

Shehryar Afridi acquitted
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a significant legal victory, the District and Sessions Court Islamabad has acquitted PTI leader Shehryar Khan Afridi in connection with the charges stemming from the May 9 incidents. Judicial Magistrate Malik Muhammad Imran delivered the verdict, declaring Afridi and other party workers innocent of the allegations of arson and vandalism.



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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with President of Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam, Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence.

PM proposes committee to resolve political issues

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met with Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman wherein he proposed the formation of a committee to collaboratively address the prevailing political issues.

The prime minister suggested this while visiting Maulana Fazlur Rehman's residence to inquire after his well-being. Maulana Fazl welcomed the prime minister, who appreciated the JUI-F chief's religious services and his continuous support to peaceful struggle for protection of democratic values.

Shehbaz directs federal ministries, dept heads to utilize Task Management System: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif instructed federal secretaries and heads of departments to personally utilize the Task Management System. He issued these instructions while chairing a meeting to assess the implementation progress of directives requiring federal ministries and departments to use the Task Management System.

Pakistan reiterates call for Israel's accountability

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday reiterated its call for holding Israel accountable for its grave crimes in Gaza and urged the global conscience to force Israel towards an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and bringing an end to the war on the Palestinian people.

"Pakistan believes the time has come to hold Israel accountable for its grave crimes... In this context, Pakistan notes positively the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2735 and expresses hope for a permanent and sustainable ceasefire and an end to the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza," Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said at her weekly press briefing.

She said that Pakistan welcomed the June 12 report of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on

the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel. "The findings of the commission of inquiry have confirmed reports of Israeli war crimes, including starvation as a method of warfare, murder or willful killing, intentionally directing attacks against civilians, forcible transfer, torture, and inhuman and cruel punishment," she remarked.

The report called the Israeli authorities responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the military operations and attacks in Gaza since 7 October 2023. Based on the interviews with victims and witnesses, hundreds of submissions, satellite imagery and forensic medical reports, the report calls for holding Israel accountable.

Calling this week important for Pakistan's diplomacy for Palestine, she apprised the media of

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar's visit to Türkiye on June 8 to attend the extraordinary meeting of the D8 Council of Foreign Ministers, held to discuss the situation in Gaza. At the moot, Dar called for an urgency of an unconditional ceasefire, lifting of the siege, and unimpeded flow of aid for the Palestinian people, besides the efforts to end the war.

On the sidelines, he met with the foreign ministers of Türkiye, Malaysia, and the acting foreign minister of Iran. The deputy prime minister also attended the high-level conference on Gaza held on June 10-11 in Amman, Jordan where he condemned the illegal acts of the occupation authorities for violating international law, employing starvation as a tool of war, and targeting humanitarian supplies and infrastructure.

Sugar scam suspect escapes after embezzlement

SADIQABAD (INP): Prime suspect of Sadiqabad sugar scam fled with allegedly embezzling billions of rupees of sugar dealers and traders, it surfaced on Thursday.

Hundreds of sugar traders of different towns said to be affected in the scam allegedly involved prime suspect Shaikh Rashid and accomplices. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordered an inquiry into the "mega sugar scandal" worth billions of rupees losses to the national exchequer.

A NAB team visited Sadiqabad to inquire into the matter and conducted inquiry along with the local adminis-

tration, assistant commissioner of the area said. The NAB has directed affected people to submit their claims to its Lahore office, the AC further said. Prime suspect, Sheikh Rashid, and his partners have been under investigation for allegedly embezzling billions of rupees from sugar dealers and traders.

NAB DG Lahore formed a team to conduct immediate investigations, and the inquiry begun against Sheikh Rashid, Kashif, and Faisal. The NAB spokesperson said that Sheikh Rashid's four warehouses in Sadiqabad were used to store sugar stocks, and all warehouses

and shops have been sealed on the DG NAB orders. Earlier, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) deployed special teams to monitor sugar mills across Pakistan to curb tax theft.

The FBR spokesperson said in a statement that field formation teams were deployed in sugar mills across the country. The statement read that sugar was one of the notified commodities being monitored by the state. The authorities used to monitor sugar production, sales, clearance, stock and other activities at the mills, whereas the tax stamp was mandatory on each sack.

Petrol price likely to be slashed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government is likely to slash the petrol price by up to Rs9 per litre from June 16. The oil marketing companies indicate a possible reduction of approximately Rs 9 per liter in petrol prices and Rs 4 per liter in diesel prices.

According to OMC sources, the price of kerosene is estimated to decrease by Rs 2 per liter. The final price of petroleum products will be determined by OGRA based on the global prices on June 13 and 14.

If the new rate approved, the price of petrol will drop from the current rate of Rs 268.36 per liter to Rs 259.36 per liter. High-speed diesel will be sold at Rs 266.22 per liter, down from the existing Rs. 270.22 per liter. Additionally, the government has proposed raising the petroleum development levy (PDL) from Rs 60 to Rs. 80 per liter for the next fiscal year, starting July 1.

Imran's acquittal in SC challenged

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has challenged the acquittal of PTI founder Imran Khan and Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, in cipher case. Islamabad High Court (IHC) acquitted former prime minister Imran Khan and PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi in cipher case on June 3.

The Ministry of Interior filed pleas against the high court's verdict in the Supreme Court, seeking to set aside the acquittal orders. The federal government has urged the Supreme Court to set aside the acquittal orders and restore the case to its original position.

It is pertinent to mention here that IHC Chief Justice Aamir Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb announced the verdict on the pleas challenging the conviction in the cipher case on June 3 and acquitted Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood.

PTI founder, Shah Mahmood, others acquitted in Azadi March case: A session court in Islamabad on Thursday acquitted former prime minister Imran Khan and PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi in Azadi March case.

As per details, the judicial magistrate Malik Muhammad Imran announced the reserved verdict and acquitted PTI founder Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and AML chief Sheikh Rasheed. The court also ordered acquittal of Sadaqat Abbasi and Ali Nawaz Awan from the Azadi March case.

It is to be noted that several PTI leaders including former prime minister Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and others were booked by police in various FIRs related to Azadi March. The police had registered 42 cases against senior leaders and workers of the PTI for agitation in the aftermath of clashes erupted between the police and the PTI leader in the provincial capital.

The Frontier Post

SHO among 4 cops injured
F.P. Report

KOHAT: At least four police personnel including the SHO Ustarzai were injured when they were fired at during a dispute between the two parties here on Thursday. Police said, a call was received regarding firing between the two groups in Marai Bala, a suburb of Kohat. Responding to the call, a police party headed by SHO Usterzai reached the site.

Govt envisages 13% tax-to-GDP ratio in next few years

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Thursday that without broadening the tax base, the economy cannot grow.

In his post-budget press conference here, he said the step was taken to end the term "non-filer" as he was unable to understand it. The term is unique to Pakistan, he added. He explained that tax rate for non-filers and those who do not pay tax had been raised to force them to join the tax net.

At this stage, journalists stood on their chairs in protest against raise in income tax on salaried class. He said the income tax exemption for those earning Rs600,000 per annum had been maintained. The maximum tax on salaried class is 35 percent whereas tax rate for professionals in the non-salaried class is 45 percent.

Aurangzeb said that the government aimed to raise tax-to-GDP ratio to 13 percent. Below 10 percent tax-to-GDP ratio is unsustainable. This ratio will be raised in three or four years, he continued. Clarifying raise in tax, he said the government planned to bring retailers and wholesalers into tax net. It was necessary to share the burden of income tax on salaried class.

Regarding increase in petroleum levy, Finance Minister Aurangzeb said it was not being raised with immediate effect. It would be implemented in phases keeping in mind global petroleum pricing mechanism.



He praised the FBR for bringing more retailers and wholesalers into tax net. In April, traders were requested to get themselves registered with the FBR voluntarily and about 31,000 retailers have so far been registered, he added.

He said the undocumented economy is being digitised. Human intervention is reduced by digitising economy, he said and added that the step will help end corruption. At present, paper currency worth Rs90 trillion is in circulation, he said and added that he wanted to end cash transactions.

For this purpose, the minister said the government would expand the Point of Sale (POS) scheme already continuing in big department stores to document cash transactions as much as possible. He agreed to a questioner that there was a huge leakage in sales tax. It is our priority to digitise sales tax end-to-end.

Regarding development of IT

(information technology) sector, the minister said a huge amount has been allocated for the purpose and expressed the hope that the infrastructure would be improved. He said five meetings had been held with bank associations during the last two months to discuss means on how to finance agriculture, IT and youth.

He suggested involvement of private sector in fiscal affairs and said the government has to provide them favourable environment. Whichever sector the government exits, the better, he added. It may be recalled that Aurangzeb presented the federal budget 2024-25 on Wednesday with a total outlay of Rs18.9 trillion. The budget aimed at a modest 3.6 percent GDP growth for the coming fiscal and set an ambitious Rs13 trillion tax collection target raising income tax on salaried class and removing tax exemptions.

Punjab unveils Rs5,446b budget for 2024-25

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Following the federal government, the Punjab government also increased the salaries of the government employees by up to 25 percent. The provincial government increased by the pension of the retired employees by 15 percent. The government allocated Rs610 billion for salaries, Rs445 billion for pensions, and Rs840 billion for service delivery costs.

A sum of Rs842 billion has been earmarked for the development budget. Specific allocations are Rs30 billion for Ramazan Package and Rs8 billion for the Central Business District (CBD). In the development budget outlines, 1,863 total schemes will be presented - 1,617 are ongoing schemes and 246 new schemes will be launched. The roads sector allocation is over Rs22 billion.

Rs76.5 billion have been earmarked for specialised healthcare, Rs33.89 billion for primary healthcare, Rs3 billion for population welfare, Rs2 billion for water supply and sanitation, Rs1.7 billion for social welfare, Rs14 billion for local government and community development, and Rs0.92 billion have been fixed for women development.

The provincial government has earmarked Rs69.74 billion for education. The government set aside Rs14.4 billion for the local government in Punjab. The government allocated Rs 50 billion for the sports in Punjab. Following the federal government, the Punjab government also fixed minimum wage at Rs 37,000. The government proposes Rs 10 billion for the laptop scheme in the province. Rs64.60 billion have been allocated for the agriculture in the budget 2024-25.

The government has allocated Rs 8 billion for the forests in the Punjab budget. No new tax will be levied in the provincial budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 while the focus will be on recovery of taxes already levied to increase the resources. The government will ensure the utilisation of natural resources and government assets in the province to increase the revenue generation.

The government has been prioritising

the education, health and social security while the implementation on the mega projects will be done through public-private partnership. An amount of Rs187 billion has been fixed for police. Rs1,070.19 billion record amount has been set aside for agriculture sector which was only Rs79 billion last year. Irrigation department will get Rs63.16 billion budget.

The Punjab will get Rs3,700 billion from the Federal Divisible Pool under the National Finance Commission (NFC) award while the provincial revenue target is over Rs960 billion. More than Rs10 billion have been set aside for industries development, Rs37.3 billion for Planning and Development, Rs24 billion for industry and commerce. A sum of Rs29.54 billion have been set for livestock.

The government will continue the subsidy in food and transport sector while industry and agriculture sectors will be given special attention to increase the provincial productivity. Both local and international investors will be given equal opportunities for investment. The investment will also be made in the IT sector. The government has allocated Rs 18 billion for the Punjab Enforcement Regulatory Authority.

The provincial government has proposed Rs 30 billion for Punjab Chief Minister Tractor Scheme for the farmers. Through this scheme, the farmers can get the tractors without any interest. The government has earmarked Rs 2.5 billion for the undergraduate programme in the province. The government has earmarked Rs 9 billion for the Tubewell solar programme.

The provincial government has allocated Rs 10 billion for the Kisan Cards in the Punjab budget 2024-25. The government has set aside Rs35 billion for the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) in the budget 2024-25. The government has earmarked Rs 3 billion for the Garment City in the province. The government has proposed Rs 7 billion for the Punjab Khelta Programme in the province. The Punjab government has announced 20 to 25 percent increase in the salaries of provincial employees and 15pc raise in pensions.

FIO directed for quick disposal of complaints

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has directed the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) to provide speedy and cost-free justice to aggrieved insurance policyholders against the maladministration of insurance companies.

He said that FIO needed to enhance its outreach and ensure quick disposal of complaints so that a maximum number of citizens could be provided monetary relief. The President expressed these views while talking to the newly-appointed Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO), Muntaz Ali Shah, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.

During the meeting, the President highlighted the need to create awareness about the role of FIO in providing justice to aggrieved policyholders in the settlement of insurance claims. He also advised the FIO to use modern technology and ICT tools to increase the disposal of complaints.

Earlier, the President administered the oath of office to Mr Muntaz Ali Shah as the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO), during an oath-taking ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday. Muntaz Ali Shah is a retired Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) officer and previously served in various positions throughout his career. He retired from PAS in March 2022 as Sindh Chief Secretary.

Mahrang vows to continue struggle against enforced disappearances

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Baloch Yakjehti Committee chief and a prominent human rights leader, Dr Mahrang Baloch, vowed on Thursday to continue her struggle on BYC platform against the enforced disappearances of Baloch people.

Addressing a press conference at the Karachi Press Club, she said that Karach Yakjehti Committee had been struggling against human rights violations and enforced disappearances in the Balochistan province and its struggle had always been peaceful. She said that their committee activists were being harassed and threatened while hundreds of their workers had been booked in various parts of Balochistan and even in Sindh. "We fear that they may be arrested and

tortured," she said.

The BYC chief urged human rights and other social organizations to support the committee struggle and play their due roles in stopping enforced disappearances of Baloch people. Mahrang said: "State is harassing and inciting us so that we react, but we have always been trying to be peaceful and carrying out the struggle in a peaceful manner for the achievement of the rights of Balochistan people. "We have apprised all human rights and other organisations about our struggle and sought their support." "If any BYC worker is harmed, it will be the responsibility of the state," she warned.

Mahrang hoped that all political forces would adopt a positive approach and save Baloch people from enforced disappearances and genocide. She said that a mammoth

gathering would soon be held to raise voice against atrocities with Baloch people. She appealed to Baloch people to join BYC and fulfill their responsibility against injustice. She complained that presently, parliament was pressing their voice, so they would prefer to bring people on roads for getting rights.

The BYC chief said that mostly Baloch youth were being made victims of disappearance, which was a matter of great concern. An organized movement was being run in Balochistan, which was being pressed while journalists raising voice against human rights violations were being targeted in Balochistan. She said that they were leading a movement against enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan, adding they would hopefully succeed to get their rights.



LAHORE: Vendors displaying and feeding sacrificial camels while waiting for the customers at temporary Cattle Market, Shahpur Kanjra ahead of Eidul Azha. —APP Photo

Punjab govt presents public-friendly budget: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Communication and Works (C&W) and Law Sohaib Ahmed Bharth has said that the Punjab government has given public friendly budget with an inimitable relief to low-income citizens of the province in all sectors.

In a statement, he termed this budget as people centric which is the aim of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The minimum wage of the worker has been increased from thirty-two thousand to thirty-seven thousand which will give a relief to workers. He added the government has taken decisions only to uplift the economy of the country.

Sohaib Ahmad Bharth further said that it has been the top priority of the Chief Minister Punjab to provide maximum relief to the citizens and it is reflected in the provincial

budget. The Punjab province is now on the track of unshakable progress and there will be less inflation in days to come, he remarked.

The country is coming out of economic crisis which is a good omen, he added. He disclosed that a sufficient budget has been earmarked for road sectors and for the upgradation of existing infrastructure of the province. Five expressways, enhancing connectivity between many districts of the Punjab, would be constructed for which budget has been allocated.

The minister added that as many as 842 billion has been allocated for development sector which is marvelous in the history of Punjab as in previous year it was 655 billion. Around 77 initiatives of the CM Punjab were also included in the budget, and these would be completed within one year. He added that 296 billion

has been allocated for repair and rehabilitation of roads, covering an area of 2,380 Kilometers. Moreover, 135 billion has also been kept for 482 road sector schemes. He said that 528 schemes, dumped in Planning & Development, would be started again with an amount of 58 billion. He further said that 31 billion has been allocated for Muzaffargarh Alipur and Muhammad Panah road, 13 billion for Multan Vehari road, 12 billion for Burewala Vehari road and 10 billion for upgradation of 581 BHUs in the province.

The Punjab government is also going to pay all bank arrears taken for the purchase of wheat and this is happening for the first in the history of Punjab after 1994. Rs 400 billion for Kisaan Package is also allocated in this budget. Schemes for upgradation of all social sectors are also kept in this budget, he said.

PU Confucius Institute, Orange Line Metro Train sign MoU

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab University Confucius Institute signed a training contract with Orange Line Metro Train.

The MoU was signed between the Host Director of PU Confucius Institute Prof Dr Shafiq-ur-Rehman and General Manager Li Teng. According to the MoU, teachers from the PU Confucius Institute will teach Urdu and Chinese language to the higher management of Orange Line Metro Train. It is a bilingual training which Confucius Institute provides to the Orange Line Metro Train employees. Confucius Institute already collaborated with Orange Line Metro train in cultural activities.

The PU Confucius Institute faculty members, staff and the delegations from Orange Line Metro Train were present. Host Director Prof Dr Shafiq-ur-Rehman said that it was a great initiative to strengthen the cultural and bilingual relationship between Chinese and Pakistani people.

Journalist Mushtaq passes away

F.R. Peport

PESHAWAR: Senior journalist Mushtaq Ahmad passed away on Thursday. His funeral prayer was offered at Nawab Abad Canal at 10: P.M. He was the brother of Iqbal Ahmad, Saleem Mehmood and Haji Azmat Sohail. His qul will be observed on Saturday, at Yaqatoot, Peshawar City.



PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A PART OF PCAA'S PROFESSIONAL TEAM SITUATION VACANT NOTICE NO. 08/2024

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority requires services of qualified individuals to fill the following vacant posts on regular basis where selection will be made purely on suitability and merit:-

Post	No. of Position	Prescribed Qualification & Experience	Quota & Pay Scale	Age Limit
Assistant Director IT (ERP Functional Consultant) (EG-01)	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bachelor/Master degree in IT / Finance / Business Administration at least 2nd Division from HEC recognized university. (Min. 16 Year Education).● Minimum 3 years of recent relevant experience as Oracle ERP EBS Functional consultant for Financials and SCM modules (including experience of at least one full cycle ERP implementation at a consulting firm) and understanding of business process flows and other functional processes preferably in Aviation sector.● Should have Functional experience of setups, troubleshooting and providing support for Oracle EBS Financials and SCM modules.● Perform thorough testing of ERP functionality and business processes across all modules to ensure proper implementation, Patch application and integration.● Provide end-user training and support to ensure proper utilization of the ERP system.● Coordinate with business users and external vendors / partners to manage and maintain a stable and accurate ERP production instance.	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)
Assistant Director IT (SQL Server Admin) (EG-01)	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bachelor/Master Degree in Information Technology / Computer Science / Software Engineering with at least 2nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education)● Minimum 3 Years Experience in SQL Server 2012 or above including deployment and configuration.● Strong knowledge of Data recovery models, Backups, Restores, Clustering, Database mirroring, Data Replication, Performance Tuning and Optimization.● Candidates having additional experience/certification may be given preference.	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)
Assistant Director IT (EG-01) - Oracle Database Administrator	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bachelor / Master Degree from HEC recognized University in Information Technology / Computer Science / Software Engineering with at least 2nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education).● Minimum 3 Years Experience in Oracle Database 11g/12c/19c Grid/Cloud infrastructure Enterprise Manager, Active Data guard, ASM, RAC, Installation, configurations, cloning, patching, upgrade and D/R setup in depth knowledge of Backup utilities RMAN, data export and import to perform partial and complete recovery on requirement.● Expertise in database performance tuning maintaining high availability of the database environment, evaluate and implement standard and customize security including knowledge of Oracle Linux Operating System.● Knowledge of auditing procedure, Oracle AV/DF, oracle Golden gate would be preferred.● Oracle database Administration Certified Professional (OCP) certification is mandatory.	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)
Assistant Director IT (EG-01) - ERP / Application DBA & WebLogic Administrator	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bachelor / Master Degree from HEC recognized University in Information Technology / Computer Science / Software Engineering with at least 2nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education).● Minimum 3 Years of Experience in EBS 12.0/12.1/12.2 installation, configurations, cloning, patching, upgrade and D/R setup.● Experience in Weblogic, fusion middle ware, installation, configurations, D/R setup, cloning, patching and upgrade.● Candidate must have expertise to develop / maintain / support high availability cluster application model configuration, security configurations, patching and D/R setup including Strong troubleshooting skills, performance testing and optimization, load balancing on application tier.● Oracle Certified Professional, Oracle WebLogic Server 12c or later is mandatory.● Working Knowledge of OS Linux, Oracle IDM MFA, and oracle database technologies will be preferred	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)
IT System Engineer (EG-01)	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● BS/BE in the field of Computer Science/Electronics/Communication / Information Technology or Equivalent with at least 2nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education)● Minimum 3 Years post qualification Experience in monitoring & maintaining IT Systems, Networks and infrastructure.● Installing, configuring, testing and maintaining operating systems, application software and system management tools. Ensuring the highest levels of systems and infrastructure availability.● Preparing and maintaining security, backups and redundancy strategies.● Monitoring and testing application for ensuring optimized performance.● Good communication/documentation and coordination skills● Certifications like MCSE, CSEP, CCNA, CISSP will be given preference.	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)
IT Network Engineer (EG-01)	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● BS/BE in the field of Computer Science/Electronics/Communication / Information Technology or Equivalent with at least 2nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education)● Minimum 3 Years post qualification Experience in managing and monitoring corporate IT Networks and faults / complaints resolution.● Thorough understanding of various L2/L3 protocols and technologies: TCP/IP (V4 & V6) along with related protocols.● Ability to maintain network security by monitoring security threats and vulnerabilities, and recommend solutions to mitigate risk.● Strong communication/documentation skills with Software and Database concepts / awareness.● Candidate with network certifications (CCNA, CCNP, JNCIA) will be given preference.	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)
IT Operations Engineer (EG-01)	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● BS/BE in the field of Computer Science/Electronics/Communication / Information Technology or Equivalent with at least 2nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education)● Minimum 3 Years post qualification Experience of managing IT Operations in a large organization.● Installing, configuring, testing and maintaining operating systems, application software and system management tools.● Good knowledge of Networks and Cloud Computing.● Monitoring and testing application for ensuring optimized performance.● Good communication & problem solving skills● Ability to manage Helpdesk Services for user guidance and support.● Manage contracts with vendors (e.g. SLA and software licenses etc.)● Ability to manage IT procurements including hardware analysis and RFP preparation.	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)
Assistant Director IT (Oracle ERP Technical Consultant) (EG-01)	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bachelor / Master Degree from HEC recognized University in Information Technology / Computer Science / Software Engineering /IT /Computer Engineering with at least 02nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education)● Minimum 03 years of recent relevant experience as Oracle ERP Application Developer in a large Organization.● Expertise in SQL/PL-SQL Scripting, Oracle Reports/ Forms.● Knowledge of Oracle forms personalization and OA Framework forms.● Should have hands on experience in development and related tasks in Oracle ERP 12.0 or above on Financial and Supply Chain Modules.● Preference will be given to Oracle certified with knowledge of OBIEE and WebLogic server.● Collaborate with functional users for requirement definition, software design, configuration, testing, and deployment of functional modules, integrations, and reports.● Develop technical documentation and provide ongoing support for end-users.	● Merit - 01 Rs.56,280 - 5,630 - 168,880	● 35 Years (Age relaxation as per Government Policy)

Application Procedure:

- Interested candidates are required to fill & submit Online Job Application Form available at www.caapakistan.com.pk within fifteen days from the date of this advertisement.
- Candidates will be required to upload scanned copies of certificate / degree of the required qualification only of the concerned post as mentioned above and CNIC while applying for the job.
- In case a candidate does not upload the above documents with the online application form, his/her application will be rejected.
- In case, provided information / document is found fake / bogus at any stage, the services of selected candidate will be terminated immediately and he / she will be blacklisted in future.
- All the interested candidates must read the Terms of Reference (TOR) mentioned in the detailed notice available at www.caapakistan.com.pk before applying for the post.

ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCE (TM)

Headquarters Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority,
Terminal-I, Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, Tel: 021-99072067-8

PID(K)3548/23

www.caapakistan.com.pk

Sindh Govt, Go Energy sings MoU for solar energy project

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Provincial Energy Minister Syed Nasir Shah participated in the signing ceremony of the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Energy and Go Energy Pvt Limited for the 550 MW float-

ing solar energy project on Kenjhar Lake.

Secretary Energy Mossadiq Ahmed Khan, CEO-STDC Salim Shaikh, CEO-Go Green Amar Ali Talat and Director K-Electric Haris Siddiqui were also present.



PUBLIC NOTICE Auction of Gold

Finance facilities were extended by Mobilink Bank against the security of deposit and pledge of gold to the customers mentioned below. The customers who have neglected and failed to repay the finance extended to them by Mobilink Bank along with the markup thereon.

Details:

Branch	Abbottabad
Branch code	0013
Date of auction	22 nd June 2024
Time	12:00PM
Call Deposit	Rs.5000/-

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address
Awais Khan Jadoon	13101-8735081-9	Post Office Narrian Nelor Nawansher, Abbottabad.
Muhammad Sajid	13101-2960543-1	Mohalla Khurri Banda Bagnator, P/O Bagnator, Abbottabad.
Mehwish Khan	15602-8675207-8	Khayyaban-E-Yousaf Street, Pma Kakul Road Supply, Abbottabad.
Qurat Ul Ain	13101-2812476-6	Mohalla Abbasia Banda Dilazak Jhangi, P/O Jhangi, Abbottabad.
Sardar Hamza	13101-6938375-3	Mohalla Khurri Banda Bagnator, P/O Bagnator, Abbottabad.
Majid Ali Abbasi	13101-0309271-5	Mohalla Abbasia Banda Dilazak Jhangi, P/O Jhangi, Abbottabad.
Khalid Mehmood	13101-0972530-1	Post Office Narrian Nelor Nawansher, Abbottabad.

Notice is hereby given to the customers in above mentioned that if payment of entire outstanding amount financed along with markup is not made by them to Mobilink Bank within 1 day of the publication of this notice, Mobilink Bank shall auction the gold ornaments and no further Public Notice shall be issued to call upon the customers to make the payments.

Mobilink Bank



PAF BASE, PESHAWAR TENDER NOTICE

CLOSED FRAME WORK AGREEMENT

Sealed quotations are required for the following items:

- Battery (Acid & Maintenance Free) Tyres & Tubes All Types
- Toner All Types (for Printers & PPC Machines)
- Cleaning Materials / Stationary / Packing & Preservation items
- Air Conditioners (1, 1.5 & 2 ton Rev/Non-Rev), Water Dispensers and parts
- Misc Items {Dry Cells (All Types), Thinner, Paint, Elphy, Samad Bond, Epoxy, WD-40, Contact Cleaner, Tapes (all types) etc}
- MT Lubes (Engine Oil, Aero shell, Gear Oil, Transmission Oil & Grease all grades)
- All types of Guard Filters / Recurring Spare Parts of MT Vehicles

List of items against Cleaning material, stationery items, Misc Items, Toners, may be obtained from the given Mobile No.

Tender Closing Date & Time: **02 July, 2024 (1030 hrs)**

Tender Opening Date & Time: **02 July, 2024 (1100 hrs)**

Note:- Detail specification and annual estimated Qty are subject to authorization and trend analysis (which may vary less than 10%, owing to the allocated fund) and may be obtained from Officer In-charge Log Sqn PAF Base, Peshawar, Tel No. 091-9503867, Mobile: 03207789544.

Terms & Conditions: -

Quotations after due date & time will not be entertained. **Validity of rates up to 365 days are to ensure;** quotations, having validity less than 365 Days will be rejected. Quotations, should bear Quotation **Serial No and Date. GST (as applicable by Govt.)** which should separately be mentioned on Quotation. EDD should be clearly mentioned on quotations, as days / weeks or months. Each bid shall comprise one single envelope containing financial proposal. Submission of quotations, contrary to **PPRA Rule-22** will be rejected. **The Procuring agency reserves the right to increase / decrease the number and quantity of items.** Procuring agency may reject all bids or proposals, at any time, on technical grounds, as per **PPRA Rule - 33 Sub-Rule 1.** All Participants / their representatives must be present at the time of tender opening, as per **PPRA Rule - 28 Sub-Rule (II).**

**Officer Commanding
Support Wing
PAF Base, Peshawar
Tele Ext 3863**



PESHAWAR: A large number of people purchasing sacrificial animals at Kala Mandi for upcoming Eidul Azha. — APP photo

PHC dismisses writ against nomination of PHF's president

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) dismissed writ challenging the nomination of Tariq Mansoor Bugtti as the President of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), on Thursday.

The nomination challenged by Naeem Akhtar stated that he was General Secretary PHF and had resigned from his position but later withdrew his resignation. The plea argued that the PHF's current Secretary General, Rana Mujahid, had no authority to call a meeting for the election of the President, as his own resignation had not been accepted.

PHF's lawyer, Asif Jalal, argued that the PHF is a private organization and not a government institution, and therefore writ isn't maintainable in this regard. He also pointed out that the petitioner had already resigned from his position and had no standing to challenge the election of the President.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justices Ijaz Anwar and Syed Arshad Ali dismissed the petition, holding that the PHF is a private organization and lacks writ's jurisdiction.

Lal Sher commends Army's role in safeguarding country

F.P. Report



PESHAWAR: Former Provincial Assembly Candidate and Ex-Chairman Haji Malik Lal Sher Muhammad Zai commends the dedication of Pakistan in safeguarding the country.

Talking to media representatives in Peshawar, he emphasized the pivotal role of Pakistan's armed forces in safeguarding the nation.

He expressed gratitude for the strong military bestowed upon the country by the grace of Allah, asserting that the sacrifices made by the Pakistan Army to ensure the nation's security are undeniable.

He praised the dedication of the youth who willingly offer their lives to defend the country, describing their commitment as commendable.

Zai highlighted that the preparedness and vigilance of the armed forces allow citizens to live peacefully in their homes. He emphasized the military's frontline role in thwarting enemy conspiracies, ensuring the nation's security remains intact.

Acknowledging Pakistan's global reputation due to its relentless efforts, Zai underscored that no force in the world can overlook Pakistan with disdain. He mentioned that through collective efforts aligned with modern demands, the nation's security is being fortified, with the Pakistan Army at the helm, a source of pride for all.

CS meets Mohmand traders

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary, met with a delegation of industrialists and businessmen from the Mohmand Chamber of Commerce and Industries. The delegation presented various issues impacting the Mohmand Economic Zone.

Kundi for equipping youth with market-related skills

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has emphasized the importance of equipping youth with skills according to the requirements of the market.

He expressed these views during a meeting with the Director General of the Neoteric Regional Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Irfan Aman Yousafzai, at the Governor House Peshawar yesterday.

Governor KP stated that for addressing the economic challenges of Pakistan, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is a dire need for a trained workforce.

He mentioned that controlling unemployment solely through government and private institutions is not possible, but if the new generation is equipped with skills according to modern requirements, they can become self-employed.

He also praised the initiatives taken for the empowerment of women under Neoteric. During the meeting, Director General Neoteric Irfan Aman Yousafzai briefed Governor KP on the institution's efforts regarding training courses for youth and women, as well as overall institutional performance.

He informed that under the Prime Minister's Skill Development Program, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has approximately seven hundred institutions partnered, including twenty-nine government and several private universities, in the IT, technical, and agriculture-based sectors.

Various suggestions regarding training programs for youth and women across the province were also exchanged during the meeting.

Governor directs Sui Northern to resolve issue of gas shortage

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi has directed authorities of Sui Northern to address problems of people relating to gas shortage and supply.

The governor was talking to General Manager Sui Northern, Waqas Ullah Shinwari who called on him in Governor House Peshawar. He expressed concern over unavailability of gas to consumers in summer and directed authorities to address the issue.

He also discussed establishment of Sui Northern Regional Office in D I Khan, extension of gas provision network and gas supply to consumers in D I Khan. He said that authorities should take steps to resolve issues of people relating to gas and directed to reduce gas load shedding in summer.

APP adds: Governor offers minorities to hold festivals in Governor House

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said the minorities of our country have played a pivotal role in enhancing the country's prestige and image on national and international level and the nation was proud of the role of those deployed at higher posts from this segment.

Talking to different religious minority groups including Christians, Hindus, Parsi, Sikh and others here, the Governor said religious festivals of the minorities will be held at Governor's House.

On the occasion Secretary Finance and Coordination PPP, Farzand Ali Wazir heads of the delegations including Bishop Humphry Sarfaraz Peter, Church of Pakistan Pushup Ernest Jacob, Haunch Hashmat, Chairman Assembly of God Church Masih Pastor, PPP president Naseeb Chan, Dr Sawera Parkash, General Secretary Yaisr Bahatti and others were present.

The Governor said that Pakistan Peoples Party accorded prime priority to the welfare of the minorities whether it was increase in Senate seats or protection of rights of the minorities at assembly floor.

He said he was thankful to his party for imposing confidence in his services adding he will try his best to come up to the expectations of his party leadership.

"I am not the governor from PPP but from all the parties of the province", the governor said.

"I am well aware of the problems faced by the minority segments of the society in the past but will try my best to compensate for those shortcomings". The Governor further said that he was thankful to the party for honoring him with governorship of the province and headship of BISP. Today, he said the minority delegations which came to the Governor House consisted of all the political parties and not only from PPP. The Governor maintained that half of the national cricket team consisted of players from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but sadly our historical cricket ground, Arbab Niaz Stadium was yet to be completed despite passage of 10 years. There was no First-Class Cricket in the province for a long time, he added.

Kundi further assured the delegations that he will not let down the minorities and a special quota for them will be created in educational institutions adding that all other missing privileges will be provided to them. He assured that issues of minorities related to the NADRA offices will be addressed on priority besides the demand of 'Shamshan Ghatt' will also be fulfilled at the earliest.

Including Edwards College, the Governor said conditions of other educational institutions in the province was not praiseworthy and we have to divert our attention towards these critical matters. The participants of the delegation told the Governor that his appointment as Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was a matter of relief and pride for them. For the addressal of issues of minorities, they will need guidance and help from the Governor's Office.

Speaker shows concern over rise of psychiatric patients in country

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The number of psychiatric patients in Pakistan is increasing with each passing day, attributed to various societal issues and neglect of mental health. Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Salim Swati expressed these concerns during a meeting with a delegation from the Pakistan Psychiatric Society.

The meeting, held at the Fountain House Peshawar, facilitated detailed discussions on prevalent issues in the province.

Provincial Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah also attended the meeting alongside the Speaker. The delegation, comprising experts in the field of psychiatry including Dr. Ahsan Naveed Arfan, Professor Khalid Mufti, Dr. Sajid Dawood, Professor Sultan, Professor Wajid Ali, Dr. Bashir Ahmed, Dr. Amjad, and others, shed light on various pressing issues before the Health Minister.

Highlighting the importance of addressing mental health issues, Minister Shah assured of the government's serious efforts in the healthcare sector.

He stressed on the sensitivity of mental health issues and the need for collaboration between the government and psychiatric experts. Minister Shah also assured immediate resolution of faculty shortages in hospitals, promising to provide necessary staff initially and fulfilling additional staff requirements gradually.

Speaker Babar Salim Swati commended the Health Minister for his personal interest and thanked him for dedicating time to the forum.

He acknowledged the efforts of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society, emphasizing their vital role in directly impacting human lives through their services. He expressed hope that their dedication would continue for the betterment of society.

Opting between fixed tax or percentage KPRA gives June 25 deadline for wedding halls

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority has fixed 25th of this month as deadline for the owners of wedding halls across the province to opt between fixed regime of sales tax on services and percentage regime for the coming financial year 2024-25.

According to details shared by the KPRA media wing, through the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2024 the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has introduced a fixed or flat sales tax regime for the services provided by the wedding halls.

Under the new setup, wedding halls have been divided in three categories i.e., Category-A, Category-B and Category-C based on their seating capacity.

For this purpose, a new clause has been inserted in Entry No. 1 of the Second Schedule to the KP Sales Tax Act, 2022 which shall take effect from the first day of July 2024.

The aim of this step was to simplify the payment mechanism by the sector besides bringing transparency and fairness in the system. This will not only reduce compliance cost but will also increase administrative efficiency through streamlined tax collection processes, reducing the need for extensive tax enforcement and audit mechanisms.

This new tax rates are significantly low as compared to previous rate of 10% of the value of such services.

One of the conditions of the above amendments requires owner or authorized representative of marriage halls, lawns, pandals and shamianas (Classification 9801.3000) to opt for the new regime latest by 25th of June 2024. Such option shall be submitted to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority on the format which is available on its official website www.kpra.gov.pk or just visiting the link <https://kpra.gov.pk/option-for-the-person-providing-or-rendering-marriage-halls-servicesndals-and-shamianas-services/>.

If the concerned businesses don't opt for the new and simple tax regime by the specified date, they will have to pay sales tax at the enhanced rate of 11% of the actual value or charges received from their customers besides extensive tax enforcement and audit checks.

Faiz Midani retires after serving ICS for 27 years

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Islamia Collegiate School (ICS) Teaching Staff Association held farewell ceremony for Faiz u Rehman Midani on his retirement after serving the institution for 27 years, on Thursday.

ICS Teaching Staff Association president Kafeel Ahmad, Muhammad Shehzad, General Secretary, Principal Sikandar Khan, Vice Principal Hayat Khan, and all members of the cabinet participated in the event.

He was praised for his professional services and planted a tree in the school premises. The ceremony was concluded with a tribute paid by the Principal and President to Midani's dedication and service to the school.

Four-day green expo 2024 concludes



PESHAWAR (APP): A four-day long green expo 2024 aimed to create environmental awareness and promoting sustainability among students concluded here on Thursday at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar (SBBWU).

The expo was organized by Green Youth Movement (GYM) Club at SBBWU in collaboration with Dosti Welfare Organization.

The included various activities including debate and painting competitions in which a number of students participated with great zeal.

A green corner was also set up and decorated by the students of Department of Botany under the supervision of Dr Faiza Tawab Incharge, Department of Botany and Focal person GYM, SBBWP and Dr Naila Inayat from Department of Botany.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Safia Ahmad graced the occasion followed by an interactive session hosted by GYM.

Saira Khan Afridi, Lecturer and USA certified masters trainer, Department of Economics, SBBWU briefed the audience on the role of youth leadership in climate action. At the end, winners of the competitions were given cash prizes, certificates and shields.

Shandur Polo Festival Govt to welcome tourists from all over the world

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary Tourism and Culture Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan has said that in the light of the instructions of Tourism and Culture Advisor Zahid Chanzab, all the arrangements for the Shandur Polo Festival have been finalized which will start as per schedule on the date announced by the Chief Minister i.e. Friday, June 28.

Apart from Pakistan, tourists from all over the world are welcome to participate in this 3-day extravaganza, he added.

He expressed these views while presiding over the review meeting held in the conference room of the Department of Tourism and Culture, Peshawar. The Secretary Tourism said that the top officials of the administration of both the districts of Chitral, including the Deputy Commissioner of Upper Chitral, are constantly reviewing the highways and security arrangements themselves, while the Deputy Commissioner of Upper Chitral has also canceled the holidays of the employees at the local level while he is also in constant contact with local people and leaders of Chitral. He said that immediately after Eid-ul-Azha, various administrative teams of the Department of Tourism and Culture will be dispatched to the venue of Shandur Polo Festival so that the preparations at the Shandur Ground are not only made fool-proof, but also the best arrangements are made. If necessary, additional facilities would also be provided for tourists, he maintained.



PESHAWAR: Blacksmith busy in sharpening knives to be used for slaughtering sacrificial animals ahead of Eid-ul Azha at Hashtnagri area.



In brief

Five perished in road accident

FAISALABAD (PPI): Five people, including four women, were killed in a rickshaw-car collision in Faisalabad, police said Thursday. As per details, the incident occurred near Jhumra flyover where a speeding car rammed into a loader rickshaw and killed five, injuring three others. The police officials stated that a worker identified as Amjad was on his way home with his family when the speeding car collided with the loader rickshaw. The deceased include five members of one family, including mother, her two minor daughters, her son and her mother-in-law. Furthermore, the injured father and two sons were shifted to the nearby hospital whereas the suspect driver managed to flee the spot of the incident.

Ice-drug to be eradicated F.P. Report

BANNU: Commissioner Bannu Pervaiz Sobat Khel chaired a review meeting of the Joint National Action Plan, focusing on eradicating the ice drug menace from the region. Following provincial government instructions, the initiative targets educational institutions first, where drug tests will be conducted on students and other affected individuals. The meeting attended by Deputy Commissioner Shah Saud Khan, district police, excise officials, and sensitive agencies, emphasized emergency measures to combat drug use, highlighting the need for a coordinated system among police, legal experts, and other agencies. Orders were issued to establish a drug rehabilitation center in Bannu and eliminate illegal businesses. Commissioner also called for detailed reports on foreign nationals in North Waziristan, Bannu, and Lakki Marwat to formulate a future action plan. Security measures will be tightened to prevent any incidents, and officials were instructed to avoid sharing official documents on social media, with legal action warned for violations. Funds will be allocated to ensure the timely completion of police development projects.

Five injured as vehicle overturns F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: Five people including two women and a child were injured when a vehicle turned turtle due to failure of brakes here on Thursday, police said. According to details, the accident took place near Kotkay Bridge on Balakot-Mansehra where a vehicle got out of control of driver after its brakes failed. The overturning of vehicle resulting in injuries to Imitaz 30, Saleem 25, Umer 10, and two women. The police and rescue teams reached the scene and shifted the injured to King Abdullah Hospital Mansehra for treatment.

Two dacoits held F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The district police on Thursday claimed to have arrested two dacoits involved in multiple cases of robberies, in the limits of Cantt and City police stations. SDPO City Circle Muhammad Adnan told that following the directions of District Police Officer Nasir Mehmood, the district police have tightened a noose around anti-social elements and traced multiple dacoity incidents that took place in the jurisdictions of Cantt and City police stations. A police team led by SDPO City Circle Muhammad Adnan along with SHO City police station Zeshan Iqbal and SHO Cantt Arslan Khan Gandapur arrested two dacoits named Junaid son of Javed and Taib Ullah son of Latif, residents of Tank.



JHELUM: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi paying homage to martyrs of ANF.

Free medical camp held for prisoners at Mardan Jail

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A free medical camp for prisoners at Central Jail organized on the direction of Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Iftikhar Ali Mashwani. Superintendent Central Jail Mardan Najam Abbasi welcomed MPA Iftikhar Ali Mashwani and the team of doctors for organizing the medical camp.

The free medical camp was inaugurated by Member Provincial Assembly Iftikhar Ali Mashwani. A total of 20 specialist doctor's male/female participated in the free medical camp. MS District Headquarters Hospital Mardan Dr. Javed Iqbal and Hospital Director MMC Dr. Tariq Mehmood Seemat. Specialist doctors diagnosed about 1200 male/female inmates in the jail and provided prescribed medicines free of charge. Paramedical staff doctors assisted the incarcerated patients.

Iftikhar Ali Mashwani saw all the stages including examination of patients, supply of medicines and expressed his satisfaction. MPA said that it is the responsibility of the state and institutions to provide security, health and education and other facilities to the prisoners in the prison. The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is working hard in the health sector for the common citizens.

THQ deprives from basic facilities: Despite the clear orders of the provincial government, THQ Hospital Takhtbhai is deprived of health card, the operation equipment, surgical cleaning machine has been damaged for several

months. The entire population of Takhtbhai Tehsil is deprived of the facility of free treatment in THQ Hospital.

The government of Pakhtunkhwa has restored the provision of health facilities to all men and women under the Sahat Sahulat Card Program for holders of computerized national identity cards, but the population of Tehsil Takhtbhai has not received this facility at the largest government hospital in its area deprived because the facility of treatment on health card is not available in Tehsil Hospital till now. It is the only hospital which has the status of Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in the entire district of Mardan.

According to the statistics available on the Health Card website, at present there are only two government hospitals in the district on the panel of the Health Department that care for patients under the Health Card program two of these hospitals are Mardan Medical Complex, District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Mardan and two other private hospitals. Officials of the District Health Office (DHO) Mardan said on condition of anonymity that the government and health department officials have completed the survey process of THQ Hospital Takhtbhai but so far it has not been given health card. Not brought on panel.

DHO officials have taken up the matter with the KP Health Department to include the only THQ hospital in the health card scheme but there has been no positive progress so far. Deprived of health insurance and other basic amenities,

THQ Takhtbhai is located in the hometown of senior PTI leader and MNA Ali Muhammad Khan and MPA Iftikhar.

Moreover, the hospital also lacks the facilities of sterilization autoclave machines and hygiene kits which can be hazardous to the health of doctors and patients. Due to the non-availability of a machine to sterilize the operation equipment, the lives of pregnant women who come to the hospital for C-section or delivery may be at risk, but the hospital administration remains a silent spectator. The people of the area appealed to Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur, Member National Assembly Ali Muhammad Khan, Member Provincial Assembly Iftikhar Ali Mashwani and other officials of the health department to take immediate notice and restore other facilities in the hospital.

3 injured

MURIDKE (INP): Three people were critically injured in armed clash between two groups over property dispute here on Thursday, police said.

According to details, armed men of two groups which were in old dispute over property ownership traded fire in Dahrnwala area of Murike.

