

JI announces protest
F.P. Report
LAHORE: JI leader Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has announced a countrywide protest today against power load shedding and heavy electricity bills. Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami addressing a press conference called Pakistan's Year 2024-25 budget an utterly anti-people budget. "They are not sending electricity bills, but these are bombs landing at the homes of power consumers," JI leader said.

Kundi calls on Bilawal
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi called on Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto here in Islamabad on Saturday. During the meeting, they discussed overall political and economic situation of the country, especially issues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Faisal Karim Kundi lauded the role of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for allocation of funds for projects in the current federal budget.

PM, COAS attends funeral of sepoy Haroon William



F.P. Report
RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday attended the funeral of sepoy Haroon William, a brave soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.
The funeral service of Sepoy Haroon William, a 29-year-old resident of Islamabad, was held today at Saint Paul's Church, Rawalpindi, a press release issued by the PM Office said. Sepoy William, a devoted Christian soldier, made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of the motherland and embraced martyrdom in Kurram District yesterday while on duty in counter terrorism operations.
The ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Defence Minister, Interior Minister, Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Chief of Army Staff, senior civil and military officers, soldiers, citizens, and relatives of the martyr. The prime minister praised the contributions and sacrifices of the Christian fraternity, lauding their role in the country's progress.
He emphasized that the Armed Forces of Pakistan are a cohesive unit, comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds, striving for the collective defence of the state. Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) honored the sacrifice of Sepoy Haroon William, Sepoy Anosh Rufun, and their comrades, stating that their unity and bravery exemplify the strength of the nation. He reaffirmed that the nation will always be indebted to their services and sacrifices for the honor of the motherland.
Sepoy Haroon William was laid to rest with full military honors in Rawalpindi. Funeral prayers for Havildar Aqeel Ahmed (Okara), Lance Naik Muhammad Tafeer (Poonch), Sepoy Anosh Rufun (Attock), and Sepoy Muhammad Azam Khan (Haripur) were also held in their respective hometowns with full military honours. The Armed Forces of Pakistan remain resolute and committed to eradicating terrorism from the motherland at all costs, the press release added.
Later, addressing the memorial service of Pakistan's Army's sepoy Haroon William in Saint Paul's Church, PM Shehbaz Sharif paying tributes to the martyr said that the history of Pakistan Armed Forces was filled with such unmatched sacrifices. Offering his heartfelt condolences to the family members of Sepoy Haroon William, the prime minister said he along with Army Chief, and the entire nation paid tribute to the martyr and acknowledge his sacrifice for the country.
He said Sepoy Haroon William and his comrades Havildar Aqeel Ahmed, Lance Naik Muhammad Tafeer, Sepoy Anosh Rufun , and Sepoy Muhammad Azam Khan sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country's security. "Their sacrifices will not go waste," he resolved. The prime minister said father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his address on August 11, 1947 made it clear that there will be rule of law in the country and that all the people irrespective of religion will enjoy equal rights and opportunities. Paying tribute to the Christian community members, the prime minister said they were playing key role in the country's progress.

Omar Ayub grills govt for economic tailspin

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan on Saturday lashed out at the government for complete collapse of the economy.
Speaking on the floor of National Assembly, the opposition leader played the government for spreading lies about the actual economic health of the country. He recalled during his fiery speech that Rs426.4 billion were recovered during the PTI government. He also claimed that the KP government has achieved its provincial surplus adding that the Sindh government's provincial surplus was still zero.
"People of all intelligence agencies are working in every jail. It must be asked that who is responsible for the intelligence failure. Our workers were picked up yesterday for staging peaceful protest. The arrest of our workers in condemnable. I know my statements are incisive for people sitting on the other side of the aisle." He added.
Meanwhile, sticking to its stance, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has once again demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja for failing to hold free and fair elections.
Speaking to the participants in the PTI rally in Islamabad, Omar Ayub Khan vociferously sought the resignation of CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja who, he said, failed to conduct transparent elections. "We want immediate resignation of CEC and other ECP members. The ECP only spent Rs16 billion out of its total allocated budget," he said. PTI chief Barrister Gohar lamented that doors of courts had been closed for the opposition leader. "History will remember our brave women workers who have been languishing in jail for more than a year in golden words," he said. "Justice delayed is justice denied," he remarked.
Asad Qaiser said the PTI leaders were not heard in parliament, which is tantamount to depriving them of their rights. Earlier, Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan lashed out at the government for collapse of the economy. Speaking on the floor of National Assembly, the opposition leader flayed the government for "propagating lies about the economic health of the country".

The Frontier Post

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday emphasised that the responsibility of combating terrorism lies with all federal and provincial governments, as well as institutions, underscoring the need for a collective and coordinated approach to eradicate this menace from the country.

"It is a joint responsibility of all of us to enforce the state's accountability fully and without exception," the prime minister said while addressing a meeting of the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan. The meeting was attended by the chief ministers of all the provinces, federal ministers and senior military officers.

He said terrorism had plagued Pakistan in various ways for two and a half decades. The problem of terrorism in Pakistan, he said was very complex and there was a deadly relationship between terrorism and crime, drugs, trafficking, extremism and religious hatred. He emphasised that stability and rule of law were essential for sustainable development in Pakistan.

"A soft state can never win the confidence of the investors, and a healthy and strong economy cannot be imagined in a country plagued by instability and terrorism," he added. The prime minister said all the institutions and provincial governments were relying solely on the Pakistan Armed Forces to fight against terrorism absolving themselves of any such responsibility. He said it was a dangerous trend that had been developed in the last few years which would not help completely uprooting the menace of terrorism from the country.

"Pakistan's Armed Forces have been shedding their blood for decades, offering unmatched and countless sacrifices," he said adding a sustainable stability could not be ensured without a complete system and a whole of the government. He stressed that all the law enforcement agencies, ministries, federal and provincial governments and all the institutions should jointly work to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

After the 18th amendment in the constitution, the prime minister pointed out that the provincial governments had a big role in this regard as they now receive all the required resources in this regard. We need harmony among all the stakeholders including the political and religious leaderships to put the country on the path of peace and prosperity, the prime minister added.

PM okays Operation Azm-i-Istehkam

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday approved a reinvigorated and re-energized national counter-terrorism campaign through launching of Operation 'Azm-e-Istehkam' with consensus of all stakeholders including provinces, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, symbolizing the national resolve to eradicate extremism and terrorism from the country.

The prime minister chaired a meeting of Central Apex Committee on National Action Plan. "Azm-e-Istehkam will integrate and synergize multiple lines of effort to combat the menaces of extremism and terrorism in a comprehensive and decisive manner," said in a press release issued by the PM Office Media Wing.

The meeting was attended by key ministers of the federal cabinet including the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and Information Minister Attaullah Tarar. Additionally, the chief ministers of all provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan, Services Chiefs and chief secretaries of the provinces along with other senior civilian, military and Law Enforcement Agencies officers were present. The forum conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing counter-terrorism campaign and assessed the internal security situation.

"The forum reiterated that the fight against extremism and terrorism was Pakistan's war and was absolutely essential for the nation's survival and well-being. The forum resolved that no one would be allowed to challenge the writ of the state without any exception," it was added. The progress on the multi-domain tenets of the National Action Plan was scrutinized, with particular emphasis on identifying shortcomings in the implementation for addressing the same on top priority. The necessity for a comprehensive and reinvigorated counter-terrorism strategy, founded on complete national consensus and system-wide synergy, was underscored.

In the politico-diplomatic domain, the forum resolved that efforts would be intensified to curtail the operational space for terrorists through regional cooperation. The renewed and full blown kinetic efforts of the armed forces would be augmented by full support from all the law enforcement agencies, empowered by effective legislation to address legal voids that hindered the effective prosecution of terrorism-related cases and award of exemplary punishments to them, the press release said. It said that the campaign would be duly complemented by socio-economic measures aimed at addressing genuine concerns of the people and creating an environment that discouraged extremist tendencies. The information space would be leveraged to promote a unified national narrative in support of the campaign. The forum also reviewed measures to ensure foolproof security for Chinese nationals in Pakistan. Following the prime minister's approval, new standard operating procedures (SOPs) were issued to relevant departments, which would enhance mechanisms for providing comprehensive security to Chinese citizens in Pakistan.

For the war against terrorism, he said, "the political and religious leadership should be clear in their mind that this was our war to safeguard the future of our generations". "Irrespective of all differences, we should take this responsibility and support our armed forces in this regard," he said adding "putting the responsibility upon solely a single institution will be a blatant mistake".

Besides, he stressed that active diplomacy would also be required to take action against the terrorist elements outside Pakistan. The prime minister also emphasised the need for legislative action to empower law enforcement

agencies, identifying the existing legal gaps as a major obstacle to effective counter-terrorism operations. He also assured the Pakistan Army and the Ministry of Interior to provide all possible resources and tools to support the war against terrorism.

PM Shehbaz dismissed the ongoing campaign against Pak-China relations as a baseless and malicious social media-driven dirty campaign designed to destabilise the country. He said the Chinese leadership had countered this campaign through their statements which showed how they gave importance to their relationship with Pakistan.

SIC not entitled to reserved seats, ECP tells SC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) informed the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan that the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) is not entitled to reserved seats.

In a reply submitted to the apex court in the case pertaining to the SIC's reserved seats, the ECP maintained that The Hamid Raza-led party failed to submit the list of nominees for the reserved seats by the deadline of December 24th. The ECP added that it asked the independent candidates joined the SIC after the elections. "The ECP decided not to give reserved seats to the SIC with a 4-1 verdict," the reply added.

The ECP told the SC that the Peshawar High Court (PHC) also upheld its decision. The election watchdog maintained that there is no error in the decision of the ECP as well as the PHC.

"According to the constitution of the SIC, a non-Muslim cannot become a member of the party. The provision against the inclusion of non-Muslims in the constitution of SIC is unconstitutional, answer. The SIC is not entitled to reserved seats for women and minorities," the ECP reply added. The SC full court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the SIC's plea on June 24.

Israeli strikes kill 42 in Gaza

CAIRO (Reuters): At least 42 people were killed in Israeli attacks on districts of Gaza City in the north of the Palestinian enclave on Saturday, the director of the Hamas-run government media office said.

One Israeli strike on houses in Al-Shati, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed 24 people, Ismail Al-Thawabta said. Another 18 Palestinians were killed in a strike on houses in the Al-Tuffah neighborhood. The Israeli military released a brief statement saying: "A short while ago, IDF fighter jets struck two Hamas military infrastructure sites in the area of Gaza City." It said more details would be released soon.

Exchanges of fire across the Lebanese border between Israel and the powerful Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah have also escalated in recent weeks, raising fears of an even wider war. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Friday that the cross-border hostilities must not turn Lebanon into "another Gaza," warning of the risk of triggering a catastrophe "beyond imagination."

His warning came as Israel stepped up its strikes in the Gaza Strip, where one hospital in Gaza City reported at least 30 dead on Friday. Fighting continued Saturday morning, with witnesses reporting gunbattles between militants and Israeli forces in Gaza City. And in the city's Zeitun neighborhood, Israeli helicopters fired at militants, witnesses said.

The Israeli military meanwhile said troops continued to carry out operations in central Gaza "eliminating several armed terrorists and dismantling terrorist infrastructure in the area." "Fighter jets and additional aircraft struck numerous terror targets in the Gaza Strip, including armed terrorists, weapons storage facilities,

and additional terrorist infrastructure," it added. In southern Gaza, the ICRC on Friday said 22 dead and 45 wounded people were taken to a Red Cross field hospital after shelling with "heavy calibre projectiles" near its Gaza office.

"Firing so dangerously close to humanitarian structures puts the lives of civilians and humanitarian workers at risk," the ICRC said on X. The health ministry in the Hamas-run territory blamed the shelling on Israel, saying there were 25 killed and 50 wounded in the southern coastal Al-Mawasi area, where thousands of displaced people have been sheltering in tents. An Israeli military spokesman did not acknowledge any role in the incident but said it was "under review."

In the north of the Strip, the director of Gaza City's Al-Ahli hospital was quoted by the territory's health ministry as reporting 30 dead in strikes. "It has been a difficult and brutal day in Gaza City. So far, around 30 martyrs have arrived at the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital," doctor Fadel Naem was quoted as saying. Civil defense agency spokesman Mahmud Basal said five municipal workers died when a garage in the city was bombed.

Lebanon-based Hamas ally Hezbollah meanwhile claimed a number of attacks on Israeli troops and positions near the border on Friday, including two using drones. The Israeli army said it had carried out multiple retaliatory strikes on both days. Israeli jets on Friday struck a "Hezbollah military structure in the area of Khiam, a Hezbollah military post in the area of Mais Al-Jabal, and Hezbollah terrorist infrastructure in the areas of Taybeh and Tallouseh in southern Lebanon," the army said in a statement.

Experts are divided on the prospect of a wider war, almost nine months into Israel's campaign to

eradicate Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Amid the escalating exchanges between Israel and Hezbollah, Israel's military said Tuesday that plans for an offensive in Lebanon had been "approved and validated." Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said "no place" in Israel would "be spared our rockets" in a wider war, and also threatened nearby European Union member Cyprus.

Citing the "bellicose rhetoric" on both sides, UN chief Guterres warned Friday that the risk of all-out war was real. "One rash move — one miscalculation — could trigger a catastrophe that goes far beyond the border, and frankly, beyond imagination," he said. Israel's ally the United States has appealed for de-escalation. The violence on the Lebanon border began after the October 7 attack on southern Israel by Hamas militants from Gaza. That attack resulted in the deaths of 1,194 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

The militants also seized hostages, 116 of whom remain in Gaza although the army says 41 are dead. As of Thursday, Israel's retaliatory offensive had killed at least 37,431 people, also mostly civilians, according to Gaza's health ministry. Months of negotiations toward a truce and a hostage release have failed to make headway, but mediator Qatar insisted Friday it was still working to "bridge the gap" between Israel and Hamas.

The war has destroyed much of Gaza's infrastructure and left residents short of food, fuel and other essentials. On June 16 the army said it would implement a daily "tactical pause of military activity" in a southern Gaza corridor to facilitate aid delivery. But on Friday Richard Peepers of the World Health Organization said "we did not see an impact on the humanitarian supplies coming in."

Ahsan asks parliament to find answer to mob justice

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Iqbal, the planning minister, on Saturday condemned the lynching of a man on the charge of blasphemy in Swat. Parliament, he said, should take notice of "mob justice" which had brought Pakistan to the brink of destruction.

A man was killed by a mob over alleged desecration of the Holy Quran in Swat's Madyan area a few days ago. Iqbal, who spoke during the budget debate in the National Assembly, lamented that yet another mob lynching incident had taken place in the country. He said similar incidents had happened in Sialkot, Jaranwala and Sargodha and it was alarming that the trend was not being controlled.

He also spoke about an attempt on his life in 2018, saying even now the bullet is in his body. "We must take notice of this incident as our nation is on the brink. We have now reached a point where we are using religion to justify mob violence and street justice, flagrantly violating the Constitution, the law and the state," he bemoaned.

He also demanded constitution of a committee to probe these incidents. He also urged religious scholars to play their role in stemming the tide of extremism. The deputy speaker asked Ahsan Iqbal to consult Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for formation of a committee.

Federal agency report reveals police 'negligence' in Swat

lynching incident: A report by a federal agency on Saturday revealed police "negligence" in the case of a man lynched over the allegation of blasphemy in Swat, stating that the law enforcers shifted the suspect to the Madyan Police Station which turned out to be a "grave mistake".

The authorities concerned initiated an investigation to identify and arrest members of the mob and a recent report stated that "the suspect denied committing blasphemy in police custody". It said that neither the station house officer (SHO) of the said police station took guidance from the higher-ups on the matter nor shifted the suspect to a "safe" spot.

Absence of high police officials

or political leaders during the mob violence also contributed to the loss, it added. As per the report, 11 individuals including five policemen were injured in the arson, during which two motorcycles and five vehicles were also set ablaze.

Moreover, the office of deputy superintendent of police (DSP) and SHO's quarter were also damaged during the violence. Meanwhile, Swat District Police Officer (DPO) Syed Zaman Shah said on Saturday that the members of the mob had been identified and "efforts for their arrest are underway". He said that two first information reports (FIR) had also been registered under the charges of blasphemy and damaging state property, respectively.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui chairs a meeting to discuss establishing campuses of educational institutions in Sindh. —APP Photo

CM directs measures for Muharram, expected rains

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz today issued directives for measures for upcoming flood and rains and security measures for Muharram-ul-Haram.

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz chaired a special session, reviewed the overall performance of administration on Eidul Azha across the province. CM lauded the performance of deputy commissioners and their teams. On the occasion, she commended the administrative duties of her team and directed to provincial administration that public service must be continue with the same spirit.

