Jammu and Kashmir, stands as a beacon of hope for the Kashmiri people. The region has made considerable progress in various sectors. AJK enjoys a democratic system with elected representatives, ensuring people's participation in decision-making. The region upholds fundamental human rights, allowing freedom of speech, assembly, and religion. Significant investments have been made in education and healthcare, leading to improved literacy rates and healthcare access. AJK has witnessed substantial infrastructure development, with improved roads, communication networks, and public facilities. The region's economy has shown steady growth, creating employment opportunities and improving living standards. In stark contrast, IIOJK remains under the iron grip of Indian occupation.

The region has been subjected to Human Rights Violations including Mass killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detentions are rampant. Frequent curfews and lockdowns stifle basic freedoms and hinder economic activities. Internet shutdowns and restrictions on media coverage are used to suppress dissent. Kashmiri political leaders are often incarcerated or exiled, denying the people their right to representation. The region's economy has been crippled by conflict and Indian policies, leading to high unemployment and poverty rates.

The disparity between AJK and IIOJK clearly highlights the impact of India's oppressive policies in the region. The international community must pressure India to respect human rights, end the occupation, and allow the Kashmiri people to determine their own future. The superior development indicators in AJK demonstrate Pakistan's prioritization of AJK's development and progress over other parts of the country. The Kashmiris, particularly those in AJK, recognize and appreciate Pakistan's significant contributions and reject all propaganda and misinformation intended to sow hate and despair among the people.

Empowering Future Generations - II

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

To fully harness the potential of ESD, Pakistan must address several challenges. These include the lack of trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient resources. Moreover, the country's education system is often plagued by inefficiencies, corruption, and a lack of accountability. To overcome these challenges, the government must invest in teacher training, infrastructure development, and resource allocation. Moreover, it must promote a culture of transparency and accountability to ensure that ESD is implemented effectively.

Empowering future generations through education for sustainable development is critical for Pakistan's development. By integrating ESD into its education policy, Pakistan can equip its students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to address the country's development challenges. The benefits of ESD extend beyond the classroom, contributing to the achievement of the SDGs and promoting a culture of sustainability.

While challenges remain, Pakistan has made significant progress in promoting ESD, and with continued investment and commitment, the country can lead the way in education for sustainable development. The importance of ESD cannot be overstated. As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, inequality, and social

injustice, education has a critical role to play in fostering a more sustainable and equitable future. By empowering future generations through ESD, Pakistan can create a better future for all its citizens, and contribute to a more sustainable and peaceful world. In the words of Malala Yousafzai, "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." By investing in ESD, Pakistan can unlock the potential of its young people and create a brighter future for all.

Malala Yousafzai's words are a powerful reminder of the transformative power of education in shaping the future of a nation. By investing in Education for Sustainable Development, Pakistan can unlock the immense potential of its young people and create a brighter future for all. ESD has the potential to equip young people with the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to address the complex challenges facing the country, drive economic growth and development, and promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

As Pakistani looks to the future, it is imperative that education remains at the forefront of the national agenda, and that the country invests in the education of its young people, for they hold the key to a brighter, more sustainable future. The time to act is now. Pakistan must continue to prioritize ESD, invest in its education system, and empower its future generations to lead the way in sustainable development. The country's future depends on it.

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