In cross firing, three people were critically injured. Heavy contingent of police reached the scene, brought the situation under control and shifted the injured to Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital. The police after registering a case against armed men of the two clashing groups started an investigation.

Pasban-e-Hurriyat flays closure of SHRC in IIOJK

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Uzair Ahmed Ghazali has condemned the closure of institutions like "State Human Rights Commission" and "Kashmir Press Club" referring such acts as the most serious threats to human rights and peace in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In a statement issued here on Thursday, he said that the closure of these institutions in addition to elimination of the Right to Information Act in 2019, after which the Indian soldiers and other forces under

the command of Delhi got an open license for human rights violations that they are subjecting the Kashmiri citizens to the worst atrocities.

Ghazali said that on June 29, 2011, a judicial commission was established based on the report of the State Human Rights Commission, an independent investigative body against the security personnel who killed Junaid Khoru during custody. "Unfortunately, after the end of "SHRC" the culprits have not been punished," he said.

He further said that there was no agency to target or independently investigate the war crimes, terrorist acts and illegal activities of Indian soldiers in Indian

Occupied Kashmir. "Due to which, the Indian forces are freely committing the worst crimes like killing, illegal arrests, and torture of Kashmiri citizens in fake encounters," he added.

He demanded the international human rights organizations Amnesty International, Asia Watch, Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights and Save the Children to end the restrictions imposed by the Delhi government on the human rights institutions in Occupied Kashmir. He also demanded the right of access to information to the Kashmiri citizens and to end the strict restrictions imposed on the media in IIOJK.

Commissioner stresses zero waste during Eidul Azha days

SARGODHA (APP): Commissioner Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti has underscored the importance of implementing a zero waste initiative across the division, particularly during the Eidul-Azha festivities.

He directed all municipal officers to efficiently carry out their duties, ensuring no lapses in administrative and security measures. During a preparatory and cleanliness operation review meeting

for Eid, chaired by the commissioner, it was emphasised that cleanliness would be a significant challenge throughout the three days of Eid. Bhatti instructed deputy commissioners to ensure prompt execution of all arrangements outlined in the cleanliness plan. This includes providing biodegradable bags to households in cities and major towns, as well as digging trenches for the proper burial of sacrificial animals

in accordance with the standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Special teams were directed to promptly address any complaints received through control rooms and portals during Eid days. The commissioner emphasised the importance of the presence of deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners, and municipal officers in the field during Eid days to oversee operations.

Maryam as CM Punjab achieves milestones

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Former Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar said that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif took result-oriented and people friendly steps during her first 100 days of good governance which reflected her success and capacity.

She said that first 100 days of the government, Chief Minister of the Punjab was taken special initiative for providing better healthcare, educational facilities, cheap Roti, issuance of Kisan Cards, improvement in Municipal Services and execution of different development schemes and other measures taken to provide relief to people were proved revolutionary and people friendly.

She said that under Kisan Card programme, markup free loans worth three billion of rupees were being given to farmers in the Punjab for increasing per acre agriculture yield. She said that the Punjab government was introduce distribution of lap top and motorcycle schemes for promising students.

DC commits for inter-faith harmony: Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad urged the Ulema, civil society and prominent personalities to play their vital role to maintain law and order, to promote inter-faith harmony, tolerance, brotherhood and unity on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha.

While addressing the Meeting of District Peace Committee and Interfaith Harmony Committee, DC said that Islam teaches us lesson of tolerance, unity, interfaith harmony, affection, tranquility and coherence. She said that district administration and police was finalised comprehensive plan to ensure peace, cleanliness and to lift off of sacrificial animals during Eid Days and it was also responsibility of the citizens to place offal at fixed points so that sanitary workers could lift easily.

She said that only those religious Madrassahs, religious organisations could collect sacrificial animals hides which get permit from district administration while no one would be allowed to collect hides without permit.

Addressing the meeting, DPO Faisal Gulzar said that foolproof security arrangements would be made to protect Eid congregations at Eidghahs, Masjid and other places. The members of committee assured that they would be played their positive role for keeping traditional peace in the district.

D&SJ inspects facilities at district jail F.P. Report

KARAK: District and Sessions Judge Karak, Rozina Rehman paid visit to Central Prison Karak visited and inspected all the sectors including juvenile barracks, on Thursday.

D&SJ along with Learned Judicial Magistrate-I Mr. Sahibzada Haroon Ur Rashid and Judicial Magistrate-II, Majid Ali Khan inspected Juvenile female and cook house sections of the Jail, and inquired about the issues and problems they faces in the Jail.

Removal of roadside encroachments at bazaars demanded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Social activist and member of the district dispute resolution council (DRC) Syed Hassan advocate has demanded of the Lower Dir administration to implement the Supreme Court of Pakistan verdict regarding the removal of roadside encroachments in Talash. Talking to local journalists at Talash on Thursday, he complained that traffic jams in Ziarat, Kalpani and Nasafa bazaars had made the lives of local residents and motorists miserable.

The DRC member pointed out that the majority of the shopkeepers had occupied roadsides blocking smooth flow of traffic. He said the SCP had issued strict directives to district administration through the home department that all roads should be cleared of illegal encroachments. He said the shopkeepers in bazaars at Talash had encroached roads thus causing traffic mess. He also criticized the tehsil municipal administration for doing nothing to clear choked drains on roadsides in Talash. He said that rain-water always flowed on the roads because of the choked drains.

Meanwhile the Talash traders' body and land owners told this reporter on

contact that they would not oppose any lawful actions by the administration. The land owners said that they had donated 40 feet wide land for construction of the main road and the government should pay them extra if the road was being widened. The shopkeepers said the traffic remained jammed at the bazaar because of customers' vehicles as they parked their cars in front of the shops and returned after hours. They also demanded the TMA to clear roadside drains at the bazaar.

The district administration under the supervision of deputy commissioner Wasil Khan has launched an anti-encroachment drive in parts of the district but local traders' communities and landowners are protesting against it. The traders' bodies have demanded the administration to stop pulling down roadside buildings before taking them into confidence.

Oath taking ceremony: The newly elected cabinet members of the Mutaahida Paramedics Class IV association on Wednesday took oath during a function held at the district headquarters hospital Timergara. The hospital medical superintendent Dr Ali Asghar administered the oath to the newly elected president

Syed Farooq Ali Shah, general secretary Zahir Shah and other cabinet members. Doctors, paramedical staff, nurses and class IV employees attended the function.

Addressing the gathering Dr Ali Asghar, deputy MS Dr Sheraz, president nursing association Hidayatullah, Paramedical association former president Muhammad Rahim and others congratulated the newly elected office bearers and hoped they would serve their community with honesty and devotion.

Meanwhile the Azad group of Paramedics class IV rejected the election and termed it illegal and unconstitutional. Addressing a meeting, the Azad group members including Mujtaba, Irfan Khan, Dilawar and Sahibullah announced that they would challenge the election in the court. They termed it a selection instead of election and alleged their group was not allowed to contest the election despite submission of nomination papers. They said the Azad group having a clear majority was excluded from the process. They demanded the provincial leadership to declare the recent election as null and void and hold a free and fair election.

Modi premiership and Indo-Pak relations

Anum Hamid

A S Narendra Modi takes the oath as Prime Minister of India for the third time, it sparks contemplation across borders. This development carries implications not only for India but also for its neighbor, Pakistan.

The relationship between India and Pakistan has historically been tumultuous, marked by political tensions and occasional escalations. The reelection

of Prime Minister Modi raises questions about the future dynamics between the two countries. Will there be political stability, fostering a climate of dialogue and cooperation? Or will there be continued tussles, hindering progress and regional stability?

Critical analysis of the election process is essential. Fair and transparent elections are the cornerstone of democracy, ensuring the representation of people's voices. The endorsement of the newly

formed Indian government will be closely watched, especially concerning its role in fostering peace and prosperity in the region.

It is imperative for both countries to prioritize diplomatic channels, engage in constructive dialogue, and work towards mutual understanding and cooperation. Regional stability and prosperity hinge on the ability of nations to resolve differences through peaceful means and promote shared interests.



QUETTA: People selecting and purchasing sacrificial animals at market for upcoming Eidul Azha.

DIG directs data collection regarding outlaw citizens

F.P. Report

BANNU: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Bannu directed data collections regarding suspects involved outlaw and immoral activities for maintenance of peace and suppress criminal elements in the three districts of the division. Firing, wheeling and speeding will be banned. First of all, public trust in the police will be completely restored, on Thursday.

There will be no compromise on the restoration of peace and order in North Waziristan. Progress will also come in the views expressed by DIG Bannu Region Imran Shahid in his office during a meeting with a delegation led by senior journalist and president of the Southern Districts Press Clubs Association Muhammad Alam Khan on the occasion of senior journalists Omardiaz Khan, Jamal Qamar, Karim Allah Khan, Mehboob Rahman, president of the Fruit and Vegetable Market, a prominent political and social figure,

Malik Ashur Khan Durrani, advocate, and other leaders were also present.

The list of people involved in the crime of bribery, robbery, mafia, theft, and their associates is being prepared throughout the division. When the people of the three districts are not protected, they will not sit still. He said that for the sake of the dignity and honor of the police force in Bannu district and North Waziristan, we all have to play our part when the police and public will be with you, the criminal elements cannot last long.

In this regard, the protection of the public will be ensured together with all the stakeholders of the division. They will fight to provide security and play a key role in restoring peace and closing the gaps between the public and the police. He added that the traffic system will be reactivated and the current traffic.

Meanwhile, Tehsil Municipal Administration Bannu formed teams for the operation on the site of Eid

al-Zahai, different zones were designated for focal persons, points were established in eleven uses of Tashil Benu, sanitation land and fire brigade branches officers and personnel's holidays were canceled Under the direction of Mayor Irfan Durrani, under the chairmanship of Tehsil Municipal Officer Muhammad Yousaf Khan, a meeting was held regarding the preparation of the Eid plan.

In the meeting, the officers and officials of all branches of TMA Bannu participated during the time within the limits of Tehsil Bannu. On 11th June, teams of employees were regularly formed to remove the remains of the victim and to destroy the objects, while Land Inspector Hafiz Karim Dad Khan, Land Branch Sanitary Inspector Wali Ayaz Khan focal persons were appointed in this regard. TMA boys have set up a complaint cell for any complaint during Eid, in which citizens can file a complaint regarding any emergency.



Friday, June 14, 2024



YEREVAN: Police blocked the way to protesters during a rally against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Armenia.

Opposition party agrees to join SA unity government

JOHNNESBURG (BBC): The leader of South Africa's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) says his party has agreed to form part of a government of national unity that includes the African National Congress (ANC) and the biggest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Velenkosini Hlabisa told reporters at a media briefing in Durban: "The only options were to become part of the government, or part of the opposition." "The people of South Africa who voted said that political parties must find a common ground," Mr Hlabisa said.

South Africans have been eagerly waiting to know who would form the next government after the ANC lost its majority in last month's elections. This is the first official indication that a government of national unity has been agreed, although the DA and ANC have not yet commented. The ANC has previously said it wanted to form a unity government and had engaged with all of the country's opposition parties. The new parliament is due to be sworn in on Friday, when it is expected to elect a presi-

dent, so the ANC would hope to have agreed a deal by then. It insists that Cyril Ramaphosa must remain the country's leader.

The ANC vote fell below 50% for the first time since Nelson Mandela led them to victory in 1994 and ended the racist system of apartheid, forcing them to look for coalition partners. The ANC got about 40% of the vote, with the centre-right Democratic Alliance (DA) on 22%, the MK party of former President Jacob Zuma on 15% and the radical Economic Freedom Fighters on 9%. The IFP, which is a conservative party with a strong Zulu base, got about 4% of the vote share in the election.

Many ANC activists would prefer to do a deal with the EFF and MK, which are both led by former senior ANC officials. However, such a coalition would alarm investors because these parties favour seizing white-owned land without compensation and nationalising the country's mines. The business community would prefer a coalition between the ANC and DA. Bringing in other parties, such as the IFP, would help deflect criticism

that the ANC leadership was "selling out" by working with the DA, seen by some South Africans as representing the country's white minority. The DA opposes two of the ANC's core policies - its black empowerment programme, which aims to give black people a stake in the economy following their exclusion under apartheid, and the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, which promises universal healthcare for all. "We will participate in the government of national unity for the sake of our country and for the sake of our people, who want life to continue with a stable government that will address their challenges," Mr Hlabisa said. Mr Hlabisa assured IFP supporters the party would not "lose its identity" as they have worked in a coalition government before.

Following the historic 1994 elections, Mr Mandela's ANC worked with his former enemies in the National Party, which was responsible for the implementation of apartheid, as well as the IFP, whose supporters had frequently clashed with ANC activists, leading to thousands of deaths.

Armenian leader announces plan to leave Russia security alliance

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP): The leader of Armenia declared his intention to pull out of a Russia-dominated security alliance of several ex-Soviet nations as tensions rise between the two allies.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said his government will decide later when to leave the Collective Security Treaty Organization, or CSTO, a grouping that includes Russia and the former Soviet Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Amid the widening rift with Russia, Armenia earlier froze its participation in the alliance, canceled its involvement in joint military drills and snubbed CSTO summits.

Pashinyan said for the first time that Armenia will leave CSTO altogether. He spoke during a question-and-answer session in parliament, saying that the government will decide later when to make the final move. "We will leave," Pashinyan said. "We will decide when to leave. We won't come back, there is

no other way." Shortly after, in an apparent attempt to soften the blow to Moscow, Armenia's Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan emphasized that Pashinyan hadn't announced the full withdrawal yet.

"Those who assert that the prime minister said that Armenia is withdrawing from the CSTO are mistaken," Mirzoyan said. There was no immediate comment from Moscow. Armenia's ties with Russia, its longtime sponsor and ally, have grown increasingly strained after Azerbaijan waged a lightning military campaign in September to take the Karabakh region, ending three decades of ethnic Armenian separatist rule there.

Armenian authorities accused Russian peacekeepers who were deployed to Nagorno-Karabakh after a previous round of hostilities in 2020 of failing to stop Azerbaijan's onslaught. Moscow, which has a military base in Armenia, rejected the accusations, arguing that its

troops didn't have a mandate to intervene. Speaking to lawmakers, Pashinyan denounced the CSTO for its failure to offer protection to Armenia and alleged that some of its members sided with Azerbaijan. "It turned out that its members failed to fulfill their obligations under the treaty and planned the war against us alongside Azerbaijan," he said, without elaborating.

Russia has engaged in a delicate balancing act, trying to preserve close relations with Armenia while also maintaining warm ties with Azerbaijan and its main ally Turkey, a key economic partner for Moscow amid Western sanctions. The Kremlin has been angered by Pashinyan's efforts to deepen Armenia's ties with the West and distance his country from Moscow-dominated alliances. Russia was particularly vexed by Armenia's decision to join the International Criminal Court, which last year indicted Putin for alleged war crimes connected to Russian actions in Ukraine.

Moscow, however, has sought to downplay the differences as it focused on the war in Ukraine that has dragged into a third year. Pashinyan's move comes as he faces a wave of large protests demanding he step down over his government's decision to turn over four border villages to Azerbaijan as part of an effort to negotiate a peace agreement with its longtime adversary.

Violent clashes erupted when thousands of protesters gathered outside the parliament building tried to break through police cordons. Demonstrators threw bottles and stones at police, who used stun grenades to ward off the crowds. About 100 people, including 17 police officers, were injured and 98 demonstrators were detained by police, officials said. There were at least 10 journalists among the injured, and the country's Union of Journalists issued a statement condemning what it described as disproportionate police response and demanding to prosecute the culprits.

G7 leaders to kick off summit in Italy's southern Puglia

BARI: Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) countries are gearing up for a three-day summit to discuss global affairs in the southern region of Puglia (Apulia). The event will start on Thursday in Borgo Egnazia, a luxurious resort surrounded by olive trees in the style of a medieval village and very much loved by celebrities including popstar Madonna.

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, the host of this year's summit, will be welcoming the heads of state of the seven members - the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Canada and the United Kingdom - as well as the chiefs of the European Council and the European Commission.

As the "like-minded" group tries to shake off its reputation of being a club just for the wealthy West, Italy has extended an invitation to more than 10 other countries for sideline discussions. These include

UAE's Mohamed bin Zayed, Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Notable absentees are Egypt and Saudi Arabia, who, according to a list seen by Al Jazeera, had been invited. The timing could not be better for Meloni, who will preside over the summit as Europe's rising star following her far-right party's victory at the recent European Parliament elections that saw a turn to the right across the continent.

"I'm proud to be heading to the G7 with the strongest government of all," the prime minister said on her way to Puglia. Africa and the Mediterranean - two key national security issues - will feature prominently in the summit. Meloni is expected to expand her flagship foreign policy, the so-called Mattei Plan. The project aims to position Italy as a major energy hub between Europe and the

African continent in the hope of boosting growth in Africa and, in turn, curbing immigration to Europe.

Support for Ukraine is also top of the agenda. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is scheduled to arrive on the summit's first day for two sessions dedicated to the war-torn country. The G7's most anticipated outcome is an agreement over a \$50bn loan for Ukraine backed by profits accrued on Russian assets frozen in the West soon after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. An Italian source told Al Jazeera there was political will to announce a deal at the summit, even if some technical issues need ironing out. Such an agreement, the source said, would send a strong message of unity with Kyiv at a time when Ukrainian soldiers are on the back foot, and Moscow is making steady gains in the east and north of the country. A potential change

in the White House in the US's November elections has added to the urgency.

Another session is on the Middle East, where Israel's war on Gaza is expected to dominate talks. Observers say leaders are likely to reiterate past positions, from calling on Hamas to accept a ceasefire deal laid out by US President Joe Biden, to acknowledging the importance of a two-state solution for peace in the region. Among the guests, there will also be Pope Francis - marking the first time a pontiff has been invited to the summit - for a session dedicated to artificial intelligence (AI). Other specific sessions will then be on migration, financial issues and the situation in the Asia Pacific. A final statement is expected on Saturday. This is usually a document that indicates the direction the group's members intend to follow - crafting future policies while offering the rest of the world a window into their priorities. — Aljazeera

DR Congo boat disaster kills 80

DR CONGO (BBC): At least 80 people have died after a boat sank in Democratic Republic of Congo, the country's president has said. The disaster happened on the Kwa River, 70km (44 miles) from the town of Mushie in the province of Mai-Ndombe near the border with neighbouring Congo-Brazzaville.

In a statement on social media, President Félix Tshisekedi said he was "devastated". The president said those affected would receive help and also ordered an investigation into what caused it. "The President of the Republic is calling for an investigation into the true causes of this unfortunate incident, to prevent such a disaster from happening again in the future," the presidency said on X, formerly Twitter.

Deadly boat accidents are common in DR Congo, where boats are frequently overcrowded with passengers who are rarely given safety jackets and often cannot swim.

Poland honors soldier

WARSAW (AP): Sirens wailed and lawmakers in the Polish parliament observed a minute of silence to honor a young soldier who was fatally stabbed at the Polish-Belarusian border during a migration crisis that Poland says has been engineered by Russia and Belarus.

The soldier, Mateusz Sitek, was stabbed in the chest by a migrant who thrust a knife through a gap in a steel fence on May 28. He died of his wounds more than a week later, on June 6. Sitek was laid to rest in his home village of Nowy Lubiel in central Poland.

"He gave his life for us, for our homeland," said President Andrzej Duda, who attended the funeral. In Warsaw, the speaker of parliament, Szymon Holownia, asked lawmakers to "honor the sacrifice of this young hero," saying he had been "attacked by a bandit." Some lawmakers shouted: "Honor and glory to the heroes!"

Sirens rang out at noon at police, fire brigade and border guard posts across the country in a sign of solidarity with Sitek, who was posthumously promoted to the rank of sergeant in the army and awarded a Medal of Merit for National Defense. The death has heightened a sense of insecurity that is already elevated due to Russia's war against Ukraine just across another part of Poland's eastern border. The Belarus border crisis began in 2021, when migrants began to arrive in large numbers at the European Union's eastern border, coming through Belarus and trying to enter EU member states Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. Poland and other EU governments accused Belarus' longtime dictator Alexander Lukashenko of luring migrants from the Middle East and Africa in large numbers with visas and other assistance in order to destabilize the bloc. The sense of threat has intensified recently. Poland says it is seeing more activity by Russian and Belarusian security forces and growing aggression at the border.

Poland's previous anti-migrant government built the steel barrier at the border and pushed migrants back into Belarus, a situation that refugee rights activists criticized. A pro-EU government led by Prime Minister Donald Tusk that took power in December has also taken a hard line on the border crossings, frustrating activists who hoped the pushbacks would end. After the attack on the soldier, Tusk's government announced that a buffer zone along parts of the border with Belarus would be created with access restrictions for people who do not live in the area, including for activists and journalists. The Interior Ministry said it would go into force on Thursday. Refugee rights groups say the buffer zone will exacerbate a dire humanitarian situation and prevent them from being able to assist migrants who cross the border and find themselves in swamps and forest areas needing food or medical assistance.

Significant part of Gaza facing famine like conditions

GENEVA: Thousands of Palestinian children in Gaza have been diagnosed with malnutrition, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said, as Israel continues to severely restrict supplies of food, water, medicine and fuel to the territory. "A significant proportion of Gaza's population is now facing catastrophic hunger and famine-like conditions," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters.

"Despite reports of increased delivery of food, there is currently no evidence that those who need it most are receiving sufficient quantity and quality of food," Tedros said. 8,000 children under five years old have been diagnosed and treated for acute malnutrition in Gaza.

"However, due to insecurity and lack of access, only two stabilisation centres for severely malnourished patients can operate," the WHO chief added. Tedros said 32 deaths in the besieged Palestinian enclave have been attributed to malnutrition. United Nations officials have warned of the risk of famine as Israel continues its war on Gaza. In January, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to "ensure the delivery of basic services and essential humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza".

The UN's top court reasserted that ruling in March, demanding that Israel take "all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay... the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic serv-

ices and humanitarian assistance". Some of Israel's closest allies, including the United States, have also called for more aid to enter Gaza and reach people in need. Last month, Israel seized and shut down the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, which had served as a major gateway for aid and humanitarian workers.

Last month, International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan requested arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant on charges of alleged war crimes, including using "starvation of civilians as a method of warfare". A UN-backed independent commission also accused Israel of inflicting hunger on Palestinians.

"In relation to Israeli military operations and attacks in Gaza, the Commission found that Israeli authorities are responsible for the war crimes of starvation as a method of warfare, murder or wilful killing, intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects, forcible transfer, sexual violence, torture and inhuman or cruel treatment, arbitrary detention and outrages upon personal dignity," the panel said in a report. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said earlier this week that Israel has taken "important steps" in recent months to remove obstacles to aid delivery in Gaza, but he acknowledged that it "can and must do more".