ACs, DCs and commissioners must dedicate their day in a week for public service, she insisted. She

directed the administration to visit hospitals and schools and report on the building, electricity wiring and other matters. She also stressed for a permanent control room for monitoring in every district.

CM also lauded the performance of information minister Azma Bukhari, provincial minister for local government Zeeshan Rafiq, incharge CM complaint cell Shoaib Mirza, and special assistant Zeeshan Malik.

She affirmed media, public representatives and public hailed the Punjab government's measures for Eidul Azha.

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif personally reviewed the administrative matters and appreciated Punjab gov-

ernment as well as PM Shehbaz Sharif's appreciation was an honour for her government.

CM said the standard of cleanliness like Eidul Azha must be maintained across the province. The cleanliness measures in cities, towns and villages were outstanding, not only animals waste on Eidul Azha was removed instead roads were washed and sprayed with rose water.

She also appreciated the DCs and teams for reducing buses fares. She also instructed to make an effective mechanism for provision of basic food items to common man. She said, a chief minister of another province also wanted bureaucracy and administration of his

province to follow the footsteps of Punjab.

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz directed the provincial administration to devise effective measure for Muharram, expected flood and rains across the province. She was accountable before Allah and public for public rights, "public interest and facilitation is the first priority", she highlighted.

Punjab minister for information Azma Bukhari, provincial minister for local government Zeeshan Rafiq, special assistant Zeeshan Malik, MPA Sania Ashiq, chief secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, principal secretary Sajid Zafar Dhal, additional IG, secretaries, and others attended the session.

21 shops sealed, 197 LPG cylinders confiscated

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore district administration sealed 21 shops and two mini petrol pumps besides confiscating 197 LPG cylinders, 21 weighing machines and 12 decanting apparatus during a crackdown on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider told the media that in Allama Iqbal zone, one mini petrol pump and five shops were sealed, and authorities confiscated 73 commercial cylinders, seven weighing machines and six decanting machines.

In Nishtar zone, two shops were sealed, resulting in seizure of 22 commercial cylinders, two weighing machines, and two decanting machines. In Gulberg zone, five shops were sealed, and officials seized 19 commercial cylinders and six weighing machines.

In Data Ganj Bakhsh zone, a mini petrol pump and five shops were sealed, leading to confiscation of 39 commercial cylinders, four weighing machines, four decanting machines. In the Shalimar zone, four shops were sealed, with authorities seizing 44 commercial cylinders, two weighing machines, and five decanting machines.

The DC warned that no illegal LPG decanting business would be allowed in the district.

Educated nation can change country: Khalid

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Saturday said that only an educated nation could change the country and put it on the path to development and prosperity.

Talking to media persons after a meeting to discuss establishing campuses of educational institutions in Sindh at the Regional Office of Higher Education Commission (HEC), he said they have to change emergency into an emerging Pakistan and that is only possible

through education.

Dr Siddiqui said that they were trying to take Pakistan's every area, village and slum to a prosperous stage. He emphasised the digitisation in the country. The minister mentioned that it is important to showcase this opportunity to the world and aging nations. He added that crises have already emerged in Japan, Germany, and Russia, where the population is decreasing.

Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the talent of Pakistani youth could be utilised to this effect. He

said that an agreement had also been reached with Huawei regarding the education of two lac students.

In response to a question, he stated that the standards of student unions had deteriorated, but in their original form, they could play an important role in these changing times. He said that the purpose of the 18th Amendment was the devolution of power but it proved to be an accumulation of power. GST issue on education would be raised in the National Assembly, he said replying to a question.

Minister emphasises readiness of PDMA

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee for Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique has announced that the Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) is on high alert to tackle various challenges, expected during the upcoming monsoon season. It includes preparedness for floods, COVID-19, dengue, drought, smog, and heat waves, he added.

He made this statement while chairing a meeting on Saturday to review PDMA's Monsoon Plan 2024. He

emphasised that 24-hour monitoring is being conducted through provincial and district control rooms, citing climate change as a key factor contributing to the anticipated heavy rainfall and potential flooding. The recent weather patterns were analysed during the meeting, leading to the implementation of timely protective measures for safeguarding human lives.

The minister urged all relevant departments, including divisional and district administrations, to maintain close coordination to handle emergency situa-

tions effectively. He also stressed the importance of collaboration with other PDMA institutions and directed that river embankments be reinforced. Immediate approval of schemes to prevent river erosion was discussed. Additionally, mock exercises are underway across various districts to ensure readiness.

The PDMA's Monsoon Contingency Plan 2024, presented by DG PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia, outlined key strategies to be submitted to the provincial cabinet for final approval.

CCPO inquires after injured Dolphin force men

LAHORE (APP): CCPO Bilal Siddique Kamyana visited a private hospital on Saturday to inquire after the injured Dolphin force personnel Adnan and Zafar, who were injured by gunfire during an operation against robbers in Hayer area on Friday night.

He was given briefing from police officers and medical experts on the treatment and recovery of the injured personnel. He directed that the best possible medical facilities should be provided to the injured personnel and prayed for their swift recovery.

Vehicles fined for overcharging passengers

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Transport and Mass Transit Department checked 788 vehicles on inter-city and inter-provincial routes and fined over Rs0.2 million for overcharging the passengers.

The fine was imposed on the instructions of Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon during an ongoing campaign against those, who had been collecting excessive fare and overcharging the passengers.

The transport department checked the vehicles with the help of Sindh Police and the National Highways and Motorways Police.

Around Rs 0.8 million and 11 thousand 500 rupees taken as extra fare was returned to the passengers and a total of Rs0.2 million and 90 thousand 500 rupees was imposed on the transporters for overcharging.

5 dead, 1,353 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least five persons were killed and 1,353 others injured in 1,270 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

as many as 607 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 746 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 717 drivers, 53 underage drivers, 146 pedestrians, and 495 passengers were among the victims of road crashes.

The statistics showed that 234 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 253 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 98 accidents and 102 victims, and at third Gujranwala with 85 accidents and 88 victims.

According to the data, 1,184 motorbikes, 58 auto-rickshaws, 139 motorcars, 16 vans, 10 passenger buses, 21 truck and 91 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road accidents.

Punjab to get 3,000 buses in five years: Minister

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab Transport Minister Bilal Akbar on Saturday said the government had planned to introduce 3,000 buses in the province under a five-year plan – a move that will greatly help the low-income groups amid skyrocketing cost of living and complete absence of mass transit systems barring the incomplete ones in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan.

Addressing a press conference along with Information Minister Azma Bokhari, Bilal said electric buses – which are a part of the overall plan – would start running in Lahore by December.

Chief Minister Maryam

Nawaz has already approved an initial project to introduce public transport system across Punjab, under which 657 environment-friendly buses will start running on the roads of Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur and other cities – thus fulfilling one of promises she had made in her first speech.

It is not just better transport service, as the modern buses are going to also help tackle the pollution problem and climate change challenge. High pollution levels around the year, which develops the hazardous smog phenomenon in Punjab from October till January, are causing health hazard and

overburdening the existing vulnerable healthcare system.

Speaking on the occasion, Azma said the province witnessed a decline in debt within just 100 days of Maryam assuming the charge, as the total amount had reduced by Rs23 billion – from Rs1,708bn to Rs1,685bn.

The minister said the initiatives launched by Maryam were not just limited to papers, as the same had been witnessing realisation.

In this connection, she mentioned the details of different projects, including the field hospitals, where one million people had so far received treatment.

Historic auction of premium number plates on 29th

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The historic auction of premium number plates by the Excise Department will take place on June 29.

The auction of premium number plates will be held at PC Hotel Karachi.

Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, and Taxation, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has stated that those who wish to participate in the auction can register now.

He stated that initially,



there will be an auction of premium number plates in platinum, gold, and silver categories.

Senior Minister

Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that vehicle manufacturing companies will also be invited to the auction ceremony.

Some Karachi areas to face gas suspension

KARACHI (PPI): The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) today announced suspension of gas supply in major Karachi areas on June 23 (Sunday).

The gas supply company said that the shutdown will occur from 8am to 8pm to facilitate the installation of a new gas distribution pipeline project.

The affected areas include Defence View, Manzoor Colony, Akhtar Colony, Kashmir Colony, Mehmoodabad, Azam

Basti, Qayyumabad, DHA Phase 2 Extension, Phase 4, Phase 5 and Extension, Phase 7 and Extension, and Phase 8, including Creek Vista and Emaar.

Residents and businesses in these areas are advised to make necessary arrangements to mitigate the impact of the gas supply suspension, which is expected to last for 12 hours.

Earlier, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) has said that they will start

repairing its main water line on University Road on Saturday.

According to a statement issued by the water corporation, work to repair leakages in the 48-inch main line will start at 8am on June 22 and it will be completed by June 23 at 8pm.

The KWSC said that due to the repair work, water supply from the University Reservoir will be suspended in District Central, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Scheme 33 and some areas of Gulshan-e-Iqbal.



LAHORE: CTO Amara Athar talking to media at Jail Road. —APP Photo

Punjab sanitation system to be outsourced: LG Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Zeeshan Rafique has said the sanitation system in the province is going to be outsourced.

Like the ideal cleaning plan on Eid-ul-Azha days, the outsourcing model under supervision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will also be successful, he added.

Presiding over a video-link meeting of the chief executive officers (CEOs) of the waste management companies across the province, held at the Civil Secretariat, here on Saturday, he said after outsourcing of the cleanliness system, the government responsibility will not end but increase on the contrary. "Outsourcing process at all levels will be strictly monitored," he added.

LG&CD Secretary Shakeel Ahmad Mian, Special Secretary Asia Gul and CEO of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) Babar Sahib Din also attended the meeting.

The minister directed all the CEOs to complete the pre-qualification process for private companies by June 28 and added that the local bodies and all waste management companies have made the impossible work possible by ensuring quality cleanliness on Eid-ul-Azha. "Due to this, people's trust in government institutions increased manifold. Now the same spirit has to be maintained in normal days also," he said.

Zeeshan Rafique said that in the first phase, each waste management company would start a model project in one tehsil

of each district. He reiterated his commitment that companies with good reputation and reputation would be chosen for the cleaning work. Under the outsourcing plan, not only the door-to-door waste collection would be done, but there would also be sweeping of each area twice a week and de-silting of drains once in a week, he told.

The minister said that on the directions from the Chief Minister, a uniform cleanliness system will be implemented in villages and cities. "We will introduce such a sanitation system in Punjab which will be a role model for the rest of the country," he said. He emphasized that public participation is essential in the cleaning process. "The imams of mosques will be requested to extend their coopera-

tion for spreading public awareness. Imams will be requested to fix at least five minutes for talk on the importance of cleanliness during the Friday sermon," he suggested.

Zeeshan Rafique directed the CEOs to install permanent containers for waste collection at big villages.

On this occasion, LG&CD Secretary Shakeel Ahmed Mian said that with hard work and passion, the experience of outsourcing has to be successful. He directed that the sites for waste dumping should be selected soon. It was decided during the meeting that the CEOs of all the waste management companies should be called to Lahore on Monday, June 24 to review the progress in outsourcing process in detail.



SHANGLA: Activists of PTI holding placards during a rally for release of party's founders. - FP. Photo

24-hour blackout hits Peshawar after forced grid station intrusion

PESHAWAR (INP): A major power outage gripped Peshawar, plunging the city into darkness for 24 hours following an intrusion at a grid station that led to several feeder faults.

According to a spokesman from Peshawar Electric Supply Corporation (Pesco), the forced activation of the grid by unidentified intruders caused an overload and subsequent system trip. This malfunction left 32 feeders out of service, with 12 feeders remaining non-operational for a full day, severely impacting residents and businesses in both urban and suburban areas.

The sudden blackout caused significant disruption, halting daily activities and causing widespread distress among the population. Efforts to restore electricity were hampered by the extent of the damage.

“Yesterday’s forced start of the grid led to an immediate overload and tripping of the system during maintenance operations. This resulted in a power supply disruption on 32 feeders,” the Pesco spokesman explained.

Power was eventually restored to all 32 feeders connected to the Rehman Baba grid station, with normal supply schedules resuming.

Residents are urged to report any suspicious activities around grid stations to prevent future incidents and ensure the stability of the power supply.

ASF captures smuggled drugs

PESHAWAR (PPI): In a search operation, the Airport Security Force (ASF) thwarted an attempt to smuggle drugs at Peshawar airport on Saturday.

ASF officials detained an accused named Sheeraz, who was set to travel from Peshawar to Karachi, after finding his luggage suspicious during a security check.

Upon inspection, ASF personnel discovered 648 grams of Ice drugs concealed in two of Sheeraz’s bags. Following a preliminary investigation, the suspect and the recovered drugs were handed over to the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) for further action.

Patients provided health facility

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Health Department on Saturday released the Eid performance of health centers in 37 districts.

102,816 emergency patients were provided with health services in the three days of Eid-ul-Adha. Among these patients, 3640 cases of maternal and child cases were examined in which 1,692 deliveries occurred. During this time, 246 major cases and 7,166 cases of minor operations were dealt with.

582 cases of dog bites and 20 cases of snake bites were reported in non-MTI hospitals, which were provided timely vaccination and other health services.

Repair work completed

PESHAWAR (APP): Repair work completed at Rehman Baba Grid Station with power restored to all feeders.

All 32 feeders connected to Rehman Baba grid station are being supplied with electricity as per schedule.

The grid was shut down due to the forceful activation of feeders in the grid by the protestors.

KP Bar Council condemn attacks on lawyer, journalist

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council has condemned the murderous attack on lawyer Sajjad Hussain Shinwari and journalist Khalil Gibran in District Khyber where in later was martyred in the attack while Advocate Sajjad Hussain was injured.

The office-bearers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council in a press statement issued here on Saturday said that Journalist Khalil Gibran Shaheed and lawyer Sajjad Hussain Shinwari were injured in an assassination attack a few days ago. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council demanded immediate arrest of those involved in the incident.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council said that IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should form a team of competent police officers for a transparent inquiry into the incident.

Steps should be taken to improve law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and protect lawyers and journalists, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council said.



PESHAWAR: President PPP KP Women Wing Robina Khalid cutting a cake to celebrate Benazir Bhutto’s birth day. — F.P. photo by Ghul Murtaza

Whistleblower Protection Acts: TI calls for adoption, enforcement of acts

PESHAWAR (APP): Transparency International (TI) Pakistan has stressed upon parliamentarians at federal and provincial levels to give attention attention towards the enactment of Whistleblower Protection Acts in the country.

In a press statement issued here on Saturday, TI Pakistan noted that effective whistleblower protection laws are essential for the progress of integrity, eliminating corruption from the country and fostering an environment where citizens can report misconduct without fear of retaliation. TI Pakistan further highlighted that the Government of Pakistan ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2007.

Articles 8.4 and 13.2 of UNCAC mandate governments to implement legal measures that protect whistleblowers, the statement added.

To ensure compliance with UNCAC provisions, TI Pakistan called on the federal government and the provincial governments of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan to enact laws regarding the reporting and protection of whistleblowers, which include adequate reporting mechanisms and protective measures, in line with the UNCAC requirements.

TI Pakistan has also highlighted that there have been attempts to introduce whistleblower protection legislation in the past, including in May 2019, when Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission Act, 2019 bill was presented in the National Assembly, however, it was later withdrawn.

TI Pakistan further emphasised that while the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has passed the Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission Act 2016, the province must establish Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission as mandated under Section 3 of the Act.

Murderer of two brothers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): Suspects who were allegedly involved in the murder of two brothers were arrested in Gulberg Police Station, Police said here on Saturday.

A woman is also included in the accused, Police said. The murder weapon, pistol and motorcycle were recovered from the possession of the accused, Police said.

The accused termed the incident as an example of conspiracy, Police said. The accused shot and killed two brothers last night in Gulberg, Police said.

Ishfaq appoints as Focal Person to CM KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa appointed Ishfaq Muhammad Marwat as the Focal Person for student affairs.

In this regard a notification has been issued by the Chief Minister’s Secretariat in, confirming his appointment. Ishfaq Muhammad Marwat will be responsible for assisting students in their academic and extracurricular activities, as well as their welfare and well-being.

The focal person will provide his services on an honorary basis, without any compensation.

Remembering Karamat Ali

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Feminist Fridays is deeply grieved by the passing of the revered and esteemed Karamat Ali Sahib, a stalwart champion of laborers’ rights in Pakistan. His unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in advocating for the rights of laborers have left an indelible mark on the labor movement in the country. With a steadfast commitment to the cause, he not only fought for the rights of laborers but also tirelessly worked to educate and empower them, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among the labor force.