"It is crucial to speed up the inspection of trucks and

reduce backlogs; to provide greater clarity on - and shorten the list of - prohibited goods; to increase visas for aid workers and to process them more quickly," he said at a Gaza aid conference in Jordan. Blinken, who announced \$404m in new assistance to Palestinians, also called for "clearer, more effective channels" to protect humanitarian workers from military operations.

Israeli attacks have killed at least 270 aid workers in Gaza, including seven World Central Kitchen employees in April - an incident that sparked global outrage. Aid organisations have been stressing that even the inadequate aid that gets into Gaza often fails to reach people who need it most because of the Israeli offensive.

"The US's latest humanitarian package for Gaza is a welcome step," the International Rescue Committee said. "However, the effective delivery of any financial package depends wholly on unfettered access for aid and the ability for aid workers to operate seamlessly." Beyond Gaza, the WHO's Tedros highlighted a growing health crisis in the occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces have killed hundreds of people since the outbreak of the war. "WHO has documented 480 attacks on healthcare in the West Bank since the seventh of October last year, resulting in 16 deaths and 95 injuries," he said. In one major incident, undercover Israeli forces raided a hospital in Jenin and killed three people inside the medical centre. — Aljazeera

Ship severely flooded after Houthi attack in Red Sea

WASHINGTON (BBC): The US military says a Greek-owned ship in the Red Sea has been hit by an unmanned surface vessel launched by the Houthis in Yemen, causing severe flooding and damage to the engine room.

The Royal Navy's UK's Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) office said it received reports of a ship being struck on the stern about 66 nautical miles southwest of the rebel-held port of Hodeida in Yemen. The vessel was taking on water, and not under the command of the crew, UKMTO stated. No casualties were reported.

The Iranian-backed Houthi claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it had targeted a Liberian-flagged vessel named Tutor using a sea drone. The Houthis have been attacking shipping in the Red Sea in support of the Palestinians in Gaza, causing significant disruption to world trade. In a statement, a Houthi military spokesman said the ship was attacked "using an unmanned surface boat, number of drones, and ballistic missiles", adding that the ship was "seriously

damaged, vulnerable to sinking".

The ship was targeted "because the company that owns the ship has violated the decision to ban entry into the ports of occupied Palestine", the statement said. US Central Command (CentCom) reported that "one Iranian-backed Houthi unmanned surface vessel (USV)" struck the Tutor, which it said was most recently docked in Russia. The impact "caused severe flooding and damage to the engine room", it posted on X.

CentCom added that its forces had "successfully destroyed" three anti-ship cruise missile launchers in a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen in the past 24 hours, as well as one drone launched from a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen over the Red Sea. "This continued malign and reckless behavior by the Iranian-backed Houthis threatens regional stability and endangers the lives of mariners across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden," it said. The armed Houthi group sees itself as part of an Iranian-led "axis of resistance" against Israel, the US and the wider West,

and has declared its support for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Since November, the rebel group has been carrying out attacks on ships they say are linked to Israel in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, saying their actions are in support of the Palestinians. The US and the UK have carried out a series of attacks on Houthi targets inside Yemen in response, leading the Houthis to retaliate against ships it believes are linked to those countries. The rebels' attacks on merchant vessels in the Red Sea prompted many shipping companies to stop using the waterway, through which about 12% of global seaborne trade passes.

Separately, the UN has said Houthis in Yemen have detained two more of its employees, bringing the total number of personnel seized by the group in the past week to 13. The World Health Organization (WHO) said one of its staff members was among those detained. WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X he was "deeply worried" about the situation.

Greece shuts Acropolis, schools as it braces for 43°C heatwave

ATHENS: Greece has shut the site of the ancient Acropolis to tourists, closed schools and stationed medics across Athens as it faces the first heatwave of the summer.

Temperatures were expected to hit 43 degrees Celsius (109.4 degrees Fahrenheit) and Thursday in parts of the Mediterranean country, driven by southerly winds bringing hot air and dust from North Africa.

The Acropolis hill, which includes the Parthenon temple and is one of the world's most famous archaeological sites, was closed, and Red Cross staff handed out bottles of water to tourists. Many primary schools and nurseries across the country have been told to close for two days.

Greece is one of the European countries most affected by the climate crisis. Last year, rising temperatures fuelled deadly wildfires, and erratic rains

caused some of the worst flooding on record, both of which damaged crops and livelihoods.

Similar conditions were seen last year across much of southern Europe, including Portugal, France, Spain and Italy where fires led to dozens of deaths. In Greece, fires began earlier than expected this year, including one in March. Firefighters and police were patrolling forests from air and land, ahead of what is expected to be a windy end to the week, raising the risk of fires spreading. After last year's destructive wildfires, including on the island of Rhodes, which prompted the biggest evacuation in peacetime, Greece has scaled up its preparations by hiring more staff and stepping up training.

Drones with thermal cameras were being used in Athens to coordinate the public health response, officials said. According to experts, heat is among the deadliest of natural haz-

ards; more than 61,000 people died during Europe's record-breaking summer heatwave in 2022. A combination of human-caused climate change and the arrival of the natural climate phenomenon El Nino, which contributes to higher temperatures in many parts of the world, was a factor in pushing temperatures to record levels last summer in parts of Europe.

But as El Nino fades, scientists have said climate change, primarily triggered by greenhouse gas emissions mainly from burning fossil fuels, will result in more frequent, severe and dangerous heatwaves. "Climate change across the globe is increasing the frequency, intensity and duration of heatwaves," Akshay Deoras, a research scientist at the National Centre for Atmospheric Science at the University of Reading, told Al Jazeera in 2023. "It's effectively making heatwaves into severe heatwaves." — Aljazeera

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EC raises tariffs against Chinese EVs

THE European Commission has said it would impose additional tariffs on electric vehicles (EVs) made in China. It would range from 17.4 per cent on China-made BYD to 38.1 per cent on SAIC, another Chinese EV product apart from the standard 10 per cent duty. The reason given is that these cars were given excessive subsidies.

Interestingly, the share of China's branded EVs rose from less than 1 per cent in 2019 to 8 per cent and it is expected to rise to 15 per cent in 2025. That is indeed a rapid rise, but it is not clear whether the Commission's sharp response would solve the problem.

German automakers like the BMW, which have a big market in China, are worried that if China were to retaliate as it said it would, then its exports would be affected. China's foreign ministry spokesman Li Jian said that the Commission's decision was nothing but protectionism, the Chinese commerce ministry said that it would take appropriate action.

The commission is investigating the issue of subsidies to the Chinese EVs, and the hike in tariffs is a temporary measure and it will be made permanent for five years when the investigation concludes in November. The commission's decision to increase tariffs on China-made EVs looks like a knee-jerk response because it is likely to hurt European carmakers, especially the German auto industry, than the Chinese. Germany's auto exports have a 30 per cent share of the Chinese market. There is also the complication that the tariffs will affect German cars made in China and exported to Europe. The European Commission in its investigation into the subsidies issue has said that the automakers who cooperate in the inquiry would be levied a 21 per cent tariff, while those who do not cooperate will be levied a 38.1 per cent tariff hike. But the Chinese automakers do not seem to be affected by the commission's tariff salvo.

The Chinese Passenger Car Association (CPCA) Secretary General Cui Dongshu said, "The EU's provisional tariffs come basically within our expectations, averaging around 20 per cent, which won't have much of an impact on the majority of Chinese firms. Those exporting China-made EVs that include Tesla, Geely, and BYD still have huge potential for development in Europe in the future." Chinese EV-makers and suppliers are also looking to set up production units in Europe. Apart from their ideological opposition – democracy versus communism – Europe and America are fighting a part economic war and part political one. They also want to pressure the Chinese economy as a way of discouraging Beijing from giving any substantial aid to Russia in Moscow's war in Ukraine. Economic sanctions against Russia have not deterred Moscow from continuing to wage war in Ukraine. And raising tariffs against Chinese exports is unlikely to force Beijing to change its Russia policy. It is true that on the economic front, China does pose a challenge to the markets in Europe and America with its cheap goods, including EVs. Raising tariff barriers is one of the ways of protecting domestic markets, but it might not be the most effective way. Europe and America will have to raise their capacity to manufacture efficiently, with reasonably low costs. But that is a tall order for the West. As a matter of fact, it is the West who built up China as an economic giant by transferring their manufacturing to China where the wages were cheap. The West is caught in a trap of its own making. There is also the clear danger that if the Chinese manufacturing capacity were to shrink suddenly, there would be a global economic crisis.

Macron's gamble

AHEAD of Sunday's European election results, attention was understandably focused on the impact of a potential far-right surge on the balance of power in Brussels institutions. In the event, the pan-European centre held, just about, with more moderate conservative parties generally enjoying a good night. But that was not even close to being the main headline of the evening.

Emmanuel Macron's shock decision to call snap legislative elections, after a humiliating defeat at the hands of Marine Le Pen's National Rally party (RN), is a gamble of the highest order, taken from a position of weakness. Even by the standards of a president who created his own movement to demolish the traditional centre-left and centre-right, it is a surprisingly risky move. In a Sunday evening address, Mr Macron told the nation that it was a necessary one in order to "clarify" a result that saw the extreme right win a combined 40% of the vote. That clarification, when it comes on 7 July, may or may not be welcome. Mr Macron will hope to call the bluff of a substantial section of the electorate, calculating that voters who cast a protest ballot at the weekend will think again when confronted with the possibility of Ms Le Pen's protégé, Jordan Bardella, becoming prime minister next month. Alternatively, he may believe that a period of "cohabitation" with an RN-led government would usefully demonstrate the radical right's unfitness for office, spiking its guns before the climactic presidential contest due in 2027. Lacking a majority in the national assembly, Mr Macron may also aspire to unite moderate parties behind him at what one leading politician described as "five minutes to midnight". A two-round voting system for parliamentary elections – and a higher turnout – at least means that Ms Le Pen's candidates will have to fight harder for victory than at the weekend.

But in truth no one knows what happens now. As David Cameron discovered after pledging a Brexit referendum, following stellar European results for Nigel Farage's Ukip in 2014, bold gambits can deliver very nasty surprises. The most likely outcome of Mr Macron's dice-rolling appears to be an increased RN presence in a fractious, fragmented and paralysed parliament. Such stasis would surely be grist to Ms Le Pen's mill ahead of 2027. It would also be destabilising for the rest of Europe, after elections that saw radical-right parties top the polls in Italy and Austria, and the AfD finish second in Germany despite being mired in scandal for months. Crucially, mainstream pro-European parties still hold a clear majority in the European parliament, and will control the horse-trading over appointments to the new European Commission. But the weekend's polls confirmed that Eurosceptic nationalist movements once confined to the margins are becoming normalised and growing in influence. Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy party, the heir to postwar neo-fascist movements, increased its vote share compared with its winning general election result of 2022. That performance consolidates Ms Meloni's position as one of the leading power brokers in Brussels politics. Depressingly, Europe's rightward lurch on themes such as the green transition and immigration looks set to continue. For the next month, though, all eyes will be on France. In the context of Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine and wider geopolitical volatility, Mr Macron has been a vociferous and welcome advocate of a more powerful, united and assertive Europe. He has now chosen to take on Ms Le Pen, who has a history of pro-Putin sympathies and yearns to disrupt the European Union from within, immediately after the biggest victory of her political career. A fateful contest looms not just for France, but for the EU as a whole.

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Rohingya as a people facing extinction within a generation

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

THE Rohingya people, a predominantly Muslim ethnic group from Myanmar's Rakhine State, have faced decades of systemic oppression and violence. This persecution has escalated to such an extent that, within one or two generations, there is a very real possibility that the Rohingya identity could vanish from their native land entirely.

Recent waves of violence have driven the majority of the Rohingya population out of Myanmar, making them one of the most persecuted and displaced groups in the world. If the current trends continue, the Rohingya may soon become an exiled people with no physical or cultural ties to their homeland, much like the Native Americans who lost their lands and way of life.

The exodus of the Rohingya from Myanmar has reached a critical point. According to estimates, there are now more Rohingya living in refugee camps and diaspora communities than in Myanmar itself. As of 2021, more than a million Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh alone, with significant numbers also in Malaysia, India and other countries. This mass displacement not only signifies a humanitarian crisis but also threatens the very survival of the Rohingya as a distinct ethnic and cultural group.

If the Rohingya population in Myanmar falls below 5 percent of the total Rohingya population worldwide, the chances of them being able to reconstitute themselves as a viable community within the country diminish drastically. This threshold is crucial; below it, their political, social and cultural influence within their homeland would be negligible. The Myanmar government's policy of

expelling the Rohingya and redistributing their lands to other ethnic groups, including Rakhine Buddhists, further complicates any potential return. The physical and demographic landscape of Rakhine State is being irreversibly altered, leaving no place for the Rohingya to return to, even if repatriation were ever to be agreed upon.

The destruction of Rohingya villages and the redistribution of their land mean that the facts on the ground are changing rapidly. With each passing day, the likelihood of the Rohingya returning to their ancestral homes decreases. The Myanmar government's actions can be seen as an attempt to erase the

displacement are diluting their way of life. The camps are often overcrowded, lacking in basic amenities and rife with poverty and disease. Education is limited and opportunities to practice cultural traditions are sparse. As generations grow up in these camps, far removed from their homeland, the distinct elements of Rohingya identity — language, traditions and social norms — are at risk of fading away.

The situation of the Rohingya bears a tragic resemblance to the plight of Native Americans. The Native American experience in the US involved displacement, cultural suppression and a systematic attempt to erase their iden-

ethical obligation to prevent such an outcome. The plight of the Rohingya must not be ignored. Governments, international organizations and civil society — and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in particular — must work together to ensure the protection of Rohingya rights, both in Myanmar and in diaspora communities. Immediate measures should include increased humanitarian aid, protection of refugees and sustained diplomatic pressure on the Myanmar government to halt its campaign of ethnic cleansing.

In the long term, efforts must also be made to preserve and promote Rohingya culture and identity. This can be achieved through educational programs, cultural initiatives and support for community organizations that work to maintain Rohingya traditions in those nations around the globe that host sizable Rohingya populations. Providing platforms for Rohingya voices and stories can help to keep their heritage alive. Additionally, legal avenues must be explored to hold those responsible for the violence and displacement accountable, ensuring that justice is served and future atrocities are prevented.

The potential disappearance of the Rohingya from their homeland is not just a tragedy for the Rohingya people; it is a loss for humanity as a whole. Every culture, every language and every tradition enriches the global tapestry of human civilization. The world must act now to ensure that the Rohingya people do not become another footnote in the long history of ethnic cleansing and cultural erasure.

Their survival as a distinct people depends on the collective will to protect and preserve their identity for future generations.

The exodus of the Rohingya from Myanmar has reached a critical point. According to estimates, there are now more Rohingya living in refugee camps and diaspora communities than in Myanmar itself. As of 2021, more than a million Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh alone, with significant numbers also in Malaysia, India and other countries. This mass displacement not only signifies a humanitarian crisis but also threatens the very survival of the Rohingya as a distinct ethnic and cultural group.

Rohingya presence and history from the country altogether.

This form of ethnic cleansing ensures that, even if international pressure mounts for the return of the Rohingya, there will be no land for them to return to, no homes to reclaim and no community structures to rebuild.

In refugee camps, the Rohingya are struggling to maintain their cultural and social practices. The harsh conditions, lack of resources and prolonged

today, many Native American communities continue to struggle with the long-term impacts of this historical trauma. Their languages, cultural practices and traditional knowledge have been significantly eroded.

The risk facing the Rohingya is alarmingly similar. If the current trends continue, the world may witness the near-total erasure of another Indigenous people.

The international community has a moral and

As Gandhi said, if it's on the internet it must be true

Ross Anderson

IT has been a constant source of regret throughout my lengthy but so far relatively undistinguished career in the business of bashing out words on a keyboard that I have failed to interview Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Dickens, Mark Twain, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill and Martin Luther King.

In my defense, some of them were dead before I was born, so interviewing them would have required the assistance of a spirit medium. But still.

What all those non-interviewees had in common was a way with words. The mots justes, the quotable quotes, the bons mots all flowed from them like an unstoppable river, in a way of which the rest of us can only dream. In comparison, most of us are tongue tied. We digress. We ramble. We are vague. On the rare occasions that we produce a genuinely memorable phrase, it was usually said first by someone else — often someone on my list of non-interviewees.

Not only that, but these great wordsmiths also required no cue or prompt to create a felicitous assembly of words that grabbed the attention, not just of the moment, but of posterity. For example, had I been speaking to Churchill about the courage and sacrifice of the mostly young English fighter pilots who won the Battle of Britain in the skies above southeast England in the summer of 1940, it would not have been necessary to ask: "So, Mr. Churchill, in your opinion, all things considered, would it be true to say that never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few?" No, the old boy came out with that zinger entirely off his own bat. Moreover, he did so in a speech to the House of Commons: it was thus recorded for posterity by Hansard, obviating the need for 1940s journalists to Google it.

It is true to say that not all of Churchill's arrows hit the bull's eye. In 1942, for example, after the host significant British victory of the Second World War, at El-Alamein in Egypt, he told an audience: "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." I'm sorry, say what now? That one needed a bit of work, one feels: maybe he came up with it one morning immediately after his standard breakfast, a pint of vintage Champagne.

Like all those on my list of non-interviewees, Churchill is as famous for what he never said as for what he did. For example, you will be familiar with his oft-quoted gag about how Americans can always be relied upon to do the right thing, once they have exhausted every other possibility. Not only did he never say that, why would he? His mother was from Brooklyn, and insulting his own ancestry was not Churchill's style.

A close rival of Churchill's in the realm of fake quotes is Albert

Einstein — who, as everyone knows, defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. Except there is no record of his ever having said any such thing. And again, why would he? Einstein was a scientist — and doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result is pretty much the basis of scientific research.

Most people blame the World Wide Web for the ease with which words can be ascribed to people who never uttered them. After all, as Mahatma Gandhi famously said, if it's on the internet it must be true. And it is certainly the case that, if you type a famous phrase into a search engine, it will helpfully attribute it for you — in many cases, suspiciously, without any context to where, when and in what circumstances the words came to be said.

That is why it is commonly believed that Voltaire said: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it" (he didn't); that Abraham Lincoln said: "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time" (he didn't); that Twain said: "The only two certainties in life are death and taxes" (he didn't); that Stalin said: "The death of one man is a tragedy, the death of millions is a statistic" (he didn't); and that Edmund Burke said: "All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing" (he didn't).

And fake quotes spread quickly. In fact, I am tempted to observe that, as Twain said, a lie can be halfway round the world before the truth has its boots on — except that's something else he never said.

A close relative of the fake quote is the "almost quote." To stick with Twain, he never quite said that reports of his death were greatly exaggerated. If you're going to quote him, check it and get it right. And while everyone knows that "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," that isn't quite what the poet Congreve wrote either: again, check it and get it right.

Perhaps the last word in these matters should go to an unlikely source — the legendary US baseball coach Yogi Berra, who found as much fame for his sporting prowess as for his unique deployment of the English language. Berra's genuine quotable quotes are in a class of their own: "It was deja vu all over again." "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." "The future ain't what it used to be," and my personal favorite, when discussing the hugely popular Ruggieri's restaurant in St. Louis — "Nobody goes there anymore, it's too crowded."

Even Berra, however, became frustrated at the quantity of words attributed to him that never passed his lips, and was eventually moved to declare: "Half the things I said, I never said."

Lebanon needs an opposition to speak up for the entire country

Khaled Abou Zahr

DOES Lebanon need a president? Let me reformulate, what can an elected Lebanese president achieve when the country is controlled by Hezbollah? And for that matter, what can a prime minister, a member of parliament or any public official do? Lebanon is stuck between the south being burned to the ground and instability in Syria from the north, with a sprinkle of a political vacuum. Surprisingly or not, the last of these is the least of Lebanon's problems, as life can go on without the politicians.

At least for now, no sovereign voice is covering up or tacitly endorsing Hezbollah's policies in front of the Lebanese or the international community. So I ask, why give Hezbollah this endorsement and firewall protection once again? What will the Lebanese gain from it?

This is why, on the current debate in Lebanon, I agree with Samir Geagea's stance regarding the election of a president, which states

that there is no need for consultations. There is a parliament, let it play its role, quorum after quorum, until a president is elected. At least, in this manner, we will see who the ruling force is and who the opposition is. Any other solution gives a full political guarantee to Hezbollah to do whatever pleases the militia and its patrons in Tehran, while blaming any ills on the Lebanese state. This is also why, today, Walid Jumblatt should not take a centrist, weakened position but join forces in an opposition front and not be part of another cover-up of Hezbollah's role and status.

Consensus and the "no winner, no loser" formula have brought devastating results in the country. Consensus is what permitted the cover-up of the Lebanese banking system's Ponzi scheme or, as the Egyptian saying goes, "Shayyelnii w' ashayyelak," which translates to "you load (stuff) on me, I load (stuff) on you," or "you scratch my back and I scratch yours." Today, for non-Arabic speakers, this

saying is often used to denote corruption and backroom deals. It is the definition of the Lebanese political scene. Moreover, the formula has brought a unique winner and that is Hezbollah. The other communities have lost and these "consultations" are nothing but a Band-Aid on a bullet wound. Opposition to Hezbollah — no matter how weak, even if it cannot do anything, even if it is nothing but a whisper — is a necessity. Western powers should put more effort into letting an opposition live, rather than pushing for a president that will yield to Hezbollah's wishes. Even if not much can be done, the lines between the opposition and the ruling party cannot stay blurred any longer. This is the least that can be done. Lebanon needs a real opposition force. Even if it cannot stop Hezbollah from moving forward, it can voice its disagreement.

Finally, a real opposition would also offer a much-needed message to France and the US that, through

their current initiatives and their choice of support packages, they bear responsibility for pushing solutions that give Hezbollah even more power and control. This comes with risks if pushed too far, yet this is a sad situation for any free voice in Lebanon.

Lebanon needs consultations, but not between members of parliament to choose a president of consensus. It needs consultations with the people of the country. Real town hall meetings, in which alternatives to the current political system are discussed. Lawyers, business owners, workers and mothers need to be included and this should be a roadmap for a new Lebanon. One might, rightly, ask what is the point when Hezbollah controls everything and silences any opposition? I believe in setting a goal or planning for a better future even in the worst of times. We cannot and should not give in to total despair and abandonment.

We have indeed noticed a larger part of the population

starting to recognize that Hezbollah is only a symptom and the real issue is the national pact and constitution that keeps the country in a vicious circle. One short decade, the 1960s, made Lebanon shine economically, culturally and financially, but this is no longer enough to keep this system going. Even with its nostalgia. And let us be honest, this great period was a time when, against all other political ideologies, the promotion of capitalism and personal freedom made the Lebanese successful. Unfortunately, the structural base was flawed and so it was short-lived. Since then, under the mirage of libertarianism, the real force in Lebanon has been led by leftist militancy mixed with religion and Hezbollah is the final boss in this game. I am surprised that today, even on the constitution, progressive forces do not request a change and have accepted a constitution set up by what they usually call "colonizing and invading powers." In all fairness, their proposed solution is just as dangerous and serves

Hezbollah, as they see the sectarian divide being replaced by a centralized power that rips every community of its identity and forces them into uniform thoughts and beliefs.