Karamat Ali Sahib epitomized the essence of the labor struggle, embodying resilience, courage, and unwavering determination throughout his six decades of service. Under his visionary leadership,

the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) has been at the forefront of raising awareness and providing invaluable support to laborers in their pursuit of justice and fair treatment for the past 35 years.

FF acknowledges and honors the remarkable legacy of Karamat Sahib, whose passion and dedication have inspired countless individuals to join the fight for laborers’ rights. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the laborers across Pakistan, as well as the friends and family of Karamat Sahib, who have lost a compassionate advocate and a true hero of the labor movement. May his profound impact and unwavering spirit continue to guide and inspire us in our ongoing quest for justice and equality for all laborers. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A special training workshop was organized for Afghan journalists living in exile across Pakistan, where more than 130 journalists received specialized training in effective story pitching and freelance journalism. This initiative was a collaborative effort between Journalists for Human Rights (Canada) and Karpohan Organization, conducted online held at the National Press Club Islamabad and Peshawar separately.

Senior Journalist, Researcher, and Trainer Zahir Shah Shirazi led the training sessions, providing in-depth insights into effective story pitching techniques. Afghan journalists were taught how to develop compelling story ideas and successfully pitch them to both local and international media outlets.

The training session saw participation from over 130 male and female Afghan journalists. The program emphasized practical approaches to effective story pitching, detailing the essential characteristics and priorities that resonate with media networks globally.



PESHAWAR: QWP Provincial Chairman Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao addressing during a reference ceremony remembering Late Mukhtiar Bacha.

Efforts underway to counter effects of climate change: Fazal

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Forests, Fazal Hakim Yousafzai has said that provincial government was making incessant efforts to counter challenges of climate change.

Talking to a delegation here Saturday, he said that our planet is faced with many threats of climate change including constant rise in global temperature.

He said that government is also following a result oriented strategy to protect forests and environment. He said that billion tree tsunami project was also an attempt of KP government to minimize effects of climate change.

He said that preparations have been finalized to launch billion tree plus project and added that we should also join hands to protect our environment and counter climate change.

Two killed, three injured in violent incidents

PESHAWAR (INP): At least two people were killed and three others injured in separate incidents of violence in different localities of the provincial capital on Saturday, police said.

According to details, unidentified armed men shot death two people in Gulberg area of Peshawar and escaped the scene after committing dual murder. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem.

The police during snap checking in Bashirabad area signaled to stop a suspected. However, the car riders instead of stopping attempted to run the vehicle over cops after which they opened fire injuring three car riders. The injured people were arrested and hospitalized.

Separate cases in both incidents were registered at respective police stations and investigations were underway.

PRDS held workshop for govt school teachers

PESHAWAR (APP): A one-day workshop for government school teachers was held by Participatory Rural Development Society (PRDS) here on Sunday, aiming at to improve teaching methodology and promote a conducive learning environment at school.

Organized with the support of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and Multi-Year Resilience (MYR) Program, training workshop was attended by education champions and teachers from different schools of district Peshawar, Nowshera and Charssadda.

MYR Program Coordinator Tariq Hayat Yousafzai and Ayesha Malik trained the teachers on effective teaching skills and techniques to help improve learning condition at school.

During awareness session teachers also shared their experiences and ideas on improving education standard and environment at school.

Tariq Hayat told the participants that their organization is active with other partner organizations and Education Department KP for promoting education especially girls’ education in the province.

In this regard various projects have been initiated in selected schools of Peshawar, Nowshera and Charssadda so as these students may get quality education without any discrimination.

He said that teachers should utilize various instructional strategies including group work and hands-on activities to make learning more relevant and engaging.

Expressing his views teachers and education champions said that for student’s interest, they engage them in various healthy activities as well as they aware them on basic principles of hygiene, healthy food and various health issues.

At the end, certificates were also distributed among the teachers.

Faiq Shah for joint strategy for bolstering trade and investment

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman, Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faiq Shah said that government and relevant stakeholders need to jointly outline holistic policy to restore confidence of foreign investors and to enhance trade and export.

On Saturday, Mr Shah commented on a statement of Mr Liu Jianchao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), asserting a peaceful atmosphere is paramount important to attract local as well as foreign investment.

He hoped CPEC phase-II would further generate economic activities and provide employment opportunities in the region.

He, however, emphasized that projects should be completed in the stipulated period, initiated under the CPEC.

The ATP chief expressed satisfaction over progress made for enabling an environment for investment under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SFIC).

He demanded an emergency policy for enhancing export, and overseas Pakistan investment, investment for diplomacy, manufacturing industry and agriculture, and we have designed a complete draft in this regard.

The party leader said political and legal tug of war, dispute and collision are inflicting colossal loss to the economy, which should be addressed through constitution and law.

Talented, competent/skillful youth, experts and international reputed researchers are part of ATP team, through their assistance, policy and roadmap of progress should be crafted, and ensure its practical enforcement, Shah stressed.

130 Afghan journalists in exile get freelance story pitching training



In addition to story pitching, Zahir Shah Shirazi also covered key aspects of freelance journalism. He detailed strategies and procedures crucial for succeeding as a freelance journalist, offering participants valuable knowledge that can help them navigate their careers amidst challenging circumstances.

Qamar Yousafzai, the Central President of the Pak-Afghan Journalists Forum, attended the training as an observer. He remarked on the significance of this large-scale online training for Afghan journalists in Pakistan, highlighting its role in enhancing their understanding of modern journalistic practices and freelance journalism.

Yousafzai praised the training material’s organization, noting its potential to substantially support Afghan journalists in improving their freelance journalism skills and story pitching effectiveness.

Appreciating the efforts of Karpohan and the expertise of Zahir Shah Shirazi, Yousafzai acknowledged the hardships faced by Afghan journalists living in exile, including unemployment and financial difficulties. He emphasized that this training empowers Afghan journalists to better utilize their skills and find employment opportunities.

Nasir Hussain, President of the Khyber Union of Journalists, also participated in the training. He assured that the Khyber Union of Journalists would offer all possible assistance to Afghan journalists facing challenges. Hussain mentioned that more training sessions would be organized to enhance the capacities of both Afghan and Pakistani journalists, aiding them in securing decent employment.

Syed Zahir Shah Shirazi highlighted that the training was part of a broader initiative supported by Journalists for Human Rights (Canada) and Karpohan Organization, aimed at enhancing the skills of young journalists and showcasing their journalistic talents. He mentioned the development of a comprehensive training module designed to improve journalists’ capabilities.

Shirazi also stated that future training sessions would focus on digital media platforms and other effective media techniques tailored to the needs of Afghan journalists, ensuring their skill enhancement across various sectors.



In brief

Two youth died in road accident F.P. Report

SWABI: Two youths in the car died on the spot while four people were seriously injured as a result of a motor car going out of control and hitting a tree on Jhanda Road near Swabi here on Saturday. The Rescue 1122 soon after arriving at the spot, shifted the dead and injured youths to District Headquarters Hospital Swabi. According to reports, the accident happened due to high speed. It is said that a motor car was going towards Wadi Kandaw area when it reached Jhanda Road, it collided with a tree due to high speed, as a result of which two youths, 20-year-old Muhammad Sami and 20-year-old Muhammad Musa, residents of Jahangira, died. While 20-year-old Isa, 15-year-old Samir, 17-year-old Saifullah and 14-year-old Yahya were seriously injured. The car has been severely damaged in the accident after hitting the tree.

Tourist drowned to death in Buner F.P. Report

BUNER: The famous Taghan Abshar (Taghan waterfall) has claimed the life of a 24-year-old youth. The young boy who died in Taghan waterfall has been identified as Shahabuddin resident of Geero Bagra, area of Buner district. The body of the young man was found in Shudra Khwar late night. The body of the young man who died in Taghan Abshar was transferred to Daggar Hospital, and the doctors confirmed the death due to suffocation in the water. The family sources have confirmed the incident. The young man who died in Taghan waterfall drowned in cold deep-water reservoirs while bathing. Colleagues have confirmed the incident too adding Shahabuddin died after drowning in Taghan waterfall. After searching and rescuing the body, teams of Rescue 1122 Buner have tried day and night in search then transfer it to Daggar Hospital, which has been appreciated by the people of the area. It is worthy to mention thaht Taghan waterfall is located in the mountains and forests of lush green tourist attraction "Wadi e Gokand" in Tehsil Daggar district of Buner . This natural waterfall is a source of attraction for local and out district tourists, but it is located at a very height in a remote rugged mountain range and is slippery.

SAWT setup 5 members body F.P. Report

LARKANA: A meeting held at literature hall of Pakistan Arts Council Larkana under the chairmanship of Abdul Hameed Hameed Bhatti, Chairman of Sindh Artist Welfare Trust. Divisional President of Sindh Artists Welfare Trust Ayub Gad, Vice President Hanif Shahag, Divisional General Secretary of Sindh Artists Welfare Trust and Vice President of Arts Council Engineer Javed Ahmad Shaikh, Secretary of Sindh Artists Welfare Trust Larkana Mushtaq Tani, Amjad Gul, Ishaq Agham, Riaz Mehisar, Sham Sindhi, Shoaib Jagirani, Muzaffar Baloch, Altaf Bhatti, Hasib Bhatti, Nazim Chandio, Sagleen Agham, and other personalities participated. In the meeting of Sindh Artist Welfare Trust, all friends discussed the performance of the trust and the welfare of artists, done on this occasion, Chairman of the Trust, Hamid Bhatti gave a full briefing on the performance of the units of the Sindh Artists Welfare Trust, including Karachi, Hyderabad and Larkana.



BARA: Locals holding a banner in favour of renowned cricketer Shahid Afridi in front of Press Club.

Two killed, six injured in Dir road mishap

F.P. Report

UPPER DIR: Two youths identified as Ramzan 20 and Sudais 18, residents of Achar Bala in Upper Dir, were killed while six others were injured when a Rawalpindi bound Vigo vehicle plunged into a deep ravine at Tarai area in the jurisdiction of Timergara police station, residents and Rescue 1122 officials said.

They said that Ramzan died on the spot while Sudais succumbed to injuries on way to Peshawar. The Rescue 1122 emergency team reached the spot and rescued the injured and the vehicle. The injured including the driver Ali Rehman 29, Farhan 19, Abdullah 9, Lateef Khan 19 and Bilal 24, all residents of Achar Bala village of Upper Dir, were shifted to the district headquarters

hospital Timergara. Two of the injured were referred to Peshawar due to their critical condition. The Timergara police registered a case and started investigations.

Meanwhile a Frontier Corps Sepoy identified as Muhammad Yasin was injured during a cross firing at Sar Laka border area at Shahi here on Friday, sources said. They said that an intelligence-based operation against suspects was in progress when the suspects retaliated during which one of the Sepoys was injured.

PTI hold protest: Dozens of the Pakistan Tahreek Insaf workers led by special assistant to chief minister on population welfare MPA Malik Liaquat Khan staged a protest rally for the release of party founder Imran Khan at

Kumbar bazaar. The protesters also chanted slogans against the government for not releasing the PTI founder Imran Khan.

Speaking on the occasion, MPA Malik Liaquat said that the May 9 incident was a false operation. He said that cases registered against several PTI leaders and workers were baseless and unconstitutional. The PTI lawmaker said that all the jailed leaders and workers should be freed if the government was sincere to make progress and development. He also demanded an appropriate probe into the killing of Sheikh Inamullah who was killed by unknown attackers at Barghando Maidan several days ago. The lawmaker said the people of Maidan were peace-loving and wanted durable peace in the area.

PPP spilt into three factions on BB's birth anniversary F.P. Report

PABBI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Nowshera is divided into three factions, on the 71st birth anniversary of Benazir Bhutto. The party's provincial president formed a four-member interim organization, but senior vice president Salim Khokhar resigned.

Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program Rubina Khalid upset to see men instead of women at the event in Khatak Bagh. Separate programs were held in Khatak Bagh, Spin Khak, and Pir Sabak to celebrate Ben zir Bhutto birthday anniversary.

PPP workers are demanding the immediate dissolution of the district interim organization, calling it "bogus." The divisions within the party are causing tensions, with some members opposing the inclusion of certain individuals in the organization. The party's ideological workers are also upset with the provincial president for forming an interim organization without consulting workers.

Police arrests alleged murderer F.P. Report

KOHAT: In the latest search operation, the accused named in the case of murder was arrested by Police in the Cantt Police jurisdiction.

The arrested alleged suspect, Wilayat, a resident of Nawa Kalay, had killed a local resident, Israfil on Friday last. The alleged accused named in the murder case was taken into custody within just 24 hours along with 18 suspects who were also detained during the operation.

The Police also recovered 1 Kalashnikov, 2 pistols and dozens of cartridges from the suspects arrested in the search operation. A heavy Police Force participated in the search operation with DSP City Hafeez Yousafzai and SHO Cantt Asif Hayat. In search and strike operations, raids were conducted on the possible hideouts of wanted criminals and criminal elements. All the persons arrested during the search operation were transferred to Cantt Police Station for investigation.

Journalist killing

Tribesmen to arrange protest after deadline

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The tribesmen provided five days deadline to the government to apprehend killers of tribal journalist, Khalil Jibran who have been Martyred by unknown militants four days back in Mazreena village of Sultan Khel.

In grand Jirga and protest sit-in initiated at Thakya ground of Sultan Khel, Tehsil Landi Kotal on Saturday speakers including Tehsil Chairman Shah Khalid, Awami National Party district President Shah Hussain Shinwari, Pakistan People Party (PPP) Khyber leader Shah Rehman Shinwari, Jamat-e-Islami Tehsil Ameer Murad Hussain Afridi, head of Khyber Transport Association Shakir Afridi, Malik Abdurrazzaq, Ziaul Haq Afridi, Hazrat Wali and others condemned the brutal killing of innocent local journalist and said if the police and the security agencies fail to arrest the culprits then they have no other option but to lift



weapons and launch hunt for the murderers.

They also sought intervention of the Chief Justice of Pakistan to intervene in the matter and probe the murder of a media person through judicial commission. Poor performance of security agencies have dis-appointed them therefore they will restore peace in their area by launching a purge operation against the militants, they warned.

Transferring of District Police Officer or Commandant Khyber Rifles is not the remedy but to change the policy

against militants they added and said war has become a business for some people that must be halted with joint efforts of all sections of society. They went on that the Pakhtun belt is the most affected area of proxy war therefore time has come to say no to terrorism and wipe out the militancy of their area themselves.

Their agitation will continue till restoration of peace in the area, the protestors vowed. At the end the participants took a rally to Sultan Khel market and dispersed peacefully.

PTIP facing hurdles to continue its journey

F.P. Report

BANNU: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentary (PTIP) which came into being by separating from the Pakistan Muslim League and asked her supporters to join the party, while Mahmood Khan of the Pakistan People's Party They want to unite with the party and they are not ready to go with the Amir position, the provincial leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf parliamentarian Asia Jahangir said in her position that in order to contribute to the development

opinions were also taken from the officials in which the former provincial minister, female leader Asia Jahangir, expressed her desire for an alliance with the Pakistan Muslim League and asked her supporters to join the party, while Mahmood Khan of the Pakistan People's Party They want to unite with the party and they are not ready to go with the Amir position, the provincial leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf parliamentarian Asia Jahangir said in her position that in order to contribute to the development

of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the PPP and the Muslim League Discussions are going on, both of them are the major political and government parties of Pakistan, both of them, whichever party will provide us with opportunities and opportunities, they will unite with them.

Because of this, problems arose in the organization, but now the organization at the village council level has started and soon the PTI parliamentarians will emerge as a political force in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Parents role in children education stressed

F.P. Report

WANA: A seminar on "The Role of Parents in Children's Education and Upbringing" was held at Government High School Karikot area of Wana, South Waziristan, on Saturday.

The educational seminar included school children, their parents, tribal elders, political party leaders, teachers, education officers, youth officers, MNAs, and people from all walks of life.

The chief guest, MNA Zubair Khan, in his speech, emphasized the importance of parents in children's education and upbringing, the role of teachers in schools, and the role of educated youth in the development of the area. He stated that his service to the nation, the area, and the people would continue unabated. He assured that any common person could contact him for the welfare of the

area, and he would advocate for the people on every front.

At the event, President of the Private School Union Humayun Sharif, representative of WAWA Owais, youth officer, education officer, Principal Zahoor, political leader of the Awami National Party Ayaz Wazir, social personality Abdul Rehman, Coordinator of Bright Future Organization Gul Nisa, and student Malala Ajmal expressed their views.

At the conclusion of the program, Best Parent Award, Best Student Award, and Best Teacher Awards were given to encourage them. The seminar organized by Kari Kot Welfare Society was highly appreciated by people from different walks of life. Education is the first step towards the development of any area, and all energy should be devoted to it.

The initiative of

Karikot Welfare Society is highly commendable because last year, the society held a seminar at the same school to prevent cheating, which had far-reaching results. The society founded in 2018, focuses particularly on education among regional issues. The society plays a key role in highlighting problems and bringing them to the attention of responsible authorities through self-help, which has made the local people very happy.

Finally, Chairman of Kari Kot Welfare Society, Kaleem Wazir, thanked the guests, MNA, political leaders, teachers, parents, students, the education officer of Lower Waziristan district, and all the participants of the seminar. He gave special thanks to the youth officer for financial support in organizing the program and for actively participating in youth activities and youth empowerment.

Emphasis on girls education for national prosperity

Ghazala Anbreen

FOR progress and prosperity of any country role of education is a must and should be given due priority. Through education regional and global challenges can be overcome as it provides means to tackle the issues like environmental protection and climate change and other global challenges faced by the world.

At least 4 to 6 percent of GDP should be allocated to education by any country while in Pakistan the budget allocation to education is less than 2 percent of GDP. The mindset has to be changed for improving the quality of education in Pakistan. It is a common observation that even in the present times the approach of many people is that the girls need not to attend private schools as the fee structure of these schools is high and in most households the girls are enrolled in the government schools while their brothers are sent to the private institutions. Even in the rural areas many girls are not sent to schools at all as it is considered that they need not to be educated. World economy today is knowledge economy. If we want to achieve this target then

we will have to change the society's stereotypical mindset and will have to introduce education as a culture.

Still there are many systems of education prevalent in our country. There is Federal board, Punjab board, Lahore board, Gujranwala board, Bahawalpur board etc. A uniform educational system with same curriculum throughout the country is very essential to abolish the discrimination between rural and urban areas.

It is also required that social sector assists the government in its efforts to introduce reforms in the education system and also it is important that education professionals are given incentives to enhance their productivity. In order to reduce the drop out rate from school which is unfortunately very high in case of Pakistan (22.8 million children aged 5-16 are out of school) the infrastructure has to be developed in the schools. The authorities should take strict action against those private schools which are established on very small plots. A particular area should be earmarked as a standard for opening a school because the young kids do need healthy sports activities and there must be a playground.

Analytical thinking and practical skills should be emphasized more in the curriculum to increase the reasoning ability in the students for conceptual learning and for developing their thinking faculties. Organized training of the teachers should be arranged where teachers are trained how to use modern technology, digital platforms, online material and e-learning. Use of modern teaching methods will help in increasing interest for the students and make them get away with academic stress. If we do not make our students skilled in use of IT, they will not be able to catch up pace with the world. Pakistan has failed to produce world class scientists because intellectual artistry is not given importance. Research should be promoted. Pakistani students who are high achievers in education worldwide should be promoted in media so as to serve as inspiration for other students.

Mostly students do not know about career options as for instance, data scientist, cosmologist, space scientist, graphic designer, meteorologist. There is no denying the fact that Pakistani students are very talented and tremendously industrious but they must be guided properly and their energies need

to be channelized in the right path. Very few schools conduct career counselling orientation sessions to guide the students for future studies or professions in the light of contemporary requirements. Same students when go abroad prove to be intellectually sound because they get a feasible environment

Sports avenues in our schools are very less. They should be given a special focus as sports make students disciplined, organized, fit and help in developing patience and social skills. Privatizing the government schools is not and should not be a good option, rather structure of the existing government schools should be improvised. We will have to get rid of this notion that education is only limited to civil services, medical and engineering fields. We must pay attention to skilled education and open more institutions where training in practical skills are imparted. Only in this way our youth will become our asset. Otherwise, they will remain a liability.

A whole rethink is needed. Students should be encouraged to do a part time job along with pursuing education degree. The status of a teacher is determined by the society. Is it not a matter

of concern that teaching in general is considered the last choice by our youth? Unless the teachers are given respectful status and good salaries why will they want to opt for this profession or deliver to their optimal level? Only passionate ones will like to become teachers and their number is very less.

In Pakistan it is often assumed that achievement is based on competition. More focus should be on learning not on competition. Supposedly a student is unable to get through the exam with flying colors, what maximum will happen? Heavens will not fall down and the world will not come to an end". Unfortunately many parents of today remind their kids frequently that they will have to get more than 90 percent marks which is a wrong approach. The efforts must be on making their kids a constructive citizen of the society who develop in them the qualities of compassion, kindness and a service to humanity and not enter in the mad race of cut throat competition with the mindset to achieve success by hook or by crook. "Grading system is generally based on competition which puts an unnecessary pressure on the students. As a result qualities like being clear

headed or being decisive remain neglected and when such students enter the practical life, they are unable to face the intricacies. The unnecessary pressure caused by an unhealthy competition to get more marks also makes a student just remain limited to the books and he cannot develop acumen in learning skills how to avoid interpersonal conflicts and develop social agree ability and acceptance.

Too much entertainment has led to make students pay less attention to studies. According to a report the teens in Pakistan spend 7 to 8 hours daily on internet daily. Because of this, attention span of the students towards studies has also reduced. Bill Gates where says that the kids below the age of 14 should not be allowed to have mobile phones and in fact his own children were not allowed to own cell phones until the age of 14. Parents must be watchful that their kids do not use cell phones for longer times. There are certain other professions which are not taken as sought after as paramedical staff and technicians. This approach should be discouraged and we must respect every profession. Every profession is sacred and so is every human.



Sunday, June 23, 2024



GAZA STRIP: Palestinians drive past buildings destroyed during previous Israeli bombardments in Khan Younis.

South Africa's new govt brings Black and white together

CAPE TOWN (AP): In a country where racial segregation was once brutally enforced, South Africa's new coalition government has brought a Black president and a white opposition leader together in an image of unity. Yet the power-sharing agreement sealed a week ago between President Cyril Ramaphosa's African National Congress party and the Democratic Alliance, one of South Africa's few white-led parties, has unwittingly renewed some racial rifts.

Many Black South Africans have expressed discomfort with a white-led party being back in power, even in a coalition. The country is haunted by the apartheid system of white minority rule that ended 30 years ago but is still felt by millions among the Black majority who were ruthlessly oppressed by a white government and remain affected by unresolved issues of poverty and inequality. South Africa is now faced with the likelihood of seeing more white people in senior government positions than ever since apartheid ended. White people make up around 7% of the country's population of 62 million. The ANC liberated South Africa from apartheid in 1994 under Nelson Mandela, the country's first Black president. Its three-decade political dominance ended in the landmark May 29 election, forcing it to form a coalition. The DA, with its roots in liberal white parties that stood against apartheid, won the second largest share of votes.

Both have promoted their coming together in a multi-party coalition as a new unity desperately needed in a country with vast socioeconomic problems. But history lingers. The DA suspended one of its white lawmakers, days after being sworn into Parliament, over racist slurs he made in a social media video more than a decade ago. Renaldo Gouws — reportedly a student in his 20s at the time — used an especially offensive

term for Black people that was infamous during apartheid and is now considered hate speech.

Gouws faces disciplinary action from his party, and the South African Human Rights Commission said it will take him to court. The DA, which previously fended off allegations of favoring whites, is again under scrutiny. The Congress of South African Trade Unions, an important political ally of the ANC, asserted that Gouws' outburst was symptomatic of a DA that is "soft on racists." The DA "needs to reflect on and address this if it wants to be accepted as a partner in the government of national unity by ordinary South Africans," it said.

DA leader John Steenhuisen denied in a television interview that his party is dedicated only to white interests, saying it wouldn't have won the second largest share of votes in a Black majority country if it was. The DA has Black and white lawmakers and supporters, but its only Black leader left the party in 2019, questioning its commitment to Black South Africans. Political analyst Angelo Fick said the DA does have a "sense of whiteness" in the eyes of many South Africans and has created that by being "utterly disinterested in speaking to the concerns about race from Black South Africans."

Shortly before Gouws' case, racially charged language came from another direction when the MK Party of former President Jacob Zuma — once an ANC leader — called Ramaphosa a "house negro" for entering into the agreement with the DA. Zuma's party also referred to white DA chairperson Helen Zille as Ramaphosa's "slave master." The MK Party and the Economic Freedom Fighters — the third and fourth biggest parties in Parliament — have refused to join what the ANC calls a government of national unity open to all. They said the fundamental reason is the DA,

which they say is committed only to the well-being of South Africa's white minority.

"We do not agree to this marriage of convenience to consolidate the white monopoly power over the economy," EFF leader Julius Malema said. Malema has sometimes provoked racial tensions in demanding change, once saying, "We are not calling for the slaughtering of white people, at least for now," and that South Africa's "white man has been too comfortable for too long."

He now says his party is not against white people but against a perceived "white privilege" that leaves 64% of Black people in poverty compared with 1% of white people, according to a 2021 report by the South African Human Rights Commission. Malema represents a new opposition to the ANC by many Black South Africans frustrated over the race-based inequality that's evident after 30 years of freedom. White people generally live in posh neighborhoods. Millions of Black people live in impoverished townships on the outskirts.

That frustration led many voters to give up on the ANC. The concerns about teaming up with the DA could weaken the party even further. In his inauguration speech, Ramaphosa recognized the "toxic" divisions that remain decades after Mandela preached racial reconciliation. "Our society remains deeply unequal and highly polarized," Ramaphosa said.

The ANC is trying to use the coalition as a kind of reboot of Mandela's ideals. "To us, it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white," ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula said of the agreement with the DA. Mandela had used the phrase to signal he was open to all races serving in South Africa's government. "Fundamentally," Mbalula said, "the question is how do we move the country forward."

North Macedonia's parliament prepares to vote on center-right govt

SKOPJE (AP): North Macedonia's parliament began a two-day debate leading up to a vote on the new government proposed by a center-right party that won May's national elections.

Heading the proposed government is Hristijan Mickoski, a 46-year-old former engineering professor who has pledged to continue his center-left predecessors' efforts to shepherd the small Balkan NATO member into the European Union. But Mickoski's more nationalist tone could alienate neighboring Bulgaria and Greece, both EU members with the power to hinder his country's accession to the 27-nation bloc.

Mickoski is expected to win Sunday's vote easily, having secured the support of 78 lawmakers in the 120-

seat house. His VMRO-DPMNE party heads a coalition that gained just over 43% of the vote in the May 8 elections, winning 58 seats — three short of a governing majority. Mickoski struck a coalition deal with the ethnic Albanian Vre di, or Worth, party and the small leftist ZNAM, securing a comfortable majority. Under the agreement, VMRO-DPMNE will have 15 ministerial positions, while Vre di and ZNAM will get six and two, respectively.

Mickoski served as an advisor on energy matters to a previous VMRO-DPMNE government in 2015-2017. His key domestic challenges in government will include enhancing the rule of law while addressing corruption and poverty and reviving a sluggish economy. But the

main issue will be North Macedonia's path to the EU, which is being blocked by Bulgaria over its demands that the candidate amend its constitution to recognize a Bulgarian minority. The previous, center-left government promised to make the change, but VMRO-DPMNE has denounced the vow as a "capitulation (to) Bulgarian dictates."

North Macedonia entered NATO in 2019, following a historic deal with Greece that ended a decades-old dispute over cultural heritage and history and saw the small country change its name from Macedonia to North Macedonia. But VMRO-DPMNE has already made clear its distaste for the agreement, which could jeopardize Athens' support for its neighbor's EU access-

sion. North Macedonia's new president Gordana Siljanovska Davkova — a VMRO-DPMNE candidate — riled Greek and EU officials by calling her country Macedonia when she took the formal oath of office. She later insisted that she had a "human right" to refer to her country as she liked.

Mickoski said recently he will use the new constitutional name — North Macedonia — during the oath and in all official meetings and events. But he added that he would stick to Macedonia in informal communications. EU membership negotiations with North Macedonia and fellow-candidate Albania began in 2022 and the process is expected to take years. Under parliamentary rules, the vote on the government must be held by midnight on Sunday.

SK summons Russian ambassador over pact with Pyongyang

SEOUL (AP): South Korea has lodged an official protest with Russia over its new partnership agreement with North Korea and demanded an immediate halt to military cooperation with Pyongyang.

Two days after Russian President Vladimir Putin visited North Korea, the foreign ministry summoned Moscow's ambassador in Seoul, Georgy Zinoviev. Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Hong Kyun conveyed the government's readiness to take decisive action with the international community

against any behaviour that threatens the people of South Korea, the ministry said.

North Korea has for decades been illegally developing nuclear weapons and missiles and is threatening to use them against its neighbour. Any cooperation that directly or indirectly helps North Korea to expand its military capabilities is a violation of UN Security Council resolutions against Pyongyang, Kim was quoted as saying.

He also warned of negative consequences for Russian-South Korean rela-

tions, saying that "Russia should act responsibly." Attempts to intimidate Russia were unacceptable, Zinoviev was quoted as saying by his embassy in a post on X after he was summoned. The ambassador said that "cooperation between Russia and North Korea is not directed against any third country."

South Korea has already condemned Russia's agreement with North Korea on a comprehensive strategic partnership, signed by the sides in Pyongyang. The treaty also provides for

mutual assistance in the event of war. In Seoul's view, the agreement also aims to strengthen military cooperation. South Korean National Security Advisor Chang Ho Jin indicated that his country could drop its previous refusal to supply weapons to Ukraine. South Korea participates in international financial sanctions against Russia for its war against Ukraine. However, it does not export weapons to Ukraine after Putin threatened severe consequences for any South Korean arms deliveries there.

Water emergency halts tourist arrivals in Italy

ROME (AP): A water emergency prompted the mayor of Capri — one of Italy's most popular islands — to order a halt to the arrival of tourists on Saturday, in a crisis that has deprived some areas of any water supply.

Without a water supply, it is impossible to guarantee essential services to "thousands of people" who travel to the island daily during the tourist season, Mayor Paolo Falco said. "The health and hygiene situation is explosive, we have taken our countermeasures and activated the crisis unit and issued a restrictive order," the mayor's order said. The emergency was caused by a failure in the mainland's water system that provides vital supplies to the world-known island.

At the moment water is still supplied to most of the island, but some isolated areas of the upper municipality of Anacapri are already dry. Only local reservoirs supply the network, which in the absence of supplies from the mainland risks being run out. Meanwhile, tanks are expected to reach the island to support essential services, pending the restoration of full supply.

The mayor's order was notified shortly after 0900 a.m. causing an immediate stop to ticket sales. The move has created long lines of passengers at the ticket offices at the ports of the southern city of Naples, the departing point for most ferries to Capri. Ferries and hydrofoils that had already departed for Capri were contacted by radio by the maritime authorities, which ordered their return to port and disembarkation of passengers.

Attack on army base in Burkina Faso

MANSILA (BBC): An attack that reportedly killed more than 100 soldiers on an army base in Burkina Faso has snowballed into speculation about unrest in the security forces, in a country where the military has been in power since 2022. The leader of the military junta has since appeared on state TV in an attempt to debunk the rumours.

Burkina Faso has been battling Islamist insurgents for several years and about half the country is outside government control. Jihadist group Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) has said it was behind last Tuesday's attack in the northern town of Mansila. The following day, there was an explosion near the headquarters of the state television.

According to several reports, armed men attacked the military base, located near the border with Niger, on 11 June. Around 100 soldiers were killed and many others were missing, reports say, adding that several hundred civilians fled Mansila for neighbouring towns in search of safety. Five days after the attack, JNIM, an al-Qaeda affiliate, said it was behind the attack, and that dozens of soldiers were killed.

The group shared a video showing a large amount of weapons and ammunition that it says were captured during the assault. There are also videos of JNIM fighters riding motorbikes and shooting relentlessly in a remote village of mud-walled buildings. The BBC has not been able to verify the video. The armed forces have since blockaded Mansila and it is not possible to enter the city without a military convoy.

Junta leader Capt Ibrahim Traoré broke his silence on the attack, 10 days after it happened. He said the military had launched an operation after the assault, and sent reinforcement troops. But he did not address JNIM's allegation that it carried out the attack.

A day after the Mansila attack, a rocket hit the parking area of state TV Radiodiffusion Télévision Burkinabé (RTB) in the capital, Ouagadougou. On its Facebook page, RTB described the event as a "shooting incident" that resulted in "two minor injuries, quickly taken care of by the presidential health service".

Rivals attack Farage for saying West provoked Kyiv war

LONDON (BBC): Nigel Farage has been criticised for suggesting the West "provoked" Russia's invasion of Ukraine by expanding the European Union and Nato military alliance eastwards. The Reform UK leader told the BBC that "of course" the war was President Vladimir Putin's fault.

But he added that the expansion of the EU and Nato gave him a "reason" to tell the Russian people "they're coming for us again". Former Conservative Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who is not standing in the election, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme Mr Farage was like a "pub bore we've all met at the end of the bar". Conservative Home Secretary James Cleverly said Mr Farage was echoing Mr Putin's "vile justification" for the war and Labour branded him "unfit" for any political office.

The former UKIP leader later said he was one of "the few figures" that had been "consistent and honest" on the issue. In an interview with the BBC's Nick Robinson, Mr Farage was challenged over his judgement and past statements, including when he named Russian President Vladimir Putin as the world leader he most admired in 2014. "I said I disliked him as a person, but admired him as a political operator because he's managed to take control of running Russia," Mr Farage said.

He was then pressed over a social media post in February 2022, when he claimed the Russian invasion of Ukraine was "a consequence of EU and Nato expansion". Mr Farage said he had been arguing since the 1990s that "the ever eastward expansion" of the Nato military alliance and the EU was giving President Putin "a reason to [give to] his Russian people to say they're coming for us again and to go to war". He added: "We provoked this war. Of course, it's [President Putin's] fault."

Mr Wallace - who oversaw the UK's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 - said Mr Farage "is a bit like that pub bore we've all met at the end of the bar" and often presents "very simplistic answers" to complex problems. He also said the Reform UK leader had been "consistently wrong" on the issue, adding: "Putin isn't really invading Ukraine because of Nato expansion."

Mr Wallace noted that a 7,000-word essay penned by the Russian leader before the invasion began - that was later seen as outlining his rationale for starting the war - only mentions Nato in a single paragraph. Conservative Home Secretary James Cleverly said Mr Farage was "echoing Putin's vile justification for the brutal invasion of Ukraine".

Labour defence spokesman John Healey said Mr Farage's comments made him "unfit for any political office in our country, let alone leading a serious party in Parliament". Former Nato Secretary General Lord Robertson accused Mr Farage of "parroting the Kremlin Line" and "producing new excuses for the brutal, unprovoked attack". During the interview, the Reform UK leader claimed Lord Robertson had agreed the war was caused by the expansion of the EU.

"Saying that we provoked Russia is like saying that if you buy a burglar alarm, in some way you provoke burglars," Lord Robertson told Radio 4's The World Tonight. After the interview aired, Mr Farage said on X (formerly Twitter) that he was "one of the few figures that have been consistent and honest about the war with Russia". Alongside the new statement, he reposted a speech in the European Parliament from 2014 in which he called for the West to "stop playing war games with Putin."

Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. It followed the occupation of the Crimea and Donbas regions in 2014. Ukraine is not a member of the EU or Nato, which is made up of 32 countries across Europe and North America. However, the country applied to join both blocs following the Russian invasion.

Nato was formed in 1949 by 12 countries, including the US, UK, Canada and France. After the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, many Eastern European countries joined including Hungary, Poland and Estonia. The EU has also expanded since the 1990s, with a number of eastern European countries joining in 2004.

In the interview, Mr Farage also accused the Conservatives of failing to deliver on Brexit. As the leader of UKIP, he was a key figure in the campaign to leave the EU. While the issue dominated the 2019 general election, with Boris Johnson campaigning on the slogan "Get Brexit Done", it has not featured prominently in the current campaign. Asked if he stood by his previous claim that Brexit had failed, Mr Farage said: "No, it's not a failure but we failed to deliver."

"It can't be a failure. We've left the European Union. We're now self-governing." But he added: "Brexit has failed those who voted for it, believing that immigration numbers would be reduced." Net migration - the difference between the number of people coming to live in the UK and those leaving - has risen sharply since 2021, when the UK left the EU.

French left vows new taxes as snap polls draws near

PARIS (AFP): Left-wing parties in France pledged to raise 30 billion euros a year from taxing businesses and the rich if they win a majority at snap parliamentary polls, drawing ire from centrists and business leaders.

The promises to fund new welfare handouts come as the left tries to catch the far-right National Rally (RN) in the polls -- both of them well ahead of President Emmanuel Macron's camp. Socialists, Greens, Communists and hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) would aim to bring in 30 billion euros from a wealth tax and a levy on windfall profits if their New Popular Front (NPF) alliances took power.

They plan to spend the cash on reversing Macron's hugely unpopular increase to the official retirement age as well as boosting housing and unemployment benefit payments and public sector salaries. "There is a delicate balance between reducing inequality and maintaining strong economic growth," Olivier Blanchard, former chief economist of the IMF, posted to Twitter.

"The NPF program simply ignores this balance, and can only... lead to an economic catastrophe." But he also dubbed the RN's eco-

nomic plan a "Christmas tree without logic or coherence". Since a European poll drubbing prompted Macron to call the snap election, yields on France's debt have soared -- a sign of weakening confidence as investors react to lavish spending plans from both the left and the RN.

Public finances are already under strain. There is an outstanding debt pile of around 110 percent of GDP -- over three trillion euros -- and an enduring government deficit that earned it a rebuke from the European Commission. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said the left's plans were "a shredder for the middle class" on a visit to Marseille. The NPF says its plans will not affect those earning less than 4,000 euros per month.

Attal and other ministers have hammered their message that they are the sole bulwark against two "extremes" on left and right. "Today there are three blocs, two of them extremes who feed off each other, because they are fuelled by divisions between French people," Attal said.

The RN's core messages revolve around opposition to Islam and immigration. Its manifesto pledges to

"stop the migrant flood". But allegations of anti-Semitism have resounded loudest this week, intensified after the rape of a 12-year-old girl allegedly by two teenagers motivated by hatred of Jews. Some figures in LFI, the largest party in the left alliance, have been accused of anti-Semitism over their reactions to Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel and the subsequent war in Gaza.

LFI's candidate in Avignon was not "able to say that Hamas is a terrorist organisation", Attal said on a visit to the southern French city. In an op-ed for Le Monde daily, lawyer Arie Alimi and historian Vincent Lemire contrasted "contextual, populist and election-eering anti-Semitism used by some members of LFI" with "the founding, historical and essential anti-Semitism of the RN," which was co-founded by a former Waffen-SS member.

Nevertheless, they added, "the NPF is the only electorally credible alternative to avoid an openly xenophobic party taking control of our institutions". The left alliance's electoral programme includes a condemnation of Hamas's attack on Israel and a plan to address racism and anti-Semitism.

Mum's thanks for support as son recovers after Germany crash

BERLIN (BBC): The mother of a Scottish football fan injured in a car crash in Germany says she is "thankful" that her son has been able to take his first steps after back surgery.

Gary Ellis, 23, was in a head-on collision at the road exit at Weeze airport as they headed for the opening match of Euro 2024 in Munich.

Passenger Gary and four other friends in the car, two aged 25 and two aged 23, were taken to hospital. Gary, from Dundee, had surgery for his broken back on Monday and is now recovering in Germany. His friends are already home in Scotland. His mum, Mandy Coleman, said she is overwhelmed with the support the family has received. After the crash, Gary's close friend, Graham Pert, set up a GoFundMe page. A target of

£15,000 was set, with funds now over £11,000.

His mum said the situation has been "surreal". She said: "The love, well wishes and generosity is just outstanding. "Strangers that don't even know us or Gary that have just been touched by the event and have given so generously. "It will go a long way to help him with this recovery, and support him through this time until he's well enough to return to normal life."

Gary is working with physios to get back on his feet. He is beginning to walk again, but is expected to have a long recovery. Gary's mum, dad and girlfriend travelled to Germany to support him. Mandy said Gary's positive attitude has kept them going. "You know what it's like as a parent. Sometimes a switch

turns on and you just cope with it because you've got no choice but to. "Very upsetting of course but we're just sort of dealing with it the best we can dad by day and trying to be positive and upbeat for Gary's sake," she said.

Gary could potentially have more surgery in 12-18 months. Mandy added: "He's a very healthy and fit young man, very active, and he's determined to get mobile again. "I think with his determination, the love and support from everyone, we're positive he will go on to make a good recovery." In a Facebook post, Gary showed a video of him walking post surgery. He said: "The biggest physical and mental challenge I've ever faced but nothing will beat me. "Thanks everyone for the support."

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Ending growth won't save the planet

EVER since Thomas Malthus argued just over 200 years ago that population growth would outstrip “the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man,” there has been a continuous parade of Cassandras fretting that humanity is about to exhaust the planet’s carrying capacity. Neo-Malthusian thinking inspired such 20th-century writings as Paul Ehrlich’s 1968 book, “The Population Bomb,” and the Club of Rome’s 1972 “The Limits to Growth,” which predicted civilization would end “some-time within the next one hundred years.” In “Toward a Steady-State Economy,” published in 1973, economist Herman Daly argued that economic growth should be resisted for the sake of the environment.

Climate change is drawing out such sentiments again. Yet the prescription — that economic growth must stop — is as wrong as it was when the grim Rev. Malthus predicted that a growing population would outstrip the Earth’s capacity to produce food, requiring famine, war and pestilence to bring humanity’s numbers back to a sustainable level.

“Degrowth” — the brand name for neo-Malthusianism — ignores how ingenuity and innovation have repeatedly empowered humanity to overcome ecological constraints identified by Malthus, Ehrlich, et al. Degrowthers ignore basic lessons of history: The world experienced no growth for hundreds of years. Getting ahead economically during certain periods of the Middle Ages, for example, required plundering one’s neighbor. Transactions were zero-sum.

The outcome was centuries of conquest and subjugation. Malthus made his predictions just as England and the rest of Europe were about to enter a two-century era of unprecedented economic growth, which liberated much of humanity from misery and drastically improved health and well-being. Ehrlich’s prophecies came just as the Green Revolution in agriculture was saving hundreds of millions from hunger.

Growth built a world in which one person’s gain needn’t require another’s loss. Consensual politics and democracy wouldn’t have been possible without it. We wonder how Daly or his acolytes would be received in the bustling yet poor megalopolis of Lagos, Nigeria, proclaiming the end of growth (or procreation) to save the planet.

And yet degrowth is coming back in fashion. The ranks of degrowthers include progressive journalist Naomi Klein, Swedish activist Greta Thunberg and even Pope Francis. At least one European university is now offering a master’s degree in degrowth. The truth is that degrowth wouldn’t fix climate change even in the unlikely event it could be imposed. Carbon emissions from economic growth can be understood as the product of four factors: population growth, growth in economic output per person, changes in the amount of energy needed for economic production, and the change in how much carbon dioxide is released when energy is consumed.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates these variables up to 2050. One inescapable conclusion: Zeroing out growth in gross domestic product would do little to reduce emissions. Even if output per person remained stuck at 2023 levels all the way to mid-century, humanity would still miss its 2050 target to reach net-zero emissions — by 26 billion tons of carbon dioxide. Halting growth in rich countries alone — allowing poor countries such as Nigeria to keep growing, hopefully to one day attain the economic well-being that affluent nations enjoy today — would do even less for the climate. Under this scenario, the world would miss its mid-century CO2 target by 38 billion tons.

Cutting emissions to safer levels would require epic degrowth. Getting carbon dioxide emissions below 10 billion tons per year in 2050 would demand inducing recessions that would cut world GDP per capita by about 5 percent per year — more than the loss during the 2008-2009 Great Recession. Cutting carbon emissions produced by the global economy will require massive new green energy infrastructure and new clean technologies. In other words, growth and innovation. The Energy Information Administration assumes that in a world of fast economic growth, each dollar of GDP will require some 13 percent less energy in 2050 than in a world in which growth slows.

Of course, GDP isn’t a true barometer of a civilization’s well-being. Proponents of untrammeled growth ignore the damage that it imposes on the environment and on human health. But that calls for mitigating the damage, not abandoning growth altogether. Degrowth’s prophets offer little more than hand-waving in response to the most elementary questions about their prescription. Degrowth evangelist Kohei Saito suggests “degrowth communism,” seemingly unaware that countries such as Albania and North Korea have already had that experience. Unsurprisingly, most degrowthers were born not in societies that have tried and failed to do without growth but in those that are already rich.

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Childhood trauma damages society – why aren’t our leaders recognising it?

Bessel Van der Kolk

TWENTY-FIVE years ago a study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that, in the United States, traumatic life experiences during childhood and adolescence are far more common than was expected. The participants in that study were mostly white, middle-class, well-educated, and in possession of good medical insurance, and yet, only one-third of them reported no serious adverse childhood experiences.

In the remaining sample, the vast majority had experienced two or more horrendous childhood events. Subsequent scientific reports from 96 countries have shown that, globally, over half of all children — one billion girls and boys — are exposed to violence each year.

Why is that important? People with childhood histories of trauma are vulnerable to develop a host of problems, including difficulties concentrating, outbursts of anger, panic, depression, and difficulties with food intake, drugs and sleep, as well as higher levels of stress hormones, and reduced or impaired immune responses.

Neuroscience research consistently shows that childhood trauma alters brain systems dedicated to evaluating the relative risk of what is happening around us, and causes difficulties regulating emotional responses throughout life. Despite the World Health Organization’s (WHO) leadership in anchoring violence against children as a global public health priority and the numerous studies over the past 30 years spelling out the devastating effects of childhood trauma on mental and physical health, the effects of exposure to violence remain largely unrecognised, and unresourced, in school systems, childcare agencies, medical clinics and the criminal justice system.

A chance to redress that neglect is on the horizon. In November 2024, the government of Colombia — in partnership with the government of Sweden, the WHO, UNICEF and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on ending violence against children — will host a Global

Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children. A first-ever bringing together of all 194 countries to recognise the scale, and severity of impact, of childhood violence and to begin to marshal much-needed resources to accelerate action.

The fact that this is a first-ever Global Ministerial on the issue, and that it is largely considered a third-tier policy pri-

ority, is startling. A response commensurate with the challenge that preventing childhood violence presents is long overdue.

Long-overdue and short-sighted; the CDC study concluded that childhood violence is the most costly public health issue in the US, calculating that the overall costs exceeded those of cancer or heart disease. It estimated that eradicating childhood violence in the US would reduce the overall rate of depression by more than half, alcoholism by two-thirds, and suicide, serious drug abuse, and domestic violence by three-quarters. Moreover, preventing exposure to violence and abuse would significantly affect job performance, and vastly decrease the need for incarceration. In fact, about 95 percent of violent inmates suffer from childhood experiences with violence and abuse. That, of course, is not limited to the US, but is relevant to children around the world.

When people talk about children’s exposure to violence they tend to focus on what happens outside the home: on the streets, at school, in refugee camps, and in war-torn societies. However, for the majority of children, trauma begins at home, at the hands of their own family members. Both physical and sexual violence by one’s own caregivers have devastating consequences. In 1987, Frank Putnam and Penelope Trickett at the National Institute of Mental Health started the first longitudinal study of the impact of sexual abuse on girls’ development that now has been ongoing for 35 years. Compared with girls of the same age, race and

social conditions, sexually abused girls suffer from a range of profoundly negative effects: difficulties learning, depression, troubled sexual development, high rates of obesity and self-mutilation. They dropped out of school at much higher rates and had more serious medical illnesses. This study, and numerous others like it, underscore the reality that supporting high-quality early caregiving is critically important in preventing physical, social and mental health problems, regardless of traumas that occur outside the family.

Safe and protective early relationships are vital to protect children from long-term problems. If the parents themselves are the source of distress, the child has no one to turn to for comfort and for restoring disrupted biological functioning. Social support is a biological necessity — not an option, and this notion should be the backbone of all prevention and treatment. Early stimulation and sensitive parenting are fundamental to successful growth and development.

John Heckman, winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Economics, has shown that quality early childhood pro-

grammes that involve parents and promote basic skills in disadvantaged children more than pay for themselves in improved outcomes. Economists have calculated that every dollar invested in high-quality home visiting, daycare, and preschool programmes results in \$7 in savings on welfare payments, healthcare costs, substance abuse treatment, and incarceration, plus higher tax revenues due to better-paying jobs.

Following violence, the world is experienced with a different nervous system. The three-decade-long research by Martin Teicher and his colleagues at Harvard has shown that many of the brain abnormalities that were thought to be specific to a variety of psychiatric problems were, in fact, the direct consequence of childhood trauma and abuse.

Labels such as “depression”, “oppositional defiant disorder”, “intermittent explosive disorder” and bipolar disorder, do not begin to address underlying issues. A mislabelled person is likely to become a mistreated patient. Mental illness is not really like cancer or heart disease: everything about us — our brains, our minds, and our bodies — is geared towards being integrated members of social groups, able to share, nurture and collaborate. This is the key to our success as a species, and this is what breaks down in most forms of mental illness. It is critical to recognise that many of our behaviour patterns are the result of the social conditions and caregiving systems that shape our minds and brains when we are young, and that continue to underpin the fundamental substance and meaning of our lives.