Lebanon needs a united opposition bloc that does not stay silent as a militia takes over the decisions of peace and war. Opposition forces cannot hit each other or be accomplices in these actions or be the scapegoats. Someone needs to ask, in parliament, for an evaluation of Hezbollah's actions. What has Hezbollah done since Israel unilaterally withdrew from Lebanon? What territories has it protected or gained? Moreover, what unnecessary destruction has it brought upon the country?

If we look at the south today, we see Hezbollah serving its transnational ideology and ensuring destruction in Lebanon. The southerners, across religious groups, are caught between a rock and a hard place and are left with no hope. A real opposition would speak up for them and the entire country.

Afrophobia is destroying the African dream

Tafi Mkaha

SPEAKING at the Africa CEO Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, on May 17, Africa's richest person, Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote, complained that he faces far more obstacles travelling around Africa than Europeans ever do.

"I have to apply for 35 different visas on my passport [to travel freely across Africa]," Dangote said. "I can assure you that Patrick [Pouyanne, CEO of Total Energies] doesn't need 35 visas on a French passport, which means [he has] freer movement than myself in Africa."

Even for an uber-wealthy businessman with near unlimited means like Dangote, the continent's fragmented and discriminatory visa regime is clearly a considerable inconvenience. For millions of African migrants, however, it is a major obstacle to safety, stability, success and prosperity.

Indeed, stringent visa regimes discriminating against Africans are not only inconveniencing industrialists and harming the continent's economic development, but also destroying migrant lives and dreams and hindering efforts to achieve true African unity.

Today, while most Westerners are free to roam the continent and exploit its socioeconomic potential with ease, Africans who want to move, for whatever reason, are swimming against the current.

This was not always the case. In the 1990s, my father ran a modest butchery and liquor store on Cameron Street, a busy road that stretched from the outskirts of the central business district to the less-endowed environs of Zimbabwe's capital Harare.

Small and nondescript, the shop was surrounded by many thriving businesses that sold cheap furniture, beds, clothes, bags, blankets, and shoes. It catered mainly to revellers and shoppers who lived in the nearby Mbare township, a low-income neighbourhood, as well as workers who commuted from places such as Chitungwiza and outlying rural areas. Among our regular patrons were Mozambican traders who sold cheap watches across the city and kept their stock at our shop.

In those years, an ever-increasing number of young entrepreneurs from Central and West Africa were opening up small shops across Harare. These young traders sold distinct, never-before-seen-in-Harare goods imported from India, China, and the UAE: radios, watches, bracelets, chains, and appliances.

I frequented these new places on occasion to buy a trinket or two whenever I had money, or simply to have a look at the latest mini gadgets to hit the market.

Back then, the increasing diversity of the high street did not bother or alarm many, because it was the norm.

When I was a student at the Prince Edward High School in Harare, I had teachers from across the continent. My history teacher, for example, was a calm and strict gentleman from Ghana, Mr Ayisa, who spoke with a fascinating Ghanaian accent. Ms Khosi and Mr Lowe, our mathematics and science teachers, respectively, were South Africans. Prince Edward also had students from as far afield as Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa, and Tanzania, to

name a few. One Prine Edward pupil from my era, Menzi Simelane, went on to serve as South Africa's national director of public prosecutions.

The school cultivated a vibrant pan-African community. This sentiment of unity was supported by the many reminders of our collective colonial past and interconnected struggles for liberation. Even the streets we walked were named after leading freedom fighters from across Africa, Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, and Samora Machel.

Back then, Harare was a diverse, welcoming city buzzing with potential. It seemed as if we were truly moving towards achieving the unity and collective advancement African leaders envisaged when they established the Organisation of

Zimbabwe".

Those sectors are – public transport (buses, taxis and car hire services); retail and wholesale trade; barber shops, hairdressing and beauty salons; employment agencies; real estate agencies; valet services; grain milling; bakeries; tobacco grading and packaging; advertising agencies; provision of local arts and crafts and their marketing and distribution; and artisanal mining.

Last October, Sithembiso Nyoni, the minister of industry and commerce, warned that foreign nationals running tuckshops or wholesale businesses without permits risk arrest. Migrants from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, Mozambique and Zambia run most of the tuckshops, or "canteens", in Zimbabwe. The

There is also widespread displeasure with Ethiopian and Somali migrants running spazas, small informal grocery shops operated from residential premises in townships, in these countries.

Meanwhile, authorities in Zambia, Tanzania, Angola, Malawi, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya have cracked down on undocumented migrants.

And last July, Black African foreigners in Tunisia were targets of organised racist assaults by Tunisians instigated by President Kais Saied. He falsely accused Black Africans of trying to alter his country's demographic makeup through extensive immigration.

A new brand of hardline anti-immigration politics has swept through Africa that threatens to asphyxiate the AU's noble quest to eventually establish freedom of movement, work, and residence.

So, the timely observations made by Dangote and the adverse experiences of migrants across the continent speak to the systemic failings crippling the African dream.

At school, I, along with thousands of others, was most privileged to experience the sweet zenith of African expertise and friendship.

For years, in downtown Harare, I witnessed how largely underprivileged communities lived and worked with so-called foreigners.

I befriended migrants of all backgrounds, everyday Africans who were smart, dedicated and savvy businesspeople in their own right.

They did not steal market share from Zimbabweans in their business dealings.

Instead, they brought with them new commercial practices, improved the marketplace, and seamlessly integrated into society.

As Dangote advised African political and business leaders in Kigali, Africa is a sorely divided and challenging place to manoeuvre.

Spurred by the divisive antics of neo-fascist politicians, amid socioeconomic tribulations, Africans are increasingly looking inwards and othering their fellow Africans.

In January 2018, the AU adopted the Free Movement of Persons (FMP) Protocol. It calls for member states to give the nationals of other member states the right to visa-free entry into their territory, right of residence, and right to establish a business.

As of August 2023, however, only 33 of the 55 member states had signed the FMP Protocol, and just four – Mali, Rwanda, Niger, and Sao Tome and Principe – had ratified it.

Africa needs to do better to defeat the scourge of Afrophobia and bring unity back to the continent. Freedom of movement is essential to creating a single market and boosting economic outcomes across the continent. It would also provide security and stability to the millions of Africans who have found homes and set up businesses outside of their countries of birth.

As proven by the European Union, the freedom of movement is an economic game changer.

Politicians and citizens alike must view Dangote's statement as a wake-up call. Do not close shops. Rather, open more. All Africans must be afforded an opportunity to exploit Africa's immense socioeconomic potential.

How to navigate financial turbulence in East Asia

Zhou Xuezh

SEVERAL East and Southeast Asian economies have faced significant financial market turbulence, with pronounced currency fluctuations, this year. But unlike the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the situation in East Asia today is markedly different. While the likelihood of systemic financial risks in the region remains low, the situation of certain economies warrants caution while increasing the appeal of Chinese assets.

Since the beginning of 2024, the stock and financial markets in East and Southeast Asian economies have been volatile. In particular, in mid-April, major stock indices in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam as well as more developed markets like Japan and South Korea, saw significant declines — from 4 percent to 9 percent. Additionally, some East and Southeast Asian economies' currencies have depreciated significantly against the US dollar, averaging a 5 percent drop as of mid-May, with the Japanese yen declining by about 10 percent.

Despite these fluctuations, the situation is different from that during the 1997 Asia financial crisis. First, before the 1997 financial crisis, a substantial influx of hot money into East Asia inflated property and stock prices. And when this capital rapidly exited the East Asian markets, asset prices and currencies plummeted. This time, the depreciation of East Asian economies' currencies has been marked by a high-interest rate period for the US dollar, without the influx of hot money.

Second, many East Asian economies had rigid exchange rate regimes before the 1997 financial crisis, which while superficially eliminating the risk of exchange rate volatility made them vulnerable to collapse when risks accumulated. Today, however, most East Asian economies have more flexible exchange rate systems, where currency depreciation can both signal and reduce risks.

And third, after the 1997 financial crisis, the East Asian economies began accumulating foreign exchange reserves. These reserves are now relatively sufficient, providing a buffer against risks.

East Asian economies' currencies have depreciated this year due to both external and internal factors. Externally, the frequently changing US Federal Reserve's interest rate policy has played a key role in the depreciation of East

Asian economies' currencies. After the fourth quarter of 2023, global commodity prices surged, and although markets initially expected the Fed to cut rates in 2024, rising inflation reduced these expectations. Additionally, the rising yield of the US' 10-year Treasury bonds strengthened the dollar, causing East Asian economies' currencies to depreciate.

Internally, the insufficient economic resilience of some East Asian economies has been a contributing factor to currency depreciation. For example, although the Bank of Japan abandoned its policy of negative interest rates in March, the move did not exceed market expectations. Combined with rising

US dollar this year, but by only 1.53 percent till mid-May. This is much less than those of other East Asian economies' currencies, which highlights the yuan's relative stability. Unlike the stock markets in many East Asian economies, which have mirrored US market volatility, the Chinese stock market has performed relatively well, especially after bottoming out in February, with its gains exceeding 10 percent. And the growing investment value of Chinese assets is likely to support a stable yuan.

The trajectory of China's stock market and currency might progress independently, with little influence of the US market and dollar movements. As real estate and local debt risks gradu-

Internally, the insufficient economic resilience of some East Asian economies has been a contributing factor to currency depreciation. For example, although the Bank of Japan abandoned its policy of negative interest rates in March, the move did not exceed market expectations. Combined with rising US Treasury yields, this led to the further depreciation of the yen. The limited tightening by the Bank of Japan reflects Japan's relatively weak domestic economy, which has prevented the country from taking more aggressive measures to improve the situation.

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Similarly, Vietnam's economic performance has been underwhelming, with the country's economy weighed down by the real estate sector, which has even begun affecting the banking industry, further dragging down the Vietnamese dong.

Despite these factors, the risks are controllable. As the United States' economic indicators weaken and inflationary pressure subsides, US Treasury yields are likely to decline, potentially easing the depreciation pressure on East Asian economies' currencies.

The Chinese yuan, too, has depreciated against the

ally subside, the robust fundamentals of China's economy will help mitigate the external shocks, too.

Nevertheless, in an increasingly interconnected global economy, fluctuations in East Asian and global financial markets will impact China's financial market.

So government departments need to maintain market stability by preventing the changes in the policies of the Fed and the European Central Bank from impacting the Chinese economy.

Besides, investors should carefully monitor the economic trends in the US and the European Union, especially the policy shifts of the Fed and the European Central Bank. Additionally, understanding the economic dynamics and potential risks in the East Asian economies is crucial for making informed investment decisions.

Qalibaf, Jalili the likely front-runners in Iran election

IN two weeks, Iran will hold a presidential election to choose the successor to Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash last month. The world is closely observing the country's political landscape, anticipating who will rise as the next president of the Islamic Republic and what impact, if any, this will have on Iran's future domestic and foreign policies.

Out of nearly 80 hopefuls who registered to run for the presidency, including four women, the Guardian Council has approved only six candidates. These individuals are permitted to campaign until June 27, just one day before the vote. The approved list of candidates comprises Masoud Pezeshkian, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf, Saeed Jalili and Alireza Zakani. This narrowed field reflects the council's stringent criteria, as well as the high stakes of the upcoming election.

The selection criteria employed by the Guardian Council heavily emphasize adherence to the religious and revolutionary principles that underpin the Islamic Republic. Candidates are assessed on their commitment to these values, which are considered essential. This process ensures that only those who align with the core tenets of the revolution are allowed to stand for election.

One striking aspect of the Guardian Council's final

selection is the preponderance of hard-liners among the approved candidates, with Pezeshkian, a member of parliament for Tabriz, being the only notable

The hard-liners are known for their staunch adherence to the revolutionary principles of the Islamic

Majid Rafizadeh

align closely with the objectives of the senior cadre of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, further

of a hard-liner as president is viewed by some leaders as a strategic move to consolidate power across all

Out of nearly 80 hopefuls who registered to run for the presidency, including four women, the Guardian Council has approved only six candidates. These individuals are permitted to campaign until June 27, just one day before the vote. The approved list of candidates comprises Masoud Pezeshkian, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf, Saeed Jalili and Alireza Zakani. This narrowed field reflects the council's stringent criteria, as well as the high stakes of the upcoming election. The selection criteria employed by the Guardian Council heavily emphasize adherence to the religious and revolutionary principles that underpin the Islamic Republic. Candidates are assessed on their commitment to these values, which are considered essential. This process ensures that only those who align with the core tenets of the revolution are allowed to stand for election. One striking aspect of the Guardian Council's final selection is the preponderance of hard-liners among the approved candidates, with Pezeshkian, a member of parliament for Tabriz, being the only notable exception. The political landscape is thus heavily skewed toward hard-line ideologies, which dominate both the parliament and the legislative branches. Should a hard-liner be elected as president, it would result in a consolidation of power, with all branches of government operating under unified hard-line control, thereby intensifying the government's conservative trajectory. The hard-liners are known for their staunch adherence to the revolutionary principles of the Islamic Republic and for advocating for a more rigid interpretation and implementation of these ideals. They adopt a firmer stance toward the US and the West, rejecting any form of negotiation or compromise, particularly regarding Iran's nuclear program. Concessions are perceived as a sign of weakness.

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Republic and for advocating for a more rigid interpretation and implementation of these ideals. They adopt a firmer stance toward the US and the West, rejecting any form of negotiation or compromise, particularly regarding Iran's nuclear program. Concessions are perceived as a sign of weakness. Domestically, hard-liners push for the enforcement of strict religious laws and, regionally, their views

cementing their influence. The Iranian government faces significant pressure on multiple fronts. Regionally, escalating tensions with Israel have led to a dangerous tit-for-tat exchange of military actions, heightening the risk of broader regional destabilization and international repercussions. Domestically, economic and political challenges add to the government's burdens. In this context, the election

branches of government, thereby providing a unified and potentially more resilient front against these multifaceted pressures.

When analyzing the likely outcome of the presidential election, the preference of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is the most critical factor. Recent historical patterns suggest that the supreme leader's favored candidate often emerges victorious. For instance,

by the ruling elite to ensure continuity and alignment with the supreme leader's vision.

Khamenei's preference for presidential candidates is most likely rooted in the desire to maintain control and ensure that the president aligns with the overarching objectives of both himself and the IRGC. An ideal president in the eyes of Khamenei is one who does not overshadow or chal-

lenge the established agenda and does not take the spotlight or seek independent political power. This preference for loyalty and obedience over independent lead-

ership is likely why figures such as Mahmoud Ahmadi-nejad and Ali Larijani, who are often seen as autonomous in their political ambitions, did not make the Guardian Council's list.

Among the six approved candidates, Qalibaf and Jalili stand out as the most likely to align with the supreme leader's criteria. Qalibaf, a principlist within Iran's political spectrum, has demonstrated unwaver-

ing loyalty to Khamenei. His career trajectory, from serving in the IRGC to becoming the first military commander elected as mayor of Tehran and later the speaker of the Iranian parliament, underscores his deep-rooted connections and endorsements from the highest echelons of power.

Similarly, Jalili, an ultra-conservative and former chief nuclear negotiator, has significant credentials, including running the supreme leader's office for several years. He is often referred to as "a living martyr," having lost a leg during the Iran-Iraq War while he served in the Basij. Jalili was also Khamenei's personal representative on the Supreme National Security Council.

Both these candidates embody the ideological purity and loyalty valued by the supreme leader, making them strong contenders in the upcoming election.

In a nutshell, the election in Iran comes at a critical juncture, especially following the sudden death of Raisi. The Guardian Council's stringent vetting process has narrowed the candidates to six, predominantly hard-liners, underscoring the government's emphasis on loyalty to revolutionary principles and the supreme leader. This likely consolidation of conservative power could further entrench Iran's hard-line stance both domestically and internationally. Candidates like Qalibaf and Jalili, who demonstrate unwavering loyalty and ideological alignment with



Enforcement of sustainable policies imperative for economic stability and progress: SCCI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq stressed enforcement of sustainable and long-lasting policies imperative for economic stability and progress.

Fuad urged policy-making institutions and bureaucracy to make consultation with chambers and other stakeholders during framing economic policies so there will be no hurdle to implement them with letter and spirit. He suggested enforcement of the UAE-tax model in Pakistan, stating that it is the only way for making Pakistan's economy progressive.

He called for bringing the tax rate to single digit and further reforms to broaden the tax-base through bringing new people in the net. The SCCI chief demanded that the fiscal budget should be jointly

prepared by ICAP, FPCCI and chambers.

All constitutional rights on gas, electricity and other natural resources should be ensured Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to flourish business, trade and industry in the province and create employment opportunities to youth, Fuad Ishaq stressed while speaking during a visit of the participants of the 40th Senior Management Course Officers of National Institute of Management, Islamabad to the chamber house on Thursday.

The senior officers delegation was headed by Chief Instructor Samreen Zuhra.

Abundant of natural resources available in KP despite that this province is lagging behind in race of progress with other

province, Mr Ishaq said, adding that owing the front line province in terrorism, business community of this province has confronted

with severe hardships and continued their business, trade and industry by rendering matchless sacrifices, which is highly laudable.

He expressed concern over putting KP in the RLNG basket despite surplus production of gas.

Similarly, he said KP is producing low cost and surplus despite charging equal electricity tariffs with major provinces, which is completely unfair and unjust.

The chamber president informed KP oil production of 31,000/per day which is 42 percent of the total production of the country, therefore he demanded establishment of an oil refinery in the province.

He said owing to the prevailing scenario, more than 400 to 600 units have shut in the province.

Fuad mentioned Pak-Afghan bilateral trade has dropped at \$ 500-800million, which had touched

\$3billion in 2012-13, blaming inconsistent policies for declining the mutual trade volume.

The SCCI chief expressed anguish that commercial bank deposits have surged at 15-16 percent in KP against the lending ratio of less than one per cent.

He called for revival of DFIs to promote industrialization in the province. He also demanded reactivation of the IDBP in true sense.

Fuad Ishaq called for the provision of benefits under the One Belt One Road Initiative of China. He said the law and order situation has improved in the province. He, however, said hunger and poverty have become the cause for rising incidents of snatching, street crime.

Earlier, the senior officers were briefed about the SCCI main objectives and future plan and initiatives through a multimedia presentation.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fuad Ishaq presenting a shield to Chief Instructor National Institute of Management Islamabad Samreen Zuhra at Chamber's House.

Gas theft crackdown:

43 connections disconnected by SNGPL

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 43 connections; Rs 1.95 million fine imposed.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 6 connections on illegal use of gas. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas pilfer.

In Multan, the team disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas while another 05 on the use of Compressor.

The regional team of Shiekhpura disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.35 million against gas theft cases.

In Faisalabad, the team disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of

Rs 0.09 million against gas theft cases.

In Karak, the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.49 million against gas theft cases. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas theft cases.

In Bahawalpur, the team disconnected 02 connections on the illegal use of gas and another 09 on the use of a Compressor.

The regional team of Sahiwal disconnected 03 connections on the illegal use of gas.

In Mardan, the team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.12 million against gas theft cases.

The regional team of Gujranwala disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas while another 01 on the use of a compressor and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.9 million against gas theft cases.

Tokyo stocks end lower

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks trimmed early gains to end lower on Thursday as investors opted to wait and see ahead of the Bank of Japan's policy decision.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index was down 0.40 percent, or 156.24 points, to end at 38,720.47, while the broader Topix index slipped 0.89 percent, or 24.66 points, to 2,731.78.

The dollar stood at 157.13 yen, against the 156.86 seen overnight in New York. Investors are monitoring the BoJ's ongoing two-day policy meeting.

The central bank will consider reducing its Japanese government bond holdings as it moves to normalise its super-easy monetary policy, the Nikkei newspaper said.

The latest US inflation data also pointed to a slowdown in the rate of price increases in May.

The annual consumer price index (CPI) came in at 3.3 percent last month, down 0.1 percentage point from April and unchanged on a monthly basis, the Labor Department said. This was slightly below expectations.

Hamdard Shura welcomes govt's decision to privatize state-owned enterprises

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The members of the Hamdard Shura Karachi chapter welcomed the decision of the federal government to privatize state-owned enterprises and expressed hope that the process of selling national assets would be handled transparently and effectively. They expressed their views in the monthly meeting of Hamdard Shura held yesterday at Hamdard Corporate Head Office on the topic "Privatization of state-owned enterprises and the future of laid-off employees".

Speaker Gen (r) Moinuddin Haider presided over the proceedings. Ms Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan also attended the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Gen (r) Moinuddin Haider said the major reasons for the failure of state-owned enterprises are overstaffing and the country's overall economic conditions.

"Unfortunately, Pakistan has never been able to

attract constant foreign direct investments in various sectors, resulting in a lack of employment opportunities.

This caused overstaffing of the existing state-owned corporations and companies," he said.

He also said present economic challenges compelled the government to reduce its expenses and privatize around 25 SOEs with management rights.

The increase in direct and indirect taxes has negatively impacted the purchasing power of ordinary citizens. The nation has been suffering the consequences of decades of mismanagement and corruption in state institutions and departments.

Esteemed members Zafar Iqbal, Cdre (r) Sadeed Anwar Malik, Engr. Anwar-ul-Haq, Rizwan Ahmed, Sultan Chawla, Amir Tauseen, Huma Baig, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, Prof. Dr. Bhuwani Shankar and Col (r) Mukhtar Ahmed Butt said SOEs face annual losses due to overstaffing and

mismanagement.

There is a possibility that privatization may lead to many employees losing their jobs, which needs to be addressed before moving ahead in the privatization process because it may potentially fuel social unrest.

Unfortunately, many of the current SOE employees cannot be employed abroad or elsewhere because they lack modern knowledge and skills. There is a need for adult education and skill development courses to address this issue.

Many employees of SOEs have turned to alternative sources of income. Besides that, if they get laid off, they will get funds through schemes like gold-en handshake. They will have multiple options to manage their financial obligations by opening small



shops and other businesses after retirement.

Therefore, the fears of widespread unemployment after privatization are unsubstantiated.

The privatization of PTCL and K Electric proved fruitful for the government as the state retains a majority stake, earning millions of rupees annually. Moreover, privatization has led to increased operational efficiency in PTCL and K

Electric.

An agreement should be made with investors that they will not lay off any employees for at least a year and will give them a chance to prove their abilities. The role of the state is not to conduct business but to create and harness a favourable business-friendly environment and regulate economic activities. Steel mills can be profitable because steel is in demand worldwide.

Rupee gains 01 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Thursday gained 01 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.59 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.60.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.6 and Rs 280.4 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.89 to close at Rs 301.28 against the last day's closing of Rs 299.39, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 177, whereas an increase of 98 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 356.26 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 355.28.

CCP grants time-bound exemption in Uber-Careem deal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted exemption till December 2025 on specific clauses of Non-Compete Deeds of Covenant and the Common Stock Purchase Agreement (CSPA) signed between Emirates Telecom group,

Careem Networks FZ-LLC, Careem Technologies Holding Limited, Managing Founders and Uber Technologies Holding Limited. Emirates Telecommunications Group Company is a UAE-based public joint stock company which offers a range of communication services across the Middle East, Africa, and

Asia. Under the three separate Non-Compete Deeds of Covenant, the Emirates Telecommunications Group, the Managing Founders, and the Uber Group commit not to engage in certain competing businesses under the covenants. They accordingly submitted an application to the CCP seeking exemptions on those Non-Compete

clauses of the agreements.

The businesses covered under the agreements include delivery of food, groceries, physical goods, providing micro-mobility ride services via Super-App, and offering digital wallet or other financial products and services. Under the agreement, ride-sharing exclusivity will also be retained.

NOTICE (AUCTION)

Directorate of Transport, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa intends to Auction Photocopier Shop at District Transport Office Peshawar, for which "A/B" and "C" category registered companies/contractors enlisted with Local Council Board (LCB), Local Government Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are invited. Details are given below:

Name of Auction	Earnest Money/Call Deposit	Contract Period	Last date for submission of Call Deposit	Date for Submission of Auction Form And opening date of Auction
Photocopier Shop	200,000/-	Two Years	27-06-2024	28-06-2024 at 02:00 PM

Terms/Conditions of Auction:

Auction Form and TOR's of auction can be obtained from office of the undersigned WW 27-06-2024 during office hours, Interested contractors must be quoted their rates in auction form and quoted rates in sealed envelope must be submitted on 28-06-2024 at 02:00 PM in the office of Director Transport Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

INF(P) 0151/24

DIRECTOR TRANSPORT, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
Room No.135, Ground Floor Benevolent Fund Building Peshawar Saddar. 091-9214185

Court Notice

In the Court of District Judge/Zilla Qazi Buner at Daggar. Family Appeal No. 46/FCA. Institution 13/07/2023. Date of hearing 22/6/2024. Mst. Rama etc Vs. Mohamad Idres etc. Notice to No. (1) Mohamad Idres s/o Hazrat Yusuf, (2) Hazrat Yusuf s/o Ibrahim abroad, (5) Shakor Khan s/o Fazal Wadod in Peshawar resident of Torwarsak Tehsil Daggar District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 a.m. dated 22/6/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

PSX jumps 3,410 points to cross 76000 points mark

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, jumping 3,410.73 points, a positive change of 4.69 per cent, reaching all time high at 76,208.16 points against 72,797.43 points the previous day.

A total of 635,525,117 shares valuing Rs 30.745 billion were traded during the day as compared to 293,083,473 shares valuing Rs10.541 billion the previous day.As many as 425 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 294 of them recorded gains and 87 sustained losses,

whereas the share price of 44 companies remained unchanged. The top three trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 66,835,469 shares at Rs 4.72 per share, Fauji Cement with 39,803,815 shares at Rs 24.14 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 21,752,929 shares at Rs 1.33 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 149.99 per share price, closing at Rs 18,199.99 whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum Company Limited with a Rs 137.66 rise in its per share price to Rs 2,685.08.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CONTROLLER OF EXAMINATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF BUNER

SWARI, BUNER KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA PAKISTAN

Email: coe@ubuner.edu.pk, Phone: 0939-555211, 0939-555438 Fax: 0939-555437

No. _____/Controller of Exams/UOB/2024 Dated: 7th June, 2024

NOTIFICATION FOR MA/M.Sc PREVIOUS & FINAL (PRIVATE) (Compartment/Improvement Students only) ANNUAL EXAMINATION-2024

Applications are invited on the prescribed examinations admission form of university of Buner for MA/M.Sc Previous/Final. Annual private Examinations forms 2024 available in all HBL branches in the jurisdictions of District Buner free of cost or can be downloaded from University website (www.ubuner.edu.pk).The examination admission form complete in all respects should reach the office of the undersigned as per following schedule.

Examinations/ Subject	Normal Fee up to 28-06-2024	Late Fee up to 08-07-2024	Double Fee up to 15-07-2024	Triple Fee up to 22-07-2024	With fine of Rs 500/- 29-07-2024
MA/M.Sc (Previous)	Exam Fee Rs.4000/=	Rs.4100/=	Rs.8000/=	Rs.12000/=	Rs 12500/=
MA/M.Sc (Final)	Exam Fee (Including DVC & Official Diva) (Rs.7500/=)	Rs.7600/=	Rs.12,900/=	Rs.19,350/=	Rs 19850/=
Single Paper Fee	Rs.= 2000/=	Rs=2100/=	Rs=4000/=	Rs=6000/=	Rs 6500/=
Two Papers Fee	Rs=2200/=	Rs=2300/=	Rs=4400/=	RS=6600/=	Rs 7100/=

Note: The fee shall be remitted in all HBL Branches on Account Title: University of Buner-External Exams in the Account No 0009327901561103.

- The candidates are required to submit their examinations admission forms along with requisite documents and white background photographs attested/signed on backside by Gazetted Officers.
- After the last date of submission of Examination forms with triple fee, forms will be accepted with a fine of Rs.500/- for delay of every 15 days or a maximum of Rs2000/- till two weeks prior to the date of commencement of examination.
- Incomplete forms and forms received after the stipulated date shall not be acceptable.
- Fee once deposited shall neither be refundable nor adjustable.
- It must be noted that examination centre is allotted on the basis of permanent address as mentioned in the examination admission form. However, the university reserves the right to allot the examination Centre anywhere on the basis of the number of candidates in the area.
- Failed in three (3) or more than three papers will be charged full fee.

Note: MA/M. Sc Previous Private Annual (Fresh Admission) is not offered as per HEC Notification

Controller of Examinations
University of Buner.
coe@ubuner.edu.pk

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Waqar Liaquat with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Liaquat Mash citizen number 1730120705325 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Aasma (Daughter)2.Waqar Liaquat (Son)3.Shan Liaquat (Son)4.Aziz Liaquat (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RING ROAD-DSFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Ahmad Abdul Rehman with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Ahmad citizen number 1730153643837 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Ahmad Abdul Rehman (Son)2.Faisal Abdul Rehman (Son)3.Bilgees Afridi (Spouse)4.Rabia Ahmad (Daughter)5.Saadia Ahmad (Daughter)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Kaleem with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Shazia Habib citizen number 1720120710334 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Shaheer Ahmad Siddiqui (Brother)2.Muhammad Kaleem (Brother)3.Tariq Mahmood Siddiqui (Brother)4.Saif Ur Rahman Siddiqui (Brother)5.Saleem Iqbal (Brother)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Fazl E Amin with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Bibi Aizoon citizen number 1730126058942 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Fazl E Amin (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Fazel Ur Rahman with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Fahmida Akhtar citizen number 17301155345648 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Fazel Ur Rahman (Brother)2.Fazal E Rahim (Brother)3.Fazal Karim (Brother)4.Ghazala Nasreen (Sister)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Shafique with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Raja Muhammad Siddique citizen number 1310109192955 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Shabana Bibi (Daughter)2.Raja Muhammad Ishaq (Son)3.Farzana Bibi (Daughter)4.Muhammad Shafique (Son)5.Khanifia Jan (Spouse)6.Shamirza Bibi (Daughter)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA ABBOTABAD-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Nazir Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Gul Nazir citizen number 21203249822881 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Lahla Bibi (Daughter)2.Muhammad Nazir Khan (Son)3.Khanyala Bibi (Daughter)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Maaz Ullah with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Taza Gul citizen number 161019871878 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Maaz Ullah (Son)2.Khadia Naveed (Daughter)3.Nadan Bibi (Daughter)4.Kainat Taza Gul (Daughter)5.Ishrat Taza Gul (Daughter)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MARDAN-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Pir Musarrat Ullah Shah with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Awal Jana citizen number 1720161297994 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Pir Musarrat Ullah Shah (Son)2.Pir Saif Ullah Shah (Son)3.Pir Hamdullah Shah (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Zakira Yasmin with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Mukhtar Awan citizen number 1730116237089 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Misbah Yasmin (Daughter)2.Zakira Yasmin (Spouse)3.Aftab Ahmad Awan (Son)4.Rubina Nazir (Daughter)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MEGA CENTER PESHAWAR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Abdul Haseeb with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. citizen number 17301153555831 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1. Begum Shafa Gul (Spouse)2.Nazma Wahid (Daughter)3.Kashmala Wahid (Daughter)4.Abdul Haseeb (Son)5.Mehwish (Daughter)6.Masahil Wahid (Daughter)7.Abdul Kabir (Son).

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU

PID(0)7745/23



In brief

Sukhan selected for PCB panel umpires

MULTAN (APP): Sukhan Faiz has been included in PCB Women's Panel Umpires bringing an honour for Multan's women cricketer. Sukhan Faiz has also had the honor of playing in the Women's World Cup 2009 in Australia. Before her job at Zakariya University, Multan, she won medals as an athlete and cricketer. The teams trained by her have shown outstanding performance in higher education women's cricket. Expressing happiness over being included in the PCB panel umpires, Sukhan Faiz said that after being a cricketer and coach, she now has another golden opportunity to stay connected with cricket through umpiring. She stated, "God willing, I will strive to meet the PCB's standards through my experience. Now, being officially included in the PCB Panel Umpiring is a special honor for both her and her Alma metre.

Athlete to feature in Throwing C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani athlete Muhammad Yasir has departed for Korea to participate in the 2nd Asian Throwing Championship, scheduled to take place from June 14-15. He was accompanied by coach Syed Fiaz Hussain Bukhari. The championship will feature athletes from Asian countries. Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) President, Brig (R) Wajahat Hussain, hoped that Yasir will deliver an outstanding performance in the championship. This is a significant opportunity for him to showcase his talent and bring laurels to the country. The AFP has been working tirelessly to promote Pakistani athletes, and Yasar's participation in the championship is expected to inspire young athletes in Pakistan to strive for excellence in the sport.

Fury back in the gym

LONDON (AFP): Tyson Fury is counting down the days as he targets "redemption" against Oleksandr Usyk after resuming training following the only defeat of his career. Fury, 35, and Usyk, 37, will lock horns again on December 21 in Saudi Arabia after the Ukrainian became undisputed world heavyweight champion by winning a split decision in their first meeting in the Gulf kingdom last month. Speaking for the first time since their clash, Fury published footage on social media of him hitting a punch bag before vowing to take revenge. "Hey guys, Tyson Fury here. Back in the gym as you can see," he said on his Instagram account. "Counting down the days until I can get my redemption on Usyk. December the 21st is going to be my time. "I've done everything in boxing, but I ain't come back from a loss. And I relish it, the chance to come back and redeem myself. Get up! December 21st is all me. Undisputed here we come." In a caption accompanying the post, Fury said he knows the reasons for his defeat by Usyk, who now holds the WBC, WBA, WBO and IBF belts. "The path to redemption is all mine. I know what I have to do, I saw my shortcomings and best believe I am inevitable," he said. Britain's Lennox Lewis was the last man to unify the major heavyweight belts -- three at the time -- after beating Evander Holyfield in 1999. By the time Fury and Usyk collide in December, Usyk may have been stripped of the IBF belt for his failure to meet its mandatory challenger.

Shakib stars as Bangladesh edge closer to T20 World Cup second round

KINGSTOWN (AFP): Veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan hit a half-century as Bangladesh defeated the Netherlands by 25 runs on Thursday to edge closer to the second round of the T20 World Cup.

Shakib, the 37-year-old former captain, recorded his 13th fifty in the format as Bangladesh made 159-5 in their 20 overs.

Shakib went on to finish undefeated on 64 off 46 deliveries having crunched nine fours as international cricket returned to Arnos Vale for the first time in 10 years.

In reply, the Dutch made 134-8 off their 20 overs.

The win took the Tigers to four points from three games and ideally placed to join already qualified South Africa in making it out of Group D and into the Super Eights second stage.

Opener Tanzid Hasan was also in the runs, stroking 35 off 26 balls with five fours and one

six after Bangladesh were put into bat by the Dutch. Bangladesh started their campaign with a two-wicket win over Sri Lanka before suffering an agonising four-run loss to South Africa.

The Dutch also went into Thursday's game with two points after defeating Nepal by six wickets before losing to South Africa by four wickets.

Off-spinner Aryan Dutt was drafted into the Dutch side in place of Teja Nidamanuru and repaid his team's faith by taking the first two Bangladesh wickets to fall.

He sent back skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (one) and Liton Das (one) to have the Tigers wobbling at 23-2.

Shakib and Tanzid steadied the ship with a 48-run partnership for the third wicket.

Mahmudullah added a valuable late 25 runs off 21 balls with four fours and a pair of sixes with Bangladesh taking 54 off the last five overs.

The Dutch were in a decent position at 111-3 in reply with Michael Levitt (18), Max O'Dowd (12) and Vikramjit Singh (26) all reaching double figures.

Singh's runs came off 16 balls and featured three sixes.

However, when Sybrand Engelbrecht's entertaining 33 off 22 balls ended in the 15th over, Dutch hopes faded.

Bas de Leede (nought), skipper Scott Edwards (25) and Logan van Beek (two) all fell in the space of six runs as they tried to force the pace.

Leg-spinner Rishad Hossain was the pick of the Bangladesh bowlers with 3-33 from his four overs.

In their final group game, Bangladesh face Nepal who still harbour Super Eights hopes of their own if they defeat the Tigers and Sri Lanka.

So far four teams have booked their spots in the Super Eights -- South Africa, India, West Indies and Australia.



KINGSTOWN: Bas de Leede is stumped off Rishad Hossain.

New Zealand facing exit after Rutherford rescues Windies

TAROUBA (AFP): Sherfane Rutherford rescued the West Indies with the bat and their bowlers contained New Zealand to complete a 13-run victory in a Group C match of the T20 World Cup in Trinidad on Wednesday.

Rutherford's unbeaten 68 off 39 balls (two fours, six sixes) lifted the home side from the depths of 30 for five in the seventh over to a competitive 149 for nine after they were put in.

Thrashed in their opening match by Afghanistan in Guyana and therefore in a virtual must-win situation, the Black Caps never developed any momentum in the chase in being restricted to 136 for nine.

Pacer Alzarri Joseph (4 for 19) and spinners Gudakesh Motie (3 for 25) and Akeal Hosein (1 for 21) kept the home side in control to clinch their third consecutive victory and a place in the Super Eight phase of the competition with one group match still to come against Afghanistan on Monday in St Lucia.

Only Glenn Phillips (40 off 33 balls) caused any real worries for the West Indies but when he fell to Joseph

in the 18th over the match was effectively over as a contest, despite Mitchell Santner belting three sixes off Romario Shepherd in the final over.

This second consecutive setback effectively ends New Zealand's hopes of advancing out of the group stage, unless other results can contrive to work in their favour. The Kiwis will be eliminated if Afghanistan defeat Papua New Guinea on Thursday.

"Keeping it simple and backing my skills, I think that was the key," said Rutherford in explaining his formula for success on the night after receiving the "Man of the Match" award.

"Play a blinder"

"Looking at their bowling line-up I knew they were short two overs and I told myself to just be there at the end to make the most of it...and I thought I did that." Rutherford received invaluable support from the lower order, adding 28 with Akeal Hosein for the sixth wicket, 27 with Romario Shepherd for the eighth and then plundered all 37 runs in the last two overs of the innings, bowled by Daryl Mitchell and Santner, with last man Motie happy

to look on from the non-striker's end.

Earlier, Trent Boult led New Zealand's much-improved, finishing with the excellent figures of three for 16. Lockie Ferguson and the recalled Tim Southee complemented that effort with two wickets each as the 2021 beaten finalists looked much sharper in the field than against the Afghans.

"We knew it was going to be difficult to get runs on this wicket which is why the quality of Sherfane's innings was of the highest," acknowledged losing captain Williamson. "We took a decision to try to bowl them out, but unfortunately it didn't come up for us today."

After victories over Papua New Guinea and Uganda at the Guyana National Stadium, West Indies' batting seemed unprepared for the challenge, until Rutherford intervened to transform what was shaping up as an abject capitulation.

"It is good that, after finding ourselves in so much trouble early on, the guys dug deep and we were able to pull this one out," said West Indies captain Rovman Powell.

'Hungry' England 'want to make history', says captain Kane

MUNICH (AFP): England captain Harry Kane said the team are primed to "make history" ahead of their Euro 2024 opener against Serbia on Sunday.

Speaking with German magazine Spiegel in an interview published Thursday, the striker backed England's chances of winning a breakthrough European Championship, their first major men's trophy since the 1966 World Cup.

"I'm not saying we'll definitely win the tournament, but we have a really good chance," Kane said, telling the magazine England had "found ourselves as a group". The 30-year-old scored 44 goals in 45 games in all competitions for Bayern Munich and will

now lead England at the tournament in his adopted home of Germany.

Kane, who moved from boyhood club Tottenham before last season, said England wanted to reverse a trend of past disappointments. "In England's history we've struggled to get across the finish line at major tournaments," said Kane.

He admitted the loss in the final of Euro 2020 to Italy on penalties at Wembley was "particularly difficult to cope with". "We were as close to the title you can get without winning it. Now I feel like this team is extremely hungry."

"We want to make history and the only way to do that is to win the title."

Despite a stellar individ-

ual career, Kane has never won a team trophy. Serial Bundesliga winners Bayern finished last season trophyless for the first time in 12 years. "If you look at my career and the doubts that have accompanied me, that'd be a great way to make a point," Kane said.

England's all-time top goalscorer is also keen to make amends after missing a crucial penalty in a 2-1 quarter-final loss to eventual finalists France at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"It still hurts and I know that pain will probably never go away," added Kane, who took himself off social media after firing over from the spot.

"I completely withdrew and just spent time with my

family. If I had started reading every headline or scrolling through Instagram and Twitter, I would have gone crazy."

England will spend the Euros at a resort just outside the central German village of Blankenhain, which boasts three golf courses.

Kane, an avid golfer who has played regularly with Germany veteran Thomas Mueller since moving to Munich, lamented he never had enough time to hone his craft further. "That's what frustrates me about golf. I don't have the time it takes to really perfect it. "I know I'm a good golfer but that's the problem with golf and the reason I love it; you can't solve every problem."

Nadal to skip Wimbledon to focus on Olympics

LONDON (AFP): Rafael Nadal confirmed on Thursday he will miss Wimbledon to focus on the Paris Olympics, which will be played on the clay courts at Roland Garros.

The announcement came a day after Spanish tennis chiefs said the 14-time French Open champion would team up with Carlos Alcaraz at the Games in the French capital, which start late next month. Nadal, 38, lost in the first round at Roland Garros last month and indicated he was likely to skip Wimbledon, played on grass courts, where he was champion in 2008 and 2010.

The injury-plagued Spaniard, who has slumped to 264 in the world rankings, said after his exit to eventual runner-up Alexander Zverev in Paris that switching surfaces would not be "smart". "It looks difficult to make a transition to grass, having the Olympics again on clay," he said at the time.

The former world number one, who won the Olympics singles title in Beijing in 2008, only returned to competition in April after missing most of the past 16 months through injury. On Thursday he confirmed on social media that he would not be travelling to London to take part in the third Grand Slam of the year. "During my post-match press conference at Roland Garros I was asked about my summer calendar and since then I have been practising on clay," he tweeted.

"It was announced yesterday that I will play at the summer

Olympics in Paris, my last Olympics."

He added: "With this goal, we believe that the best for my body is not to change surface and keep playing on clay until then. "It's for this reason that I will miss playing at the Championships this year at Wimbledon. I am saddened not to be able to live this year the great atmosphere of that amazing event that will always be in my heart, and be with all the British fans that always gave me great support. I will miss you all."

Nadal, who teamed up with Marc Lopez to win the Olympic doubles title at the 2016 Rio Games, will warm up for Paris at the Bastad clay court tournament in Sweden, which starts on July 15. The veteran, second on the all-time list of men's Grand Slam winners behind Novak Djokovic, will form a doubles team at the Olympics with newly crowned French Open champion and reigning Wimbledon champion Alcaraz.

Both will also compete in singles at the tennis tournament in Paris, which starts on July 27.

Nadal, who has a 7-5 win-loss record this year, said before the start of the recent French Open that there was a chance he might not be back at Roland Garros but insisted he was still keeping the door "100 percent open" on continuing his career. His withdrawal from Wimbledon, which starts on July 1, is a big blow for organisers, with Djokovic a major doubt after undergoing a knee operation.

Raducanu reaches Nottingham quarter-finals but Norrie loses

NOTTINGHAM: Britain's Emma Raducanu continued her Wimbledon preparations by cruising into the quarter-finals of the Nottingham Open with a straight-set win over Ukraine's Daria Snigur. Raducanu - playing only her second match since April after deciding to skip the French Open to focus on her fitness - made light work of the world number 127 to win 6-2 6-2.

She will face compatriot Fran Jones or American Ashlyn Krueger in the last eight. In the men's Challenger event, Cameron Norrie suffered a shock 1-6 6-4 6-4 loss to world number 773 Jack Pinnington Jones. Raducanu, 21, made a shaky start to the second-round match as her 22-year-old opponent broke her serve in the opening game. Both players then held serve before former US Open champion Raducanu reeled off six games in a row - including a double break - to win the first set.

After ceding the first game, Raducanu's serve was particularly impressive. She sent down 11 aces thanks to a new-look action she has adopted since reuniting with childhood coach Nick Cavaday. On her serve, Raducanu said: "I've been working on every part of my game but the serve is very important. "I don't look at the speed gun but when I raise my game it's nice to get a couple of free points.



NOTTINGHAM: Emma Raducanu plays Daria Snigur during the Rothesay Open Nottingham.

"At the start of the year, I didn't manage to get that. When playing the top opponents like Iga [Swiatek] or Aryna [Sabalenka] then you need a first serve." Snigur also found it difficult to cope with the power Raducanu produced from her groundstrokes, most notably her forehand. Raducanu had been unhappy with a number of line calls during her first-round win over Japan's Ena Shibahara, and she was seen questioning umpire Thomas Sweeney during the win over Snigur. But the world number 209 put her frustration

aside to make it back-to-back wins for the third time this year as she builds up to Wimbledon, which starts on 1 July.

Norrie shocked by fellow Brit Jack Draper as the British number one on Monday after his surprise loss to Pinnington Jones.

The 28-year-old has failed to reach a final in any tournament in 2024 and has dropped to 39 in the world rankings. The former world number eight was beaten by 57-ranked Pavel Kotov in the first round of the French Open in May. Pinnington Jones plays on the ITF Tour - the second-tier of

professional men's tennis - recorded his first win over a top-100 opponent with his comeback victory over Norrie.

The 21-year-old will now rise at least 137 places in the world rankings. "It was a tough match, I had a lot of opportunities in the second set as well a lot of break points in the third," Norrie said.