With just six months until the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, my hope is that governments recognise the opportunity and necessity to prioritise child protection, as both the right and smart thing to do. The stability and functioning of the societies and citizens of tomorrow depend on the decisions of governments today. No doubt, governments are feeling fiscal pressure but recognising and adequately resourcing childhood violence prevention will prove to be a strategic investment.

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Could a Starmer win boost Biden’s hopes?

Christopher Phillips

THINGS are not looking good for Joe Biden. The latest polls for November’s US presidential election have him neck and neck with his rival and predecessor Donald Trump. However, the latest analysis by The Economist — using the same statistical model that predicted Biden’s win in 2020 — suggests Trump is now in pole position.

Given the concentration of Trump’s support in key swing states, the magazine gives him a two-in-three chance of victory. Neither Trump’s recent conviction nor positive economic figures seem to be shifting the dial in Biden’s favor.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the picture is quite different for fellow progressive Keir Starmer. The Labour leader has a seemingly unassailable lead in the polls and is likely to become the UK’s next prime minister when elections are held on July 4. Not only is he forecast to win, but the latest Ipsos poll has Labour obliterating Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. If accurate, Starmer will take 453 seats in Parliament, leaving Sunak’s Conservatives with 115 — their worst defeat since the modern party was founded in 1834.

This raises the question whether a Starmer landslide in July might offer a boost to Biden’s beleaguered reelection campaign. US elections often feature “October surprises” — unexpected events, often from abroad, that dramatically influence the outcome of the election. Though Starmer’s victory has long been forecast, might a landslide win serve as a fillip to Biden?

Firstly, it is possible that a significant Starmer win could influence some US voters to favor Biden over Trump. While most American voters pay little attention to British politics, there is some evidence to suggest Britain’s decision to vote to leave the EU in 2016 had a positive impact on Trump’s election later that year. Trump sought to connect his campaign to the UK’s “liberation” from the EU, stating his victory would be “Brexit plus, plus, plus.”

Many of the same demographic of voter — disproportionately white, older and without a university education — backed Brexit in the UK and Trump in the US. Perhaps because of this, in November 2016, the Trump camp replicated some of the successful strategies the “Leave” campaign had used.

Though history never repeats itself exactly, it is plausible that the Biden campaign in 2024 might benefit in a similar way from Starmer’s election. If Starmer’s election is greeted positively by Biden’s base and floating voters, he could also connect his campaign to Labour’s in the way that Trump did to Brexit. Similarly, there is already close cooperation between the Labour and Democratic electoral machines, with Politico reporting that the US centrist think tank Third Way has advised Starmer on election messaging. It is plausible to think that Biden’s race will be eager to learn lessons from any Labour landslide that they can import back to the US for November.

Secondly, as prime minister, Starmer may be able to take policy positions in the four months before the November election to aid the

White House’s current incumbent. It will be a delicate line for Labour to walk. Starmer has insisted he “will work with whoever is elected” in November and will not want to be seen to be working against Trump. Indeed, shadow foreign secretary David Lammy has been expanding his connections with Republicans and the Trump camp to prepare for such a possibility. But at the same time, Starmer’s Labour are ideological fellow travelers of the Democrats and will privately have a strong preference for a Biden victory.

One opportunity to indirectly aid Biden comes soon after the UK election: NATO’s 75th anniversary summit in Washington from July 9. In opposition, Starmer pitched to have a high-profile meeting with Biden, without success. At the summit, in contrast, it might be the president who is keen to have his picture taken with the victorious Labour leader. Beyond the public pleasantries, Starmer could also help Biden at the summit by emphasizing the UK’s commitment to NATO.

Trump, a NATO skeptic, has long claimed that the US’ allies do not pay their way. Labour has already pledged to raise defense spending to 2.5 percent of gross domestic product, matching a current Conservative commitment. Starmer could make much of this in Washington, enabling Biden to reassure US voters that, unlike Trump, he has been able to persuade allies to increase their NATO burden.

Beyond NATO, Starmer will have other opportunities to support Biden’s initiatives. Labour is committed to the war in Ukraine and has largely agreed with the Conservatives’ line of backing US positions on the Middle East. Should Biden’s flailing Gaza ceasefire plan gain traction in the coming weeks and months, Starmer will be well positioned to offer the White House high-profile support.

That said, Labour and the Democrats are not fully aligned on all aspects of foreign policy. China is one notable area of divergence. While Biden (and Trump) characterize China as an adversary, Lammy has stated he wants ties with Beijing to “endure and evolve.” A more nuanced approach from London toward China, recognizing both the threat Beijing poses but also possible areas of collaboration, particularly in the economic sphere, may prove a point of contention with Washington. Starmer could therefore further assist Biden by playing down any potential disagreements on China until after the US elections.

The impact of Starmer’s likely landslide victory in the UK on the US elections could ultimately prove very limited. Domestic issues tend to decide elections first and foremost and, if Biden cannot make a strong enough case against Trump at home, then he may be doomed irrespective of events on the other side of the Atlantic. However, if the race remains close or narrows to a knife-edge, then every vote will count. In such a scenario, the few voters that might be persuaded to back the incumbent because of the factors listed above could make the difference. If so, Biden may have Starmer to thank.

Algeria a key part of Turkiye’s North Africa strategy

Sinem Cengiz

ALGERIA occupies a key position in Turkiye’s Africa pivot, being neither distant nor an ally, while presenting both opportunities and challenges in its relations with Ankara. Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf was in Ankara last week, having a closed-door meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Although no details were disclosed about the meeting at the presidential complex, a closer look at Turkish-Algerian relations will provide insights into their trajectory.

Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune’s state visit to Turkiye in 2022 and Erdogan’s reciprocal visit last year cemented their two countries’ growing ties. During Erdogan’s visit to Algeria, Ankara and Algiers elevated their relations to strategic level, marking a significant advancement in ties since Tebboune assumed office in 2019.

There were several reasons for the setbacks in Turkish-Algerian relations, but now there are compelling reasons for progress. In 1955, Turkiye sided with the Western world and abstained from a vote on Algeria’s self-determination at the UN General Assembly thanks to its Western-oriented foreign policy line. The wartime independence movement perceived Turkiye’s abstention as siding with France, yet the Turkish stance was rooted in its commitment to support its NATO allies. In 1960, following a change in government, Turkiye voted to support Algeria’s independence.

Despite having a common historical legacy, Turkiye and Algeria, due to their differing political and ideological tendencies, had a distant relationship throughout the Cold War era. In 1985, then-Prime Minister Turgut Ozal apologized for Turkiye’s partiality toward France in the 1950s. Despite these overtures and

the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the two countries failed to find common ground on which to build closer relations. The so-called Arab Spring of 2010 introduced another dimension to their relations, albeit not in a positive manner. It is particularly important to add the Iranian dimension to the equilibrium in the post-2010 era. Iran has tried to exploit the lackluster performance on ties between Turkiye and Algeria. The Syrian crisis was an important ground for this Iranian strategy.

The increasing alignment in the policies of Algeria and Iran have gained momentum since the Syrian crisis, while Turkiye stood in the opposite camp to the Algerian-Iranian axis. Iran and Algeria have adamantly opposed any foreign interference in Syria’s internal affairs. They took a similar stance at the 2012 meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in

Makkah, where the suspension of Syria was approved by an absolute majority, with the only objections coming from Iran and Algeria.

Iranian leaders have underlined several times that Iran and Algeria have the capacity to create a new world order, adding that they could be an exemplar of brotherly ties via the expansion and diversification of relations in all spheres. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has said several times that the North African state has been a good partner and an anti-Israeli resistance front since the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

The other

Fragments of Gaza: My journey of memory and loss

Shahd Safi

NINE months before October 7, I began learning photography under the guidance of my friend Mahmoud Abu Salama. Mahmoud owns a Canon camera, something I've always wanted. Whenever he didn't need it, he would let me use it, which felt like receiving a precious gift.

I loved capturing moments, but being a perfectionist, I hesitated to use a camera until I felt skilled enough. I started watching online videos on how to take great photos and learned that symmetry enhances beauty. Whenever I saw something symmetrical, I felt an irresistible urge to photograph it.

Mahmoud couldn't always lend me his Canon, and I didn't have the money to buy my own, so, I decided to get a Lumix as a temporary solution until I could afford a more expensive camera. With my new Lumix, I discovered that spiral patterns attract people's attention. Just a month into my photography journey, I received an Erasmus scholarship to study for one semester in Spain as a cultural exchange student from the English literature department at my university, Al-Aqsa.

I traveled to Jaen on January 27, 2023. There, I learned that incorporating a human element makes photos more compelling and that the best photos tell a story. In Spain, I lost my Lumix, which made me feel frustrated. I think I left it somewhere, and when I went back to search for it, it had been stolen. The camera had a lot of memories that connected me with Gaza. However, I realised that while cameras can preserve some moments, we still carry the most important memories within us. For me, those are the memories from my beloved home, Gaza.

In August 2023, I returned home. By then, I had built a strong network of contacts. Many recognised my work with NGOs, which made job opportunities more accessible despite my not-so-high grades, affected by

the challenges of the pandemic and my parents' unexpected separation.

I had become financially stable, having secured freelance work that allowed me to pay for my education and support my family. My mother, burdened by debt, was relieved when I could help. Our relationship had improved slightly, and I felt proud of my achievements.

Everything seemed to be falling into place, and I was ready to buy my Canon camera and a guitar, finally able to indulge in my passions. I wanted to relive my meaningful past, capturing every sentiment my photography had missed – from my passion for school and proving my intelligence, to my ambitions and intellectual pursuits.

I yearned to grow wiser, kinder and more thoughtful. I wanted to process the sadness and anger caused by the systematically created poverty we, in Gaza, confront; the injustices we have been witnessing ever since Palestine was occupied; and the world's great betrayal of our human rights and its denial of our existence. All that has been accumulating over the years, from childhood through my early 20s, and I want to realise my dreams of travelling freely without facing obstacles.

On October 7, I was supposed to start my final year of university. I was eager to commit fully to my studies, but instead, I woke up to the sounds of bombardment. The internet was intermittent, but I received messages from my school announcing a pause in classes due to the attack on Gaza. My life turned upside down, shifting from excitement and ambition to sadness, worry and fear.

I went from being a passionate student to someone documenting the injustices and human rights violations against my people. I was shocked by the world's double standards and the media's misrepresentation of Palestinians. Despite limited

internet access, I wrote articles and pitched them to news outlets whenever possible. Life in Gaza before the war was already difficult. We struggled with unsafe water, limited electricity and restricted travel. After October 7, these struggles intensified. Water became scarce, electricity was entirely cut off, and travel required large sums of money that secured no guarantees for exit. We lived in constant fear, under bombardment, with no safe place to turn to.

Most of the places I knew and loved were totally destroyed, including my home. Had I known this would be Gaza's fate, I would have taken more photos, capturing every moment. I would have said goodbye to every beautiful spot I experienced in Gaza.

The schools where I graduated and was awarded for being at the top of my class, the places where I forged the strongest friendships and laughed the most, and the places where I felt most at home – all gone. My heart aches with the memories of what once was and the stark reality of what remains. I wasn't able to capture the boredom that would overcome us when the TV would go silent after a blackout; the closeness we enjoyed when we chatted no longer distracted by the internet; the joy children felt when the lights flickered back on after a blackout; the relief mothers experienced, as clean laundry fluttered in the breeze; the delight one would get from a sweet nap after a long day at the university.

I wasn't able to preserve the moments of anger at our governments for the division they have maintained since 2007, the consequences that followed, and the unclear vision of our future. I could neither capture the contempt for those who marred our beautiful land, killed, dismissed, tortured, handcuffed, blindfolded or detained my people, nor the dark nights studying

by candlelight that burned my forehead hair, which took time to heal. The fervent pride we felt when we named the Palestinian villages and cities we lost in 1948, the deep-rooted connection we have to a land stretching back to ancient times, and the tears that welled up when we remembered our ancestors' defeats – all these memories live within us. These are all things my camera could not capture but my heart could.

I am fortunate to have escaped Gaza. On March 3, I left after a successful fundraising campaign, thanks to the support of kind people and connections made through my work teaching Arabic and freelancing. My mother and some siblings are safe in Cairo, but my father stayed in Gaza with my other siblings. This left my heart broken apart – a piece of it is in Gaza with my father, other siblings, and friends; another is in Cairo; and yet another is with my sister in Algeria, where she is a university student on a scholarship in international law. There is also one piece of my heart that died when I left Gaza.

My mother, siblings and I now face hardship in Egypt and the pain of uncertainty: What will happen if a ceasefire is announced? Will we return to Gaza, or will we be forced to stay in Egypt? Both options are equally frightening to us. My heart is so overwhelmed that no therapy can help me heal. I will only be able to start healing when my camera can capture civilian planes in our sky, not Israeli warplanes. I will heal when I can safely travel the world and proudly say I am Palestinian, when I can pass through Palestinian airports, when my identity is never questioned, and when I am no longer called a refugee. Only then will I rest assured that my people will not witness injustices again and that the world has apologised, and stepped up for us. That is when our suffering in Palestine will end.

Keir Starmer's empty promise of British renewal

Jamie Maxwell

RECENT British prime ministers have been routinely ambushed by reality. David Cameron didn't see Brexit coming. Theresa May underestimated the appeal of Corbynism. Boris Johnson couldn't handle COVID. Liz Truss was removed from office by the financial markets. In calling a snap general election for July 4 – one that he is certain to lose – Rishi Sunak has discovered that his political gifts aren't quite as extensive as he thought they were. What, then, lies in wait for Sir Keir Starmer, the man destined to become the next occupant of Number 10 Downing Street?

The Labour leader has carefully positioned himself as a moderating force in United Kingdom politics; a stable, centrist alternative to 14 years of incumbents "Tory chaos". For this, he has been rewarded with a 20-point poll lead and the prospect of a crushing summer rout of Conservative seats. One survey, published at the start of June, even indicated that he could win the largest Westminster majority of any British politician since Stanley Baldwin in 1924. But dispatching Sunak's desperate and beleaguered right-wing government will be the easy part. Actually running Britain – a country recently characterised by The Financial Times as "poor" with "pockets of rich people" – will be much harder. Starmer doesn't look even slightly up to the task.

Labour's economic policy – the centrepiece of that opaque cluster of ideas collectively known as "Starmerism" – is a case in point. In a speech to the City of London in March, the party's shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, set out what she saw as the primary drivers of British decay: the lowest productivity in the G7, a dearth of strategic investment, and long-term regional neglect. Reeves then hinted at a solution: a new "strategic partnership" between the state and the private sector, reform of the UK's restrictive planning laws, and a national wealth fund to help channel cash into industrially deprived areas.

Yet, in the same speech, Reeves failed to acknowledge the central role played by the City of London itself in amplifying the UK's abnormally high rates of regional inequality. Instead, she lauded the British capital's "world-leading professional and financial services", pausing only to acknowledge the damage banking sectors can cause to national economies when left "under-regulated." The omission was revealing. For decades, the City has acted as a vortex for

domestic British investment, draining wealth away from the country's peripheries – Northern England, Central Scotland, South Wales – and redirecting it towards the asset-rich English South East. Or, just as often, out of the UK altogether and into offshore tax havens.

Naturally, the social effects of this system have been devastating. According to the consulting firm EY, London and its surrounding regions – which are booming – will account for a full 40 percent of the UK's economic growth by 2027. The rest of Britain, meanwhile, will continue down the path of Tory stagnation. Under the Conservatives, spending cuts hit poor northern cities twice as hard as they did prosperous southern ones, amplifying health inequalities and pushing local services to the limit. As the party has made clear, Labour might mitigate these cuts, but it won't reverse them – in the next parliament, budgetary discipline will take priority over social democratic largesse. As if to underline the point, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the UK's spending watchdog, estimates that, in the absence of substantial tax hikes, savings of up to £16 billion (\$20bn) will be needed to eliminate Britain's deficit over the coming years, regardless of who takes power on July 4. Bringing the UK's day-to-day spending into balance is one of Labour's economic goals. "We will not waver from strong fiscal rules," Reeves – for six years, an economist at the Bank of England – warned in March.

On this, at least, Starmer has been true to his word. In February, Labour ditched its flagship pledge to spend £28 billion per year on a "green investment plan". In its place, Starmer unveiled a more modest commitment: £5 billion per year, by 2028/29, to decarbonise the UK economy. Environmental groups condemned the U-turn. Labour had "caved like a house of cards in the wind" to pressure from the climate-denying right, said Areeba Hamid of Greenpeace. But the shift was inevitable. Starmer, anxious about the softness of Labour's support, wants to limit the space for Tory attack lines. At the same time, four years after replacing Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader, he remains determined to expunge any trace of Corbyn's influence from within his party's ranks.