"But I'm happy for him and he deserved the win today and hopefully he can go further. "I was very disappointed with the match, but I am happy that Jack is through and the [American university] Texas Christian Union boys are doing well."



In brief

ANF recovers 324 kg drugs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover 324 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 192 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted in Saryab Road Quetta while a drug smuggler was arrested during the operation. In another operation, 108 kg hashish was recovered from an abandoned vehicle near Zhob Road Kuchlak. 18 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two suspects arrested near 26 No. Chungi, Islamabad. In the fourth operation, 6 kg hashish was recovered from a woman netted from GT Road, Attock. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

Randhawa issues directives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday directed the officials to ensure all necessary assistance and facilities to the visitors at One Window operation during the summer season. During his surprise visit to CDA's One Window, Muhammad Ali also issued directives for proper seating arrangements for visitors at the center, said a press release. He instructed all officers and employees to maintain punctuality at the One Window and said that the objective of the center is to provide comprehensive services to citizens under a single roof. Highlighting the importance of citizens receiving all required services efficiently at One Window, he said that ongoing digitization efforts will further enhance its effectiveness.

292,700 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 292,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 225,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1446.34 feet and was 48.34 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 88,500 cusecs and 125,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1183.90 feet, which was 135.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 39,300 cusecs and 70,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 187,200, 153,200, 115,400 and 57,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 64,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Fourth death anniversary of leading film actress Sabiha Khanum was observed on Thursday. Born on October 16, 1935 in Gujrat, she ruled Pakistani cinema in 1950s and '60s with super hit movies, including Kaneez, Mukhra, Anokha, Tehzeeb and many others. She was awarded Pride of Performance in 1986. She died on June 13, 2020 in the United States.

PM aide urges collective action for climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, MNA Romina Khurshid Alam, on Thursday said that while Pakistan is struggling to cope with exacerbating impacts of climate change particularly heatwaves and floods, the present government is taking all-out policy measures to overcome the impacts, which have already caused irrecoverable economic losses worth billions of rupees.

While addressing a national seminar 'Disaster-Resilient Pakistan' held here at the National University of Technology and organised by the National Disaster Management Authority, PM's aide noted that frequent disruptions in normal weather patterns overall last one decade has severely impacted the country's agricultural productivity, posing risk to national food water, energy securities, livelihoods of millions, deepening hunger and malnutrition woes.

The country's geographical location, coupled with its heightened socio-economic vulnerabilities, intensifies the risks posed by the climate crisis, she highlighted.

Evidence from the various reports international financial institutions including World Bank and Asian Development Bank suggest the country would

continue to experience more adverse effects of climate change in future, including more erratic weather patterns, heightened glacial melting, paced sea-level rise and unleashing of more intense weather events such as floods and droughts. These impacts not only threaten human lives and infrastructure but also exacerbate existing socio-economic disparities, the reports highlight.

Quoting from a World Bank study 'Pakistan: Country Climate and Development Report', the PM's aide Romina Khurshid said that between 1992 and 2021 climate- and weather-related disasters in Pakistan causes economic losses to the tune of US \$29.3 billion from damage to property, crops, and livestock, equivalent to 11.1% of the 2020 GDP.

The devastating riverine floods in 2022 alone resulted in more than \$30 billion in economic losses and damages, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive action, she added.

Apprising the event participants of the present PM Shehbaz Sharif-led government's climate risk mitigation measures, Romina Khurshid Alam said, "The present PM Shehbaz Sharif-led government is taking all-out policy initiatives and implementing various adaptations and mitigation coping

measures to address the country's worsening climate-vulnerability."

The PM's Coordinator Romina Khurshid noted that as a part of climate change adaptation and mitigation policy measures, enhanced investments in resilient infrastructure, sustainable agriculture practices, efficient water management and renewable energy are imperative to build resilience against climate change-induced risks and protect the country's vulnerable socio-economic sectors and lives and livelihoods of the climate-susceptible communities, particularly in coastal and mountain areas.

The present government has already prioritised climate action to protect the lives and livelihoods of the people and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come, she added.

Spelling out various policy initiatives, the PM's aide said further that as a part of climate action, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination was already implementing a robust policies and implementation frameworks to cope with climate and environmental challenges including the National Environment Policy, National Climate Change Policy, National Forest Policy, the Pakistan Climate Change Act (2017), Green Building

Codes. Moreover, the various projects have also been implemented under these policies and implementation frameworks such as the Scaling up of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) Risk Reduction project, the Living Indus Initiative, Recharge Pakistan and the Green Pakistan Programme, under which 2.1 billion tree saplings have already been planted across the country, Romina Khurshid added.

She also told the seminar participants that National Adaptation Plan of Pakistan, rolled out by the ministry in consultation with relevant provincial, national and international stakeholders, is being implemented to enhance resilience, address vulnerabilities, and mobilise climate finance, manage disaster risks by investing in early warning systems, strengthening climate governance and enhancing preparedness for effective response.

Arranging adequate funding for implementation of the various policies and

implementation frameworks for coping with climate change impacts on socio-economic sectors is a major challenge, the PM's aide highlighted and urged the private sector to come forward to support and fund government's climate resilience building initiatives.

"Efforts are being made to engage private sector by approaching financial institutions including banking, industrial sector and corporate sectors to invest in climate-resilient development programmes and projects of the government under public-private partnerships, and help strengthen the government's climate action for making Pakistan climate-resilient," Romina Khurshid apprised the participants.

While highlighting the unprecedented significance of the public-private partnership for climate-resilience Pakistan' She As Pakistan moves on to deal with intensifying impacts of climate change despite limited financial resources and technical capacity, the

private sector's partnership with the government for collective climate action are of unprecedented significance for the climate-resilient Pakistan.

"Failure to act swiftly and collectively would only aggravate the climate-vulnerability of the country's socio-economic sectors, particularly agriculture, energy, water, health and education," she warned.

On the occasion, the speakers emphasized on the collective responsibility in disaster management and discussed the adoption of a national anticipatory approach. Guest of Honour of seminar, Rector NUTECH, Lt General (R) Moazzam Ejaz delivered the closing remarks.

Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik briefed attendees on the establishment of a modern National Emergencies Operation Center at NDMA. He outlined the capabilities of NEOC, enabled by multiple satellite feeds, software and artificial intelligence tools, to generate a National

Common Operating Picture (NCOP), strengthening digital risk assessment, early warning systems and preparedness strategies for Pakistan. He emphasized the role of government and institutions in disaster risk reduction entails need for comprehensive policies, regulatory frameworks, and cross-sector collaborations to effectively translate knowledge into actionable measures. He urged that engaging young people not only builds future resilience but also injects fresh perspectives and innovative ideas into disaster management strategies.

The seminar was attended by key stakeholders, including government officials, Ambassadors, representatives of UN agencies, development partners, humanitarian organizations, academia, disaster response experts, media, tech professionals and youth, all dedicated to investing in disaster risk reduction and resilience building as a key component of sustainable development.

Meeting held to abolish corporal punishment

ISLAMABAD (APP): To abolish and completely eradicate Corporal Punishment in educational institutions, a meeting was convened on Thursday by inviting relevant stakeholders at the Pakistan Manpower Institute Building. Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training chaired the meeting.

According to the Education Ministry, the chair explained that it was our prime responsibility to ensure protection of children rights in educational

settings and that included absolute ending of Corporal punishment.

The deliberations of meeting included strategizing effective execution of corporal punishment Act and ensuring that every child was being protected and heard, it added.

The actions in this regard will include immediate awareness raising campaigns, a baseline survey for auditing the extant and frequency of corporal punishment, workshops for students, teachers, parents and

community, display of a sealed compliant box in all educational institutions, notification of disciplinary committees in each school and an exclusive director in each Directorate.

Furthermore, setting up of a Hot-line for students and parents to report any such incident confidentially was also included in the proposed actions.

The participants of meeting proclaimed to ensure complete implementation of corporal punishment Act, the ministry said.

Formation of standing committees:

National Assembly issues circulation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Secretariat issued a circular on Thursday announced the formation of 40 standing committees including the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq approved the membership for these committees during the session held on May 17.

The standing committees included Aviation, Cabinet Division, Climate Change, Environmental Coordination, Commerce, Communications, Defense, Defe-

nse Production, Economic Affairs Division, Energy and Petroleum Division, Federal Education Professional Training National Heritage and Culture, Finance and Revenue, Foreign Affairs, Government Assurances, Housing and Works, Human Rights, Industries and Production, Information and Broadcasting, Information Technology and Telecommunication, Interior, Provincial Coordination, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Law and Justice, Maritime Affairs, Narcotics Control, Food Security and

Research, National Health Services Regulation and Coordination, overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources, parliamentary Affairs, Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Energy Power Division, privatization, Railways, Interfaith Harmony, Rules of procedure and Privileges, Science and Technology, States and Frontier Regions, Water Resources, House and Library, and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

MNA hails budget 2024-25 as public friendly

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Member National Assembly (MNA) Dr Shaista Khan Thursday termed the budget 2024-25 a balanced budget which reflects Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's concern for down-trodden people of the country where salaried class' rights were being protected.

She said the working class as well as pensioners had been given a reasonable raise in their wages, which was an appreciable measure.

Unlike the previous

budgets this government's budget will reduce the gap between the rich and the poor segments of society, she said, adding, that the funds approved in the budget for development projects will open a new era of progress and prosperity.

The federal government has presented a budget aligned with public expectations, with significant allocations for welfare projects, particularly addressing the needs of the working class and government employees, she mentioned.

She also appreciated the increased allocation of the Benazir Bhutto Income Support Programme and congratulated Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and his cabinet for announcing a historical budget. She hoped that the government would carry forward the mission to facilitate the common man.

The budget envisages measures that will strengthen the economy and reduce the hardship of weak segments of the society, she added.

WAPDA awards Rs10.6b contract

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) awarded the contract for civil and electro-mechanical works for rehabilitation of Dargai Hydel Power Station worth Rs. 10.6 billion to a Joint Venture (JV), comprising two Chinese and a Pakistani firm.

General Manager (Hydel Development) WAPDA Ihsan Ullah and authorized representative of the JV Nabeel Tahir signed the contract on behalf of their respective organizations, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), Member (Power) WAPDA Jamil Akhtar, WAPDA officers, representatives of AFD, the consultants and the contractors were also present in the contract signing ceremony.

WAPDA is carrying out rehabilitation and capacity enhancement of Dargai Hydel Power Station with Financial Support of AFD, France.

According to the contract, Dargai Hydel Power Station will be rehabilitated in 3 years. On completion of the rehabilitation project, Dargai Hydel Power Station will generate 22 MW of green and clean hydel electricity. It will provide 130 million units of low cost hydel electricity to the National Grid annually.

Dargai Hydel Power Station, located in Malakand, was constructed in 1952. After serving 72 years, it requires rehabilitation to continue its operation.

WAPDA is implementing a two-pronged strategy for optimal utilization of hydropower resources in Pakistan.

Under the strategy, Water and Power Development Authority is not only constructing new hydropower projects but also rehabilitating and upgrading its old hydel power stations to maximize the ratio of environment friendly and low-cost hydel electricity in the National Grid. Rehabilitation of Dargai Hydel Power Station is part of the said strategy.

Minister welcomes budget' zero-duty status

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Thursday welcomed the government's several tax relief measures in the federal budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 such as zero-rated status for the seafood industry which will promote and protect this industry to enhance its export.

He said it was a welcome change from the past with the government looking at the fisheries sector and seafood exports, particularly as a major area of growth.

All seafood processing machinery would be exempted from any import duties so that value-addition plants would be imported, he said adding that "We will make our products according to

world-class standards".

He said that the seafood sector will generate further job opportunities besides feeding nutritional food to the masses, adding, that this sector can earn valuable foreign exchange, however, it needs proper financing, facilitation, and support of a strategic plan and policy.

Pakistan exported about \$500 million worth of seafood during the fiscal year 2022-23, which was recorded high and will further increase in the coming months due to massive incentives to this industry.

Replying to a question, he said management measures implemented in the fiscal year budget will help to control the inflation, adding, that government was taking adequate meas-

ures to address it.

The government has set a red line for the Economic team that there must be no more financial burden on the poor and salaried persons in the fiscal year budget which is admirable, he mentioned.

He expressed satisfaction with the allocation for the health, education, IT sectors, adding, that the main target of the budget was mitigating people's problems, transforming the agriculture sector, promoting information technology (IT), education Children, boosting exports, promoting industrial growth, and bolstering businesses.

In this difficult time the 25% increase in government employees' salary was also a remarkable step, he highlighted.

Training program launched for ophthalmologists

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a collaborative effort to address the growing challenge of blindness in OIC African member countries, COMSTech has joined hands with other partners to launch a comprehensive training program for ophthalmologists of African OIC member states.

The program will be executed through the collaborative efforts of COMSTech (OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the Layton Rahmatullah Benevolent Trust (LRBT) Hospital.

According to the COMSTech, this one-year training program aims to equip 18 doctors from Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Somalia, and Togo with advanced skills in treating Glaucoma and Diabetic Retinopathy.

The training takes place at the LRBT Hospital in Korangi, Karachi, a renowned non-profit organization dedicated to preventing blindness and providing high-quality eye

care. LRBT's extensive experience, coupled with COMSTech's leadership in science and technology cooperation, and IsDB's AFAB (Alliance to Fight Avoidable Blindness) program, creates a powerful alliance to combat this critical health issue.

The program focuses on

both medical and surgical treatments for pediatric and adult patients, empowering these doctors to become leaders in eye care upon returning to their home countries.

This will significantly enhance local capacities to prevent and treat blindness, transforming lives and communities.

AIOU ranked 1st in quality educ

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has been ranked first among 89 Pakistani universities and 7th among 2175 international universities in the recent Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024 for quality education (SDG-4).

Additionally, AIOU has secured the first position among Pakistani universities for SDG 8 (Decent Employment and Economic Growth) and ranked third for SDG 10 (Reduction of Inequality) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Dr. Nasir Mahmood congratulated the entire faculty and staff on this proud moment and stated that Allama Iqbal Open University is in no way inferior to the best universities in the world. "Our curriculum, laboratories, and teachers adhere to international standards, and we make every effort to achieve the benchmarks of quality education".

This is why Allama Iqbal Open University has been recognized as the seventh-best university in the world today. It is a matter of great pride for us.



ISLAMABAD: Two elderly persons busy in reading newspaper about Federal Budget 2024-25. —APP Photo

Minister met ambassador

KABUL (BNA): Minister of Information and Culture, Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa, held a meeting with Hassan Kazemi Qomi, special envoy of President of Iran and the Iranian ambassador in Kabul. The discussions centered on fortifying and enriching the cultural and artistic ties between Kabul and Tehran. The Minister mentioned that, alongside the excellent political interactions between the two countries, cultural and artistic collaborations are steadily expanding.

Committee meeting held

KABUL (BNA): The regular meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Investment Committee was held. The meeting took place at Marmarin Palace. Various investment proposals from the private sector were discussed and reviewed. The meeting covered proposals for electrification of Mori Chaq village in Bala Murghab, the construction of a commercial market and an underground road in Jalalabad city, and the development of the Bam Herat recreational complex.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Hanafi Turkish foundations discuss humanitarian aid

KABUL (BNA): The Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, held a meeting with representatives from two prominent Turkish charitable foundations.

ARG reported in a statement that Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi held discussions with Mehmet Ubeyd Kosger, representative of the Hayrat Foundation, and Ali Senel, representative of the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation.

During the meeting, the representatives expressed their satisfaction with the security situation and the creation of good economic opportunities in Afghanistan. They provided information about their activities in the country to the Deputy PM.

The representatives assured continued support from Turkish citizens and the government for the people of Afghanistan.



of Afghanistan.

They mentioned that aid packages have been distributed to refugees, earthquake victims, and those affected by recent floods.

Additionally, they announced plans to distribute sacrificial meat to the needy during Eid al-Adha.

Meanwhile, Deputy PM

Hanafi expressed gratitude for the humanitarian assistance from the Turkish government and citizens.

He highlighted the strong religious, historical, and cultural ties between Afghanistan and Turkey, emphasizing the enduring friendly relations between the two

brotherly nations.

Furthermore, the Deputy PM warmly welcomed the initiatives of the Turkish charitable foundations and assured them that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan would offer all necessary support and facilitation for their humanitarian efforts.

Implementing digital systems top priority

KABUL (BNA): The Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, recently convened with representatives from various chambers across the country, alongside the Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, Nooruddin Azizi.

During the meeting, Khanjan Alokozay and Haji Shirin Agha Sakhi, speaking on behalf of the others, emphasized the need to simplify administrative processes for traders and investors. They also underscored the importance of strengthening and expanding the digital system for evaluating commercial documents.

Meanwhile, the Deputy PM for Administrative Affairs praised the efforts and contributions of traders and investors during the meeting. He stated that the Islamic Emirate is committed to creating favorable commercial conditions in the country and providing all necessary facilities for traders and investors.

He further emphasized that establishing a comprehensive digital system within the administrative departments is a top priority. He assured that the responsible officials are diligently advancing efforts to develop and implement this system, aiming to enhance efficiency, transparency, and ease of access for traders and investors.

UNICEF marks ‘sad’ 1000-day milestone of ban on Afghan girls’ education

KABUL (Ariana News): Thursday marks 1,000 days since Afghan girls were banned from attending secondary schools – a ruling imposed by the Islamic Emirate in December 2021.

In a statement marking the day, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said, “Today marks a sad and sobering milestone: 1,000 days since the announcement banning girls in Afghanistan from attending secondary schools. 1,000 days out-of-school amounts to 3 billion learning hours lost. For 1.5 million girls, this systematic exclusion is not only a blatant violation of their right to education, but also results in dwindling opportunities and deteriorating mental health.”

She said the rights of children, especially girls, “cannot be held hostage to politics” and that their lives, futures, hopes and dreams are hanging in the balance.

Russell also stated that the ban impacts the humanitarian crisis and has serious ramifications for Afghanistan’s economy and development trajectory.

She called on the Islamic Emirate to allow all children to resume learning immediately.

The UN has not however been the only organization to repeatedly call on the Islamic Emirate to lift the ban on girls’ education.

Just last month, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) called on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to respect Afghan girls and women’s right to education and work.

In a declaration issued after the OIC summit in Gambia, the organization described the right to education and work as the fundamental rights of Afghan girls and women, and called for more communication with the IEA authorities on these issues.

The Islamic Emirate has however stated in the past that the issue of education of girls and women is an internal matter and countries should not interfere in it.

Director stresses to receive religious studies

KABUL (TOLONews): Rafiullah Habibi, Director of Technical and Vocational Education, emphasizes the need for young people to learn religious sciences in the country.

During the results announcement program for about five hundred students of this institute, Habibi stated that in addition to modern sciences, young people should also pay attention to religious sciences.

The Director of Technical and Vocational Education said, “It is a faith-based responsibility to include intellectual, ideological, and reformative education alongside modern education.”

Sayed Abdulrahman Rafat, the Director of Kabul Mechanics Institute, said, “Technical and vocational education is one of the most important parts of education in the world, through which the educational system of countries trains specialized workforce for the labor market.”

At the same time, several students of this institute who participated in this competition are asking the authorities of the Islamic Emirate to open the school doors for girls.

Nisar Ahmad Jahed, the exam organizer, said, “We started this process about a month ago, and around 500 students participated in it.”

Participant Mohammad Zakir said, “Girls’ schools should be reopened so they



too can contribute to the country’s progress because both men and women play an important role in the development of the country.”

Students of this institute say that such exams are beneficial for increasing the awareness of young people about jurisprudence and religious sciences.

Participant Zaki said, “It is best to have more competitions on the life of the Prophet, jurisprudence issues, and other religious matters to increase students’ knowledge about jurisprudence and science.”

The Kabul Mechanics Institute was established in 1937 (1316 in the Afghan calendar) and provides technical and vocational training in mechanics to students.

Afghanistan’s central bank chief upbeat over stable AFN

KABUL (Ariana News): The acting head of Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) says that the value of the afghani (AFN) against the US dollar has remained stable compared to that of other currencies in the region.

Hadayatullah Badri said in a Supreme Council of Da Afghanistan Bank meeting this week that the liquidity situation in banks has improved because “people’s deposits in the Islamic banking sector have increased by 4 percent compared to the previous quarter.”

Issues that were also discussed at the meeting included the effective implementation of monetary

policies, the state of the banking sector, efforts to develop Islamic banking, the mechanization of exchange activities and people’s access to financial services.

However, it subsequently plummeted into deflation, reaching -9.0 percent in March 2024.

Similarly, food inflation decreased from +26 percent in June 2022 to -13.8 percent in March 2024.

The persistent deflation is reflecting a fall in food prices and weak consumer demand.

However, WFP stated: “While deflation supports

low food prices, limited number of job opportunities and low wages will continue to weaken household purchasing power.”

Exchange rate: The monthly average exchange rate between AFN and US dollar was recorded at AFN 72.0 per 1 USD.

After its surge in January 2022, the value of AFN started to consistently appreciate against the US dollar during the year 2023 and remains relatively stable, hovering around AFN 70-74 per USD since November 2023.

Factors such as US dollar auctions by the Da Afghanistan Bank, ban on

foreign currencies for domestic transactions, increased remittances, and UN dollar shipments significantly contribute to the stability of AFN, WFP reported.

Minister visits pilgrim camps

KABUL (BNA): Sheikh-ul-Hadith Dr. Noor Mohammad Saqib, the Acting Minister of Hajj and Islamic Affairs of and the General Head of the Afghan Hajj Delegation in Saudi Arabia, accompanied by several senior officials from the Makkah delegation’s committee, visited the camps in Mina and Arafat.

The press office of the Ministry of Hajj and Islamic Affairs announced today that the Acting Minister visited the camps designated for Afghan pilgrims in Mina and Arafat before the start of the Hajj rituals.

In addition to inspecting the Afghan pilgrims’ tents, Minister Saqib visited the Ahlul Bayt Foundation and discussed various topics with its officials and the heads of related departments, focusing on providing better services to Afghan pilgrims in Mina and Arafat.

Iran Air resumes flights to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Transport and Aviation of the caretaker government has announced the commencement of flights by Iran Air to Kabul.

The ministry, in a press release, stated that Iran’s international airline began its flights to Kabul on Wednesday, June 12, for the first time.

The press release mentioned that besides Ariana Afghan Airlines and Kam Air, Mahan Air, Kish Air, and Yazd Air also have flights to Iran.

According to the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, this airline will operate one flight per week to Kabul.

Previously, Turkish Airlines had also announced the resumption of its flights to Afghanistan after a three-year hiatus.

It is noteworthy that after the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan, many airlines had suspended their flights to the country.

Additionally, over the past two years, foreign airlines including Air Arabia and Flydubai from the UAE, as well as airlines from Iran and Pakistan, have announced the start of their operations in Afghanistan.