Starmer's assault on the Labour left has produced a bonfire of progressive policies. His initial vows to scrap university tuition fees, raise taxes on top earners, nationalise Britain's price-gouging

energy companies, and end the incremental privatisation of the NHS have all been jettisoned or watered down. So, too, has his promise to abolish the House of Lords, the single largest unelected legislative chamber anywhere in the Western world.

Speaking to The Guardian in 2022, Starmer was emphatic: dissolving the Lords, an institution stuffed full of "Tory lackeys and donors", would "restore trust" in the British state. "People have lost faith in the ability of politicians to bring about change," he said. "As well as fixing our economy, we need to fix our politics." By the middle of last year, however, repairing Britain's broken political model had slipped down Starmer's agenda. "Constitutional [reform] takes time and drains energy," Thangam Debbonaire, a senior Starmer ally, told The i Newspaper in June 2023. "We've got a lot to do to fix a country where nothing works from getting a passport to fixing potholes."

Starmer and his team are right to argue that the Conservatives have left Britain in a mess. From Cameron's austerity cuts to Truss's market-spooking fiscal experiments, the UK is a poorer, weaker, and more divided place now than it was a decade and a half ago. And yet, despite shedding virtually every policy capable of addressing Britain's problems, Starmer has actually grown more, not less, grandiose as the race for Number 10 has progressed. It is time to "turn the page" on Tory decline and embrace "a decade of national renewal with Labour," he has said repeatedly since Sunak kickedstarted the campaign in May. Such rhetoric is not new. In 1997, Tony Blair, celebrating his landmark election victory over the Conservatives, asked and answered his own question: "A new dawn has broken, has it not? And it is wonderful."

But it wasn't wonderful. By the time Blair's successor, Gordon Brown, resigned in 2010, inaugurating the most recent stretch of Tory rule, New Labour had become synonymous with three things: Iraq, corruption, and financial collapse.

The UK didn't flourish during the Blair-Brown era, it fractured, shifting the national doom loop back into gear. Starmer – a former director of public prosecutions – is a far less ambitious figure than Blair, and shares none of Blair's disruptive vision. He has pledged a great British rebirth but has no intention of delivering one. Reality lies in wait for the next Labour government. Decline is Britain's reality.

Aljazeera

Biden has no answer to Hezbollah's spreading threat

A MID increasingly violent cross-border exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and growing fears of a full-scale war, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah last week threatened to attack Cyprus if the Mediterranean island made its military bases available to Israel.

Washington has cautioned Israel against any escalation that might encourage other Iran-backed Shiite militias from Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, and Syria to join in, but that warning poses questions: What would the US advise European capitals to do if Nasrallah threatened them over any disagreements they might have with Tehran? And who will guarantee that Tehran, once it produces nuclear weapons, will not threaten to use them against Cyprus or the rest of Europe?

Cyprus has caught Iran's attention for its role in inspecting humanitarian aid bound for Gaza. Hamas opposes aid not channelled through its militia, fearing that losing control over aid distribution might weaken its grip on power.

It is no secret that America is restraining Israel from restoring calm in its north by engaging Hezbollah. What is puzzling is that Washington offers no alternative other than asking Israel to accept Nasrallah's terms: Hezbollah will stop attacking Israel only if it ends its war in Gaza, a position Nasrallah restated last

week. If Israel followed American advice and Lebanese demands, it would give Nasrallah a say in matters that do not concern him – specifically, relations between Israel and the Palestinians. That would undermine the concept of the nation state and the foundation of the global order, but US President Joe Biden appears to be fine with it.

In July 2006, Hezbollah initiated a devastating 33-day war with Israel, ostensibly to force the latter into a prisoner swap, which occurred after the war. The conflict ended with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ordered the disarmament of all militias in Lebanon, the redeployment of Hezbollah fighters north of the Litani River (about 30 kilometers from the Lebanese Israeli border), and the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces alongside an expanded UN Interim Force in Lebanon between the river and the border.

The resolution also required Lebanon and Israel to negotiate border disputes. In 2022, they demarcated their maritime border, but Hezbollah has since refused to negotiate the 13 disputed land points, insisting that Israel withdraw unilaterally or face battle.

Hezbollah launched an offensive against Israel last October, the day after the Hamas attack on Israel and Israel's retaliatory invasion of Gaza. Nasrallah declared that this war was not about

the border, but to pin down Israeli forces in the north, diverting them from the Gaza front. Hezbollah's offensive had not only occupied 100,000 Israeli soldiers in the north but also displaced tens of thousands of Israelis and inflicted economic and tourism losses, he said, and analysts were now discussing a Hezbollah security zone in northern Israel. Taking a victory lap even before the fighting has escalated into full-scale conflict, Nasrallah assured his followers that the forthcoming battle with Israel would change the region, be the most honorable battle since 1948, and lead to Israel's annihilation.

The Biden administration appears to have few strategies to help Israel beyond asking it to stop its southern offensive to avoid northern conflict. Washington merely echoes Iran and Hezbollah's threats, advising Israel – and perhaps now Cyprus too – to heed them. This reverses the classic diplomatic strategy of speaking softly while wielding a big stick. Instead, the Biden administration talks tough against Iran and its militias but has yet to make its threats look believable. Nasrallah probably understands that Biden is more focused on his re-election in November than on Middle Eastern affairs, and he may believe the US will allow Hezbollah to continue its aggression against Israel – and now apparently Europe too.

Arab News

Nobody is confronting great Remainer lie about Brexit

David Frost

EIGHT years ago on Sunday, we went to vote in the Brexit referendum. Let's not forget that most of our rulers never wanted it in the first place. It only happened because of the campaigning of Nigel Farage and Ukip and the determination of a bunch of Tory MPs like Sir Bill Cash. It became the largest act of democracy, and indeed the largest vote for anything, in British history.

Four years later, through a supreme effort, and in the teeth of the opposition of the anti-democrats and the blockers – including Sir Keir Starmer and most of the current Labour leadership – the Conservative Party, Boris Johnson and I smashed through the barriers and delivered the referendum result. We went on to sign the largest, widest, and deepest trade and co-operation agreement anywhere. We made Britain a free and independent country once again.

Where has that spirit of hope and optimism gone? In part, of course, it dissipated amid the Covid pandemic and the shock of the Ukraine war. But it's not just that. Those who never wanted to leave the EU have taken every opportunity, seized on every random economic figure, to tell us that Brexit was an irresponsible populist mistake. And since Boris's departure, there has been no real counter-argument from the Government.

It's not surprising so many believe – despite the actual evidence – that somehow "Brexit is failing". Yet it really isn't so. Obviously any change on the scale of leaving the EU entails both costs and benefits. Assessing that trade-off is not just about economics and trade, but also about intangibles like control and national democracy, upon which free Western countries have traditionally put a high value.

So there will always be room for debate. But one thing we can be sure of is that the catastrophising of Project Fear was simply wrong. We accomplished the biggest change in this country's economic and political model for 50 years, and you can barely see it in the figures. The likely small hit from disentangling ourselves from the single market and customs union isn't even visible in

the charts. The disasters predicted by so many have simply not happened. So when the critics got so much wrong before, why should we believe them now?

Yet you still hear many who should know better, like the Office for Budget Responsibility, and many who don't, like the actor Brian Cox on the BBC last weekend, claiming that Brexit is shrinking our GDP by 4 per cent. But this figure is not a fact: it is a prediction, a very unsafe one, made several years back, about the supposed drag on our GDP sometime in the next decade.

And the prediction just does not reflect reality. The truth is that, since we left the EU's economic area at the end of 2020, our hourly productivity has grown faster than the eurozone's and, according to the OECD, our overall economy has grown faster than that of France or Germany. There is every reason to think that both of these trends will continue.

Similarly, don't believe the anti-Brexit hype about our trade performance. We are actually in the middle of a services trade boom, one unpredicted by the gloomy anti-Brexit economists. Moreover, as the economist Catherine McBride has been repeatedly pointing out for the Briefings for Britain group, our goods exports to the EU and the rest of the world have performed roughly equally, and our goods imports from the EU have actually gone up faster than those from elsewhere, neither of which suggests that EU trade barriers are at the root of any difficulties we have.

So why do so many voters feel they aren't getting what they hoped for from Brexit? One answer is that our problems are deep-rooted: housing and planning, unreformed public services, tax and spend at the highest-ever levels, the crackpot pursuit of renewables, and an economy that has got hooked on the sugar rushes of low-skill immigration and zero interest rates. Add to all this the pandemic, with its £400 billion debt, a shock which is going to take a long time to work through, and plainly the last few years would have been difficult come what may.

The other reason is that we have

not delivered on our promises. We pledged to cut immigration and it has not happened. Quite apart from the negative direct effects, this failure has revealed just how much the levers of control are outside the government's hands and how ineffective the British state really is.

Leaving the EU is the necessary condition for solving these problems. It doesn't fix them in itself. We, the British people, still have to do that for ourselves. What Brexit does do – or should do, for the job is not entirely complete – is give us back control, the ability to govern our country in our own interests and in a way that suits us. That is about changing the laws that we inherited from the EU. It's about taking on the European Convention on Human Rights. And it is also about ending the passivity of the last couple of decades, in which too much of the British establishment seemed to prefer investing in our minority, non-controlling, share in the EU than in governing Britain in the interests of the British people.

Yes, we should have changed more and more quickly. But, again despite what you will hear from many, getting out of the EU has already made a big difference. First of all, we have our democracy back. Here, we can change everything at elections. EU countries can't. They can change their leaders but can only change the policies if they can persuade everyone else to agree.

We choose our governments ourselves, but the EU's miscellaneous job-lot of presidents – including seemingly one who was forced to resign from his own government due to a corruption scandal – is currently being chosen in backrooms, divvied up among political groupings, and rubber-stamped by its parliament. Nor do we have to pay £10-12 billion a year net into the EU each year, a sum that would be a lot higher by now as the bloc has expanded its budgets and borrowing since we left.

We have got all the EU's old trade deals and several new ones of our own, too, notably the huge trans-Pacific Partnership, which gives us free trade with the fastest growing economies in the world. We have cut

Ibrahim Thiaw

replenished. At the same time, droughts are becoming more frequent and severe. This is why Saudi Arabia recently joined the International Drought Resilience Alliance – a global coalition mobilizing resources to prepare for severe droughts – whose secretariat is hosted by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

The implications of this looming water crisis are profound. Agriculture, which consumes around 85 percent of Saudi Arabia's water, could face catastrophic disruption. As water becomes scarcer, food security is threatened, and the livelihoods of those who depend on agriculture hang in the balance.

Severe desertification, where fertile land is reduced to barren landscape, further exacerbates food insecurity and economic instability. The economic costs are staggering, with billions of dollars lost each year. In the Middle East alone, land degradation affects more than 50 million hectares,

resulting in annual losses estimated at \$9 billion.

This December, the importance of tackling land degradation and water scarcity will be in the global spotlight when Saudi Arabia hosts the UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh. The summit is shaping up to be the largest and most ambitious global forum on land and drought to date. This pivotal moment, which also coincides with the 30th anniversary of the convention, is an opportunity for all nations to come together to develop sustainable solutions and demonstrate their commitment to land restoration.

Every year we lose 100 million hectares, an area the size of Mauritania. If current trends continue, we will need to restore 1.5 billion hectares by 2030 to achieve land degradation neutrality. Around the world, countries are taking bold steps to restore land. In Africa, for example, the Great Green Wall initiative aims to restore 100 million hectares of

Addressing water and land challenges at COP16

STANDING on a rocky outcrop on the outskirts of Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, one cannot help but be struck by the vast expanse of arid land that stretches endlessly to the horizon. The rolling dunes and rugged terrain tell a story of resilience and adaptability. But behind this harsh beauty lies an urgent crisis. According to the World Bank, three-quarters of the region's arable land is already degraded, and 60 percent of the population faces water scarcity – a figure that is expected to reach 100 percent by 2050.

Water scarcity and land degradation are not just environmental issues. They are existential threats to the Kingdom and beyond. With no natural rivers or lakes, Saudi Arabia relies heavily on groundwater and desalinated seawater.

Climate change is exacerbating this fragile balance, causing unpredictable rainfall, prolonged droughts and heat waves that deplete water resources faster than they can be

SCCI rejects hike in fixed charges of electricity for industrial consumers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq out-rightly rejected the recent unprecedented increase from 300 to 355 percent in fixed charges of electricity for industrial consumers, stating that imposition of fixed charges on domestic consumers is highly unjust, which would further make life of common man miserable.

In a statement here on Saturday, Ishaq said the major increase in fixed charges was tantamount to destruction of industries and burying people alive.

The chamber president warned of the government for launching an agitation campaign.

He also made it clear that if in case, the decision couldn't be withdrawn immediately, aggressive and harsh steps would be taken against unfair and unjust hike in fixed charges, and government and relevant authorities will be responsible for any unfortunate incident, he added.

The SCCI president said the government and NEPRA had made a whopping increase in fixed charges from 300 to 355 percent for industrial consumers, which was com-

pletely unjust, unfair and pushed industry to further destruction and was tantamount to putting the last nail in the coffin of this important sector.

Attempts are initiated to add the ordeals of the business community, which is highly condemnable, Fuad Ishaq said.

He vowed the business community will strongly resist anti-industry and business policies and be forced to widely agitate.

Owing to flawed policies of the government, he added, the industrial growth has slowed down and a number of units were shut down in the province.

He warned industries will completely close and trigger further unemployment so it is essential to revisit overall policies and let industries and economy flourish.

The SCCI chief said it is totally incomprehensible that consumers are already paying charges on units and there is no justification for imposing fixed charges on consumers, he added.

Fuad Ishaq demanded privatization of all power distribution companies (DISCOs) if those discos which were unable to sale like PESCO, so such one should be handed over to the Pakistan Army.



HYDERABAD: Vendor selling ice at his stall as demand of ice increased during hot weather.

18% GST to reverse all gains towards digitalization of businesses

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Finance Bill 2024 proposed GST increase to 18 percent will further disadvantage tax-compliant retailers and will reverse all gains towards digitalization of the retail sector over the past five years. Although a maximum GST rate of 12 percent should be restored, maintaining the current rate at 15 percent will partially incentivize customers of Tier-1 retailers therefore allowing some semblance of competitiveness for the formal sector.

These views were expressed by the Chairman of the Chainstore Association of Pakistan Rana Tariq, emphasizing that a strategic combination of sequential measures, implemented in consultation with progressive retailers, will promote economic growth and sustainable tax compliance across the entire retail sector.

He stated the association represents Tier-1 Retailers integrated with the FBR-POS system. The organized retail sector significantly contributes to Pakistan's formal economy, directly employing over 2,000,000 people and indirectly supporting many more through shopping malls, manufacturers, service providers, and the cottage industry amongst over 50 other sectors.

Despite ongoing attempts to rationalize the taxation of the retail sector, the proposed tax reforms have led to the closure of several integrated Tier-1 retailers and the premature reduction of the physical retail network of many others over the past two years, he furthered.

He urged the government to maintain the 15% GST rate for Integrated Tier-1 Retailers by retaining S. No. 66 of the Eight Schedule of the Sales Tax Act 1990, which is pro-

posed to be omitted in the Finance Bill 2024, as the FBR-POS integration has been instrumental in digitalizing taxation efforts, yielding positive results across the country since its inception. We firmly believe that thorough digitalization can address the elusive taxation reforms of the retail sector.

The press release noted that when FBR-POS integration was introduced in 2019, the GST rate for locally produced textile and leather products was 9%. This rate has since been hiked to 15% without significant broadening of the tax base, making domestic Tier-1 retailers uncompetitive and hampering digitalization efforts.

Integrated retailers currently generate 20-25% of their turnover through various tax regimes, while undocumented retailers are increasing due to avoidance of taxes, generating negligible taxes relative to their

turnover and avoiding compliance and audits.

The FBR-POS integration regime has faced many recent setbacks, including the easing of integration criteria in the Finance Act 2023 and the discontinuation of the POS prize scheme for consumers since November 2022, despite ongoing charges. Tax compliant retailers are also concerned about the use of the collected funds.

Previously, consumers were motivated by cash prize opportunities to purchase from integrated Tier-1 retailers and verify sales invoices digitally, promoting compliance and crowd-sourced tax enforcement.

The association leadership emphasized that special concession for FBR-POS integrated taxpayers should be announced to encourage more retailers to integrate. Additionally, issuing notices without adverse information should be discouraged.

FBR's expanded authority in tax fraud cases hamper investment

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Saturday that some conditions of the IMF have yet to be fulfilled in the recent budget.

In contrast, most of the budget proposals are in accordance with the instructions of the IMF, he said.

He said that honouring commitments with the IMF will help Pakistan secure new loans to keep the country afloat.

Mian Zahid Hussain said allocating 1400 billion rupees for developmental projects in these difficult circumstances is a miracle.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that electricity could be made

cheaper by Rs10 per unit for the industrial sector by a 200 billion rupees cut in development projects.

The affordable electricity will increase exports by five billion dollars and also increase employment and provide relief to people, but it seems difficult at this juncture.

The business leader said that last year, 950 billion rupees were earmarked for development projects, of which only 379 billion rupees could be spent till May.

The budget is too focused on indirect taxes, which will increase poverty while reducing government expenditure should be addressed.

There has yet to be a concrete plan to eliminate the losses of 1200 billion rupees per year from the power sector. Besides, the privatization of 80 government institutions, which incur losses of 1200 billion rupees annually, must be done immediately.

In both terms, 2400 billion rupees can be saved annually, which makes it possible to save seven and a half billion dollars in government expenses.

He said that in the total budget of 18 thousand billion rupees, a deficit of 9 thousand billion rupees has been shown, which half of the total budget is. This deficit will be covered by taking more loans from various sources.

Nine thousand billion rupees interest will have to be paid on government loans this year and 10 thousand billion rupees next year. To avoid this situation, there is no alternative but privatization and an increased tax base.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the industries of former Fata, Pata and other parts of the country are being given incentives of more than 200 billion rupees. At the same time, there are several incentives in addition to this, violating the promises made to the IMF.

In these circumstances, if there is no increase in exports, remittances and tax base, new mini-budgets will have to be brought, increasing the pressure on the people.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that big infrastructure projects can bring improvement for the economy and the people, so these projects should be completed immediately so that the country's economic condition can improve.

He said that despite the huge increase in inflation, it is excessive to increase the tax on the income of the salaried class and that increasing the price of medicines, medical equipment, poultry feed, tractors, mobile phones, stationery, newspaper, cement, pasteurized milk and other items will increase inflation.

He warned that increased powers given to FBR are tax fraud cases and 0-year sentence risks being misused to discourage investment.

Upset PLT customers banned over too many returns

Court Notice

In the Court of Shafqat Qadeer Civil Judge XIV Bannu. Suit No. 275/1. Institution no. 2021 Next date of Hearing 19-07-2024 Case title: Noor zaman VS Shafi zaman Notice to: 4/1. Shafi zaman 4/2. Javed Khan 4/3. Sajid Khan Sons of Nadia Gul 4/4. M s t . S h a z a r Gul 4/5. Rozina 4/6. Majida 4/7. Sanjeeda D/o Noor Zaman R/o Mangal Mela Tehsil Domil and District Bannu. Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will /shall not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8.00 AM on 19-07-2024, the proceedings will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

LONDON (BBC News): Fast-fashion brand PrettyLittleThing (PLT) is facing criticism from customers who have had their accounts with the company deactivated because of the number of times they have returned their purchases.

In an email seen by the BBC, shoppers were told on Friday that their accounts had been reviewed and shut down so they would not be able to place any further orders.

Some of those affected have used social media to criticise the new policy, claiming they had only made one return so far this year, or suggesting they would return fewer items if the firm was more consistent in its sizing of clothing items. PLT did not immediately respond to the BBC's request for comment.

The online retailer, which is part of the Boohoo Group, had come under fire earlier this month after scrapping its free returns policy. One PLT customer branded the latest move a

"joke" and said returns would not be necessary if the sizing and the quality of the clothing was not "awful". Posting on X, they said: "You don't have a physical store, [of course] people will return things."

Another wrote that they had received the email telling them their account was being deactivated despite the fact their last return to the company was three months ago.

On TikTok, videos of shoppers questioning why their accounts have been suspended have also received hundreds of likes.

Becca Unsworth, a 24-year-old pensions administrator from Preston, told the BBC that she was "appalled" after her account was suspended.

Initially, she was not sure whether the email had been sent to her in error.

However, on Saturday morning she says she was informed by a PLT cus-

tomers service adviser that it was genuine.

She describes herself as a loyal customer for the last seven years: "I go to PLT for everything really - something for work, a new top for a night out, hair stuff, beauty products. I spent so much money there."

"I do return but it's due to the fact something may arrive faulty or I need to order an item in three different sizes to make sure it fits at all," she said, describing the brand's sizing as "terrible".

Becca had also paid the £9.99 fee to access PLT's "Royalty" scheme for unlimited deliveries in the UK for a year.

But she has been told with her account being deactivated, the company will not provide her with a refund or partial refund.

She adds that the experience has "put [her] off shopping there ever again" and now she will opt for the likes of Asos or Shein.

Sophie Smith, a 26-year-old PLT shopper from No-

wich, said that she thought the message received was a "joke" initially.

She has been a member of its "Royalty" delivery scheme since it was first offered and opts for PLT for outfits for bottomless brunches, weddings or nights out. She told the BBC she has only made one return to PLT this year, and added that she felt the latest development showed the company "doesn't value their customers".

In the email, PLT apologised for any inconvenience caused and pointed out that shoppers would still be able to make returns via its online portal.

PLT is part of the Boohoo Group, which was founded by Mahmud Kamani and retail executive Carol Kane in 2006.

The brand started out as an accessories-only outfit, with a focus on on-trend, low-cost pieces. It was co-founded and headed up by Umar Kamani, one of Mahmud Kamani's sons, who drove the brand's col-

laborations with the likes of supermodel Naomi Campbell and influencer Molly-May Hague, as well as its expansion in the US.

While it has come under the spotlight for its working practices, the Boohoo Group was one of the big winners of the pandemic, as online retailers thrived.

However, it has since faced several challenges with the rate of returns normalising, rising competition from ultra-fast fashion brands like Shein, and customer budgets being squeezed during the cost-of-living crisis.

Customers vented their frustration recently when PLT decided to introduce a £1.99 fee for returns, including for those members of its "Royalty" service.

High Street giants such as Zara, Uniqlo and Next already charge for online returns, while PLT rival Oh Polly recently introduced a policy where the greater the amount of an order returned, the higher the return fee.

Nasdaq both fell.

Shares in AI processor manufacturer Nvidia, largely responsible for driving the equity rally, retreated 3.2 percent after having tumbled 3.5 percent on Thursday as profit-taking set in.

"I think that because of Juneteenth, you have a lot of people who are leaving to go on vacation early," Sam Stovall from the financial intelligence firm CFRA told AFP, referring to Wednesday's US federal holiday.

Stovall predicted stocks could see another decline of five percent or more.

"At the same time, I'm not calling for a new bear market, so don't let your emotions be your portfolio's worst enemy," he said.

In Washington, the federal government announced it had recouped nearly \$557 million from the sale of stock options it acquired in several airlines in 2020, when it stepped in to support them during the Covid-19 pandemic.

And fresh data published showed that existing home sales fell by 0.7 percent in May from a month earlier, while prices reached a record high.

On the corporate front, British soft drinks manufacturer Britvic fended narrowly eight percent higher following news that it has rejected a takeover approach worth £3.1 billion (\$3.9 billion) from Danish beer giant Carlsberg, arguing it significantly under-

valued the maker of the fruit drink Robinsons squash.

With focus on European political uncertainty ahead of a French snap election, data Friday showed growth of business activity in the eurozone slowed down in June after the manufacturing sector posted its biggest decline in six months.

The HCOB Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index published by S&P Global recorded a figure of 50.8, down from 52.2 in May and its lowest level in three months.

A PMI reading above 50 indicates growth, while below 50 shows contraction.

"There wasn't a single reading that managed to beat expectations or that came in above last month's numbers," noted David Morrison, senior market analyst at Trade Nation.

Shares in Paris closed the day down 0.6 percent, while Frankfurt shed 0.5 percent.

In the UK, the private sector grew at its slowest rate for seven months in June, as goods and services inflation remained stubbornly high and firms put spending decisions on hold until after the general election on July 4.

London's blue-chip FTSE 100 stock index slid 0.4 percent.

Asian traders tracked Thursday's weak performance on Wall Street, with Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai all down.

Pak's carpet design displayed at Tehran carpets exhibition

TEHRAN (APP): ECO member states displayed their carpet arts including Pakistani carpet designs during Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) regional exhibition of carpet arts held in Tehran.

Besides the carpet exhibition, a parallel workshop on the art of old carpet restoration was also inaugurated on the occasion, said a press release received here from Tehran on Saturday.

While inaugurating the carpet exhibition, President of Economic Cultural Institute (ECI) Tehran, Saad S Khan emphasised that carpet is the most ancient of regional art that

is common across all the regional countries.

Meanwhile, professors and scholars speaking on the occasion talked about the common heritage of carpet designs in Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and other regional countries that are members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) based in Tehran.

Turkmenistan even holds Carpet Day each year as a national state holiday, Dr Saad said.

The scholars highlighted the cultural significance of carpets as a cultural symbol, carpets' role in hospitality in traditional homes and the importance of car-

pet weaving as a form of livelihood.

Experts explained various techniques for restoring old, worn out or torn carpets, up to a century old, which can be restored to appear as good as new.

The ceremony was followed by a widely attended exhibition at the ECI Art Gallery in Tehran of handmade unique carpets from the countries of the region including Pakistan.

There was a live demonstration of carpet restoration being done by artisans. Thousands of visitors from across ECO countries are expected to visit this year's ongoing carpet exhibition.

IT exports surges to stunning \$ 332 million

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of cement witnessed an increase of 40.46 per cent during the first eleven months of the financial year 2023-24, as against the exports of the corresponding months of last year.

The cement exports from the country were recorded at US \$236.797 million during July-May (2023-24) against the exports of US \$168.583 million during July-May (2022-23), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the exports of cement also surged by 66.78 per cent going up from 3,707,427 metric tons to 6,183,117 metric tons, according to the data.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the exports of cement also witnessed an increase of 78.23 per cent during the month of May 2024 as compared to the same month of last year.

The exports of cement from the country during May 2024 were recorded at US \$32.251 million against the exports of US \$18.095 million in May 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, exports of cement also increased by 28.62 per cent during May 2024 when compared to the exports of US \$25.074 million in April 2024, the PBS data revealed.

Facilitation Council (SIFC) and Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) in the increase of IT exports is laudable.

Shaza Fatima said on the directives of the Prime Minister of Pakistan robust steps are underway for increasing IT exports.

She said that hefty increase has been made in IT sector budget in coming financial year, adding that this increase in IT exports will be helpful in increase of IT exports.

She said that Rs. 20 billion has been allocated for Digital Infrastructure Information projects in the current budget.

It may be noted that in comparison to previous

month of April 2024, ICT services export remittances have increased by US\$ 22 million (7.1% growth) in May 2024.

Trade surplus of US\$ 2,571 billion, highest in all Services (87.9% of total ICT export remittances) has been realized by the IT & ITeS Industry during July 2023 to May 2024 of FY2023-24, an increase of 22.31% as compared to trade surplus of US\$ 2,102 billion during the same period last year.

ICT sector exports of US\$ 2,925 billion are the highest among all Services (41.02% of total export of services) with 'Other Business Services' trailing at US\$ 1,424 billion.

Tech rally ebbs, leaves Wall Street adrift

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): The tech rally that drove Wall Street to record highs appeared out of steam as US markets finished mixed, with European markets hit by disappointing data.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished less than 0.1 percent higher, while the S&P 500 and the

valued the maker of the fruit drink Robinsons squash.

With focus on European political uncertainty ahead of a French snap election, data Friday showed growth of business activity in the eurozone slowed down in June after the manufacturing sector posted its biggest decline in six months.

The HCOB Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index published by S&P Global recorded a figure of 50.8, down from 52.2 in May and its lowest level in three months.

A PMI reading above 50 indicates growth, while below 50 shows contraction.

"There wasn't a single reading that managed to beat expectations or that came in above last month's numbers," noted David Morrison, senior market analyst at Trade Nation.

Shares in Paris closed the day down 0.6 percent, while Frankfurt shed 0.5 percent.

In the UK, the private sector grew at its slowest rate for seven months in June, as goods and services inflation remained stubbornly high and firms put spending decisions on hold until after the general election on July 4.

London's blue-chip FTSE 100 stock index slid 0.4 percent.

Asian traders tracked Thursday's weak performance on Wall Street, with Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai all down.



In brief

Norris on Spanish Grand Prix pole

BARCELONA (AFP): McLaren's Lando Norris produced a spellbinding late lap to deprive Max Verstappen of pole for the Spanish Grand Prix in qualifying on Saturday. Lewis Hamilton will start on the second row alongside his Mercedes teammate George Russell. Verstappen looked sure to start Sunday's 10th round of the season from the front of the grid. But in the last throw of the top-10 shoot-out Norris denied the Red Bull ace by a mere two hundredths of a second. "Today was the perfect lap," said Norris after only his second career pole. "My best lap by a long way, I knew I had to do something perfect, it was probably my best lap ever." Norris produced his minute of magic after a "stressful" day when the McLaren hospitality unit caught fire before third practice earlier. "I lost my shoes. It's all been a bit messy. I like to listen to my music loud beforehand, but didn't have that this time. But it's not the end of the world. I'm not going to complain about it." Turning back to a vintage qualifying session, Norris, whose only other pole came in Russia in 2021, reflected: "It's been a while since Sochi, all the way back then. "Max seemed a bit stronger today, but we made some changes," added the Briton who won his maiden Grand Prix in May in Miami. "I'm super happy to be on pole, it's going to be tough but we're here to win!" Verstappen, targeting a fourth straight world title, leads the championship by 56 points from Charles Leclerc, who starts Sunday's race in fifth, with Norris seven points back in third. Verstappen won his maiden Grand Prix in Barcelona in 2016 and is on a hat-trick after wins in 2022 and 2023.

Sinner to face Hurkacz

HALLE WESTFALEN (AFP): World number one Jannik Sinner reached his first career grass-court final when he beat Zhang Zhizhen 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) at Halle on Saturday. "It means a lot. I had four very tough matches to go to the final," Sinner said in his post-semi-final interview. "It was a good match today." In the final the Italian, will face Pole Hubert Hurkacz who beat Alexander Zverev 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 in the pre-Wimbledon warm-up tournament. Sinner and Zhang both dominated on serve and only allowed one break point each. Sinner converted his only break point and that was enough to take the first set. Zhang's lone break point gave him set point at 5-6 in the second. Sinner responded by ripping a brave forehand winner and then made a fast start on his way to winning the tie-break. "In important moments (I was) trying to serve well," the Italian said. "He returned actually really well in some moments so I had to be very careful. I had to save a set point in the second set. If not I had to go again in three sets. But this is a grass court, anything can happen." Earlier, Hurkacz beat the second-seeded German in one-hour, 33-minutes. The fifth-seeded Pole, winner in Halle two years ago, will bid to collect his second title of the season after winning on clay at Estoril in April. "I'm really confident on my serve," said Hurkacz who fired 17 aces including 13 in the first set and saved all four break points he faced. "It needed to be really good," said Hurkacz after his first win over Zverev in four meetings, most recently a three-set defeat in the United Cup final, a mixed team event before the Australian Open in Sydney.



ANTIGUA: Kuldeep Yadav (C) celebrates the wicket of Towhid Hridoy with teammates during the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup West Indies & USA 2024 Super Eight match.

Portugal breeze past Turkey and into Euro 2024 knockout stage

DORTMUND (AFP): Portugal swept into the last 16 of Euro 2024 on Saturday after comfortably seeing off Turkey 3-0 and guaranteeing first place in Group F. Bernardo Silva's fine finish in the 21st minute, a comical Samet Akaydin own goal shortly afterwards and Bruno Fernandes's second-half tap-in gave Portugal a straightforward win in front of swathes of passionate Turkish fans in Dortmund. Portugal looked every inch a team aiming to win their second European Championship after triumphing in 2016, their star-studded line-up easily dealing with Vincenzo Montella's enthusiastic but limited Turkey team. Cristiano Ronaldo will have at least two more tries to become the oldest goalscorer at a European Championship as Martinez said on Friday that the 39-year-old is in the right shape to play every four days. It was Ronaldo who unselfishly set up Fernandes for a simple goal in the 56th minute after springing through Turkey's offside trap, and he then had time to pose for a selfie with a child fan who invaded the pitch midway through the second half.

Martinez's side, on a perfect six points, will face one of the four best third-place finishers in the next round and go into their final group game against Georgia without any pressure for a result. The same cannot be said for Turkey who need a draw against the Czech Republic on Wednesday to ensure second place. Turkey's passionate support again flocked to the Westfalenstadion in huge numbers, with long tailbacks on the roads leading to the ground several hours before the 6:00 pm (1600 GMT) kick-off. Some fans sat on the top of cars leading chants among the thousands of supporters who crawled towards their destination. Pitch invaders Once inside what was effectively a home crowd