Currently, only two airlines, Ariana Afghan Airlines and Kam Air, provide services within Afghanistan.

Educational opportunities provided for orphans



TAKHAR (TOLONews): A Turkish charity organization has established an orphanage in the city of Taloqan, the capital of Takhar, providing educational and training opportunities for orphaned children.

The head of this organization states that, as part of their ongoing efforts to gather orphaned and deprived children, they have identified 35 children so far.

Tahir Khan, the head of the charity organization, said, “Our selection and recruitment process for orphans ensures that children who have been

deprived of education and have not received any assistance from any organization or individual so far, are accepted and covered by us.”

Noorullah Maqimi, the head of the orphanage, said, “They are provided with meals three times a day, and they also have a religious studies teacher, a supervisor, and a guard.”

Several orphaned children who have been given educational opportunities at this orphanage express their happiness.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs says that currently, more

than ten thousand orphaned children are engaged in education and training in orphanages.

Sami Ebrahimi, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, said, “The Islamic Emirate has activated orphanages for orphaned children in all provinces across the country, including a recently established orphanage in Takhar for the upbringing of orphaned children.”

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs also states that they are striving to create separate orphanages for orphaned girls.

Iranian company to set up advanced oil refinery

KABUL (TOLONews): An Iranian company has submitted a plan to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to establish a standard oil refinery in Afghanistan.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the spokesman of the ministry of Industry and Commerce, said that the acting minister met with representatives of an Iranian company about the quality and types of products to be derived from crude oil in the refinery to be constructed.

The spokesperson for the Ministry told TOLONews: “In this meeting, the repre-

sentative of Vira Energy and Chemistry Company shared the plan to establish a standard refinery using modern technology, in accordance with the crude oil extracted in Afghanistan, and provided technical information regarding the quantity, quality, and types of products obtained.”

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment said the establishment of small and large refineries in the oil sector are crucial for achieving self-sufficiency.

According to the officials in this chamber, utiliz-

ing Iran’s experience in constructing oil refineries with relatively small investments in Afghanistan will yield positive results.

“Unrefined oil is cheap, but when refined and turned into quality petrol or diesel, its price increases,” said Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the ACCI’s board of directors.

Meanwhile, some experts said that if standard refineries are established in the country’s mines, the price of minerals within the country will decrease and higher profits can be obtained from exports.

Children laborers call for their situation to be addressed

KABUL (TOLONews): Coinciding with June 12th, the World Day Against Child Labor, a number of children in the capital have told TOLONews that due to economic challenges, they are forced to do hazardous work.

These children have asked the Islamic Emirate to support the families of working children and to provide suitable job opportunities for them.

Nawab, an eleven-year-old who is the sole breadwinner for his family of seven and also a fourth-grade student, said he is less able to focus on his studies.

Nawab told TOLONews: “I am eleven years old. I

am the only one in my family who works, and I bring food home at night. No one else in our house works.”

“My request from the Islamic Emirate is to provide us with educational opportunities. We want to study and serve the country,” said Zahir, another child laborer in Kabul.

The General Workers’ Union believe that the increase in child labor has negative effects on the country’s economy, and the Islamic Emirate should coordinate with international organizations like the International Labour Organization to create educational opportunities for children.

Mohammad Liaquat

Adel, President of the General Workers’ Union, added: “Many children, who are our future, are engaged in hard labor in brick kilns, agricultural sectors, and mines.”

“Legally, humanely, and religiously, hard and intense labor has negative effects on a child’s mental state and future,” said Sayed Massoud, an economic analyst.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has pledged that it will prevent child labor and provide necessary assistance to them.

According to Samiullah Ebrahimi, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, educational centers for

orphaned children have been established in the capital and provinces, and in addition to other aid, vocational training for children is also provided in these centers.

Samiullah Ebrahimi said: “The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has activated orphanages for these children in Kabul and the provinces so that they can be cared for and have access to education and upbringing, which is their basic right.”

Coinciding with the World Day Against Child Labor, the United Nations has stated that around 160 million children worldwide are deprived of education and are engaged in labor.

Kandahar youth donate blood to replenish local hospitals

K A N D A H A R (TOLONews): 100 young people have donated blood to the blood bank at the Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar.

One young man said they wanted to help patients by giving blood.

Amanullah, 27, is one of those youths who sought to give blood to sick residents.

Amanullah, a Kandahar resident, said: “It is the need of countrymen, and giving blood is the best charity.”

1000cc blood was collected in Mirwais Regional Hospital and will be used for the treatment of cancer patients, gynecological patients, and injured people in traffic accidents.

“Blood in hospitals is down, so we want to give blood to countrymen so that they recover their health, and it is not important whether the patient is a man or woman,” said Qudratullah, a Kandahar



resident. Nazir Hemat, a Kandahar resident, said: “We donate blood to those

women and children who are suffering from blood diseases.”

According to the infor-

mation, the majority of patients who are in treatment at the providential hospital are children.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering oath of office to Mumtaz Ali Shah as Federal Insurance Ombudsman, during a ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Israeli forces thrust deeper into Rafah as diplomacy falters

CAIRO (Reuters): Israeli tanks advanced deeper into the western area of Rafah, amid one of the worst nights of bombardment from air, ground, and sea, forcing many families to flee their homes and tents under darkness, residents said on Thursday.

Residents said the Israeli forces thrust toward the Al-Mawasi area of Rafah near the beach, which is designated as a humanitarian area in all announcements and maps published by the Israeli army since it began its Rafah offensive in May. The Israeli military denied in a statement it had launched any strikes inside the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone.

Israel said its assault aimed to wipe out Hamas' last intact combat units in Rafah, a city which had sheltered more than a million people before the latest advance began. Most of those people have now moved north toward Khan Younis and Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip. The Israeli military said in a statement it was continuing "intelligence-based, targeted operations" on Rafah, saying forces in the past day had located weapons, and killed Palestinian gunmen in close-range combat.

Over the past day, the military said it had struck 45 targets across the Gaza Strip from the air, including military structures, militant cells, rocket launchers, and tunnel shafts. Israel has ruled out peace until Hamas is eradicated, and much of Gaza lies in ruins. But Hamas has proven resilient, with militants resurfacing to fight in areas where Israeli

forces had previously declared to have defeated them and pulled back.

US President Joe Biden will urge fellow leaders of Group of Seven nations to support ceasefire negotiations and encourage Hamas to accept a proposal backed by Israel, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a meeting of G7 leaders in southern Italy, Sullivan said the world should encourage the Palestinian militant group to accept the proposal and avoid stalemate. Sullivan said Israel is standing behind a ceasefire proposal for the eight-month-old war in the Gaza Strip, and the goal is to bridge gaps with Hamas and get to a deal soon.

Hamas has welcomed the ceasefire proposal, but insists any agreement must secure an end to the war, a demand Israel still rejects. Israel described Hamas's response to the new US peace proposal as total rejection. Since a brief week-long truce in November, repeated attempts to arrange a ceasefire have failed, with Hamas insisting on a permanent end to the war and full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

Sullivan said Hamas had submitted an amended proposal with some minor changes that could be worked out, as well as others that were not in line with what Biden had laid out or that had been embraced by the UN Security Council. "Our goal is to figure out how we bridge the remaining gaps and get to a deal," he said, adding that discussions would contin-

ue with Qatar and Egypt, who, in turn, would work with Hamas to reach agreement as quickly as possible.

Sullivan stressed that Israel was standing behind the ceasefire proposal Biden outlined in a May 31 speech, adding that he had heard no Israeli leader challenge the deal. Hamas precipitated the war when militants from Israeli-blockaded Gaza stormed into southern Israel in a lightning strike last Oct. 7, killing about 1,200 people and taking over 250 hostages back to the enclave, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's invasion and bombardment of Gaza since then has killed at least 37,000 people, according to the territory's health ministry. Thousands more are feared dead and buried under rubble, with most of the population of 2.3 million displaced. Biden was expected to update G7 leaders on the ceasefire negotiations and how their countries could support the process, Sullivan said, underscoring the broader implications for increasing tension between Israel and Lebanon.

Biden would discuss "the increasing intensity and scope of the strikes by Hezbollah deeper into Israel, and including into civilian areas," Sullivan said, adding that a ceasefire in Gaza would help bring calm to that region as well. G7 leaders would also compare notes on what he called "the continuing threat posed by Iran, both with respect to its support for proxy forces, and with respect to the Iranian nuclear program, where we continue to have grave concerns."

Govt focusing on education sector: Tarar

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said the government is focusing on education sector in order to exploit the full potential of the youth in various fields especially Information Technology.

Addressing an education expo in Islamabad on Thursday, he said the budget of education has been enhanced. He said IT facilities will be provided in the schools and the tech startups will be encouraged. The Information Minister said the PML-N government has always taken measures to encourage the youth. In this regard, he referred to the provision of free laptops and merit scholarships to the youth.

He noted Pakistan can carve out its rightful place in the comity of nations by equipping the youth with the latest education. He said a framework agreement was signed during the Prime Minister's visit to China under which a Chinese tech company will provide IT training to two hundred thousand Pakistani youth every year. Attaullah Tarar said the country's economic indicators are improving and the world institutions are also acknowledging the fact. He said there has been record reduction in inflation and the foreign exchange reserves are enough for two months' worth of imports.

PTI founder's marriage case adjourned

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court on Thursday adjourned the hearing of the appeals of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) founder and his wife Bushra Bibi against their conviction in the marriage case till Friday.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka heard the case. The petitioners' lawyers Advocate Usman Gul and Barrister Salman Safdar informed the court that the Islamabad High Court's order had not yet been signed, and requested for rescheduling the hearing on Friday.

The court, however, observed that it would conduct the hearing tomorrow if the IHC's written decision were available, otherwise, it would be moved to Saturday. The IHC had instructed the lower court to decide the petitions for suspension of the sentence within 10 days and the main appeals within a month. The court adjourned the hearing till 8:30 a.m. on Friday.

PTI Central Secretariat reopens

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: On the order of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), the Central Secretariat of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) was reopened on Thursday.

A bailiff appointed by Justice Ijaz Ishaq Khan of the IHC for the purpose reopened the office. The IHC over a week ago had ordered the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to immediately de-seal PTI's central secretariat in the federal capital. Accepting the PTI's plea, the court noted that the authority had not issued any notice prior to the order to seal the party's secretariat. It added that the CDA had neither sent the order to seal the office to the party, nor its copy. The CDA had partly demolished the secretariat before sealing it on May 24, saying it had been built in violation of the building bylaw.

40 standing committees of NA formed

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As many as 40 standing committees of the National Assembly were formed on Thursday. In this regard, a circular about the formation of the standing committees of the National Assembly has been released by the National Assembly Secretariat.

According to the circular, Standing Committee on Aviation consists of 19 members while Cabinet Secretariat committee includes 18 members.

G7 agrees \$50b deal to support Ukraine

ROME (Reuters): Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) major democracies agreed on an outline deal on Thursday to provide \$50 billion of loans for Ukraine using interest from Russian sovereign assets frozen after Moscow launched its invasion of its neighbour in 2022.

The political agreement was the centrepiece of the opening day in southern Italy of the annual summit of G7 leaders, attended for a second successive year by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The Ukrainian leader will sign a new, long-term security accord with US President Joe Biden on Thursday, as well as one with fellow G7 member Japan.

Many of the G7 leaders are struggling at home but determined to make a difference on the world stage as they also seek to counter China's economic ambitions. "There is a lot of work to be done, but I am sure that in these two days, we will be able to have discussions that will lead to concrete and measurable results," Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni told her G7 guests as their talks started in a luxury hotel resort in the southern region of Puglia.

The G7 plan for Ukraine is based on a multi-year loan using profits from some \$300bn of impounded Russian funds. The technical details will be finalised in the coming weeks, a G7 diplomatic source told Reuters. The source, who asked not to be named, said the additional funding would arrive by the end of this year. A senior US official said the United States had agreed to provide up to \$50bn itself, but that amount could decline significantly as other countries announced their participation.

The aim of the deal was to ensure it can run for years regardless of who is in power in each G7 state — a nod to concerns that US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump might be much less sympathetic to Kyiv if he beats Biden in November, according to a person close to the talks. While Meloni is flying high after triumphing in weekend European elections, the leaders of the other six nations

— the United States, Japan, France, Germany, Britain and Canada — face major domestic woes that risk undermining their authority.

The G7 leaders also expressed their concerns about the situation on the Israel-Lebanon border and endorsed US efforts to secure a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, according to a draft communique due to be released following the summit. In addition, they called on Israel to refrain from a full-scale offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, "in line with their obligations under international law".

Western nations were also unanimous in their concern over China's industrial overcapacity, which they say is distorting global markets, and their determination to help African states develop their economies, diplomats said. The G7 may have a very different complexion next year. Biden faces an uphill battle to win re-election in November, and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak looks certain to lose power at a national poll next month.

French President Emmanuel Macron dissolved his country's parliament on Sunday after his party was trounced in the European vote. All smiled broadly as they greeted Meloni under a blazing sun at the entrance to the Borgo Egnazia resort where they will spend two days in sessions that will later be opened to a host of fellow leaders, including Pope Francis.

Eager not to appear like an elitist fortress, the G7 has thrown open its doors to a large number of outsiders this year, including the pope, who is expected to give a keynote speech on Friday on the risks and potential of Artificial Intelligence. Among those who have also been invited to Puglia are the leaders of some of the biggest regional powers across the globe such as India, Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, Algeria and Kenya. Although the summit is scheduled to run until Saturday, many G7 chiefs will leave on Friday night, including Biden, meaning the final day has been earmarked for bilateral meetings for those staying on and a closing news conference from Meloni.

PHC halts potential removal of BOGs in hospitals

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Arshad Ali granted status quo against potential removal of chairmen and members of the Boards of Governors of various hospitals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Thursday. The pleas filed by chairman BOG Khyber Teaching Hospital Dr. Omar Ayub, Dr. Musa Kaleem, Dr. Muhammad Ali Chohan, Javed Ahmad Raza, Aftab Rabbani and Ayaz Ahmad stating that they were appointed for a three-year term.

The counsel for applicants, Mian Zakir Hussain, Barrister Babar Shahzad, Imran and Habib Ullah Anwar argued that the health minister does not have the authority to remove them. The appointments were made with the approval of the chief minister, and that the health minister's attempt to remove them is unlawful, the lawyers stated.

The counsel argued that Search and Nomination committee called several candidates for interviews in this regard. The new appointments being made

are politically motivated, and that they will compromise the quality of health-care services in the province, the lawyer stated.

The lawyers argued that the current setup has made significant improvements in the hospitals, and that removing them would undermine the progress made so far. Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa objected maintainability of the plea and also argues that the petitioners should approach the tribunal established under the Medical Teaching Institutions (MTI) Act, rather than the high court.

The counsel Zakir Hussain advocate argued that MTI Tribunal in non-functional as only Chairman is appointed while appointment of members still awaiting. The petitioners' lawyers argue that the high court has the jurisdiction to hear the case, citing several Supreme Court and high court judgments that support their stance.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Arshad Ali halted potential removal of chairmen and members BOG in hospitals across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and seeking

response from the Health Department while adjourned further hearing.

PHC issue notices to DG health: PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Arshad issued notices to Director General (DG) Health and Medical Superintendent District Headquarters Hospital, Nowshera, regarding the termination of Class IV employees without payment of one-year salaries.

The counsel Khalid Rahman advocate argued that the petitioners were appointed in January 2023 and had been working for the past year without receiving their salaries. Despite not being paid, they were barred from working, without any inquiry, show-cause notice, or termination order.

The counsel argued that Supreme Court and High Court had protected rights of employees in different verdicts in such situations. The petitioners have requested the court to declare the termination orders null and void and order the payment of their salaries for the past year. PHC issued notices to DG health MS DHQ Nowshera along with relevant authorities, seeking a response while adjourned further hearing.

Russian nuke-powered sub, arrives in Cuba

HAVANA (AP): Russia's Admiral Gorchkov frigate and the nuclear-powered submarine Kagran, accompanied by a tug boat and a fuel ship, have arrived in Cuba for a five-day visit seen as a show of force by Moscow amid rising tension over its invasion of Ukraine. Curious onlookers, fishermen and police gathered along the Malecon seafront boulevard in Havana to welcome the fleet as it entered the city's harbour.

Cuba, a longtime ally of Russia, saluted the vessels' arrival with a 21-gun salute, while Russian diplomats waved small Russian flags and took selfies against a backdrop of the harbour's historic fortresses. The four Russian vessels conducted "high-precision missile weapons" training in the Atlantic Ocean while on their way to Cuba. The submarine and frigate are equipped with Zircon hypersonic missiles, Kalibr cruise missiles and Onyx antiship missiles, the Russian Ministry of Defence said.

The unusual deployment of the Russian navy so close to the United States comes after Washington and some of Ukraine's other Western allies allowed Kyiv to use their weapons on targets inside Russia amid a renewed Russian assault on northeastern Kharkiv and battle troop and ammunition shortages. Havana lies just 160 kilometres (100 miles) from Key West in the southern state of Florida where the US has a naval air station.

"The warships are a reminder to Washington that it is unpleasant when an adversary meddles in your near abroad," Benjamin Gedan, director of the Latin America programme at the Washington, DC-based Wilson Center think tank, told The Associated Press news agency, referring to Western involvement in Russia's war in Ukraine. "It also reminds Russia's friends in the region, including US antagonists Cuba and Venezuela, that Moscow is on their side," he said.

Hezbollah launches rockets, drones at Israel military sites

JERUSALEM: Hezbollah has said it launched a major drone and rocket attack targeting several Israeli military bases amid growing fears of an all-out war between the Lebanese armed group and Israel. It was the largest attack by the Iran-aligned group since the outbreak of violence between the two sides on October 8, a Hezbollah source told Al Jazeera Arabic on Thursday.

The group said the attack in northern Israel was in retaliation for the assassination of senior commander Taleb Abdullah — known as Abu Taleb — in an Israeli air raid in the southern Lebanese village of Jouaiya earlier this week. The source said the "compound attack" also aimed to establish deterrence after the killing of Abdullah. The Lebanese group used 150 rockets and 30 explosive drones to target 15 Israeli positions, including some

in the occupied Golan Heights, the source said.

Israeli media outlets reported that Hezbollah rockets wounded at least two people and started 15 fires. The Israeli military said in a post on X that "numerous" launches were intercepted and that some ignited fires. In an official statement, Hezbollah said the operation was "in support of the steadfast Palestinian people and their courageous and honourable resistance in Gaza and in the context of the response to the assassination of the Zionist enemy carries out in Jouaiya". One of the Israeli units targeted in the attack is responsible for planning assassinations, Hezbollah said.

Hezbollah had also fired a barrage of 200 rockets at Israel. There have been near-constant reports of rocket sirens being activated in northern Israel since Abdullah was killed along

with three other fighters late on Tuesday. Hezbollah does not reveal details about its military structure or ranks, but Abdullah was only the second slain fighter from the group to be eulogised as a "commander" in the past months — after Wissam al-Tawil, who was killed in an Israeli attack in January. Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad paid tribute to Abdullah on Wednesday, lauding his efforts to confront Israel.

Hezbollah started attacking military bases in northern Israel after the outbreak of the war on Gaza in what it says is a "support front" to back Palestinian armed groups. Israel has responded by bombing villages across south Lebanon and targeting Hezbollah's positions. Despite the near-daily exchange of fire, the confrontations have largely been limited to the border area.

Rural India runs dry as thirsty megacity Mumbai sucks water

MUMBAI (AFP): Far from the gleaming high-rises of India's financial capital Mumbai, impoverished villages in areas supplying the megacity's water are running dry — a crisis repeated across the country that experts say foreshadows terrifying problems.

"The people in Mumbai drink our water but no one there, including the government, pays attention to us or our demands," said Sunita Pandurang Satgir, carrying a heavy metal pot on her head filled with foul-smelling water. Demand is increasing in the world's most populous nation of 1.4 billion people, but supplies are shrinking — with climate change driving erratic rainfall and extreme heat.

Large-scale infrastructure for Mumbai includes reservoirs connected by canals and pipelines channelling water from 100 kilometres away. Experts say a failure of basic planning means that the network is often not con-

nected to hundreds of rural villages in the region and several nearby districts.

But demand far outstrips meagre resources, and critical groundwater levels are falling. "Our days and our lives just revolve around thinking about collecting water, collecting it once, and collecting it again, and again," Satgir said. "We make four to six rounds for water every day... leaving us time for nothing else".

Climate change is shifting weather patterns, bringing longer-lasting and more intense droughts. Wells rapidly run dry early in the extreme heat. In the peak of summer, 35-year-old Satgir said she can spend up to six hours a day fetching water. Temperatures this year surged above a brutal 45°C. When the well dries, the village then relies on a government tanker with irregular supplies, two or three times a week.

It brings untreated water from a river where people

wash and animals graze. Satgir's home in the dusty village of Navinwadi, near the farming town of Shahapur, lies some 100 kilometres from the busy streets of Mumbai. The area is also the source of major reservoirs supplying some 60 per cent of water to Mumbai, local government authorities say.

Mumbai is India's second-biggest and rapidly expanding city, with an estimated population of 22 million. "All that water from around us goes to the people in the big city and nothing has changed for us," Satgir said. "Our three generations are linked to that one well," she added. "It is our only source." Deputy village head Rupali Bhaskar Sadgir, 26, said residents were often sick from the water. But it was their only option. "We've been requesting governments for years to ensure that the water available at the dams also reaches us," she said.



ISLAMABAD: PPP leaders from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa called on party chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

BHC reserves decision on wheat procurement case

QUETTA (INP): The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has reserved its decision in the case concerning alleged irregularities in wheat procurement and directed the removal of Section 144, which restricted the transportation of wheat.

The case was heard by a bench comprising Chief Justice Hashim Kakar and Justice Shaukat Rukhshani. Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti appeared in court, while the Chief Secretary was absent due to a busy schedule. Representatives from the Food Department also attended the hearing. Chief Minister Bugti reported that the government had provided 150,000 sacks of

wheat to farmers, costing 42 million rupees, and requested permission to purchase an additional 150,000 sacks. He proposed using the remaining funds for welfare projects in Jafarabad and Naseerabad, including the establishment of technical colleges and clean drinking water initiatives.

Chief Justice Kakar praised the Chief Minister's suggestions but highlighted issues with the Food Department, noting that much of the wheat is either smuggled to Afghanistan or left to rot in warehouses. He pointed out the need for better management and criticized the misuse of government vehicles.

The Chief Justice also remarked that annually, 1.02 million sacks of wheat are produced in Naseerabad Division, but the government only procures 500,000 sacks due to Section 144, leaving 950,000 sacks at risk of spoiling in homes.

The court, acknowledging numerous complaints about the Chief Secretary's performance, promised to include its recommendations in the final decision. After hearing all arguments, the court reserved its judgment on the wheat procurement case, marking a critical juncture in addressing agricultural management and bureaucratic efficiency in the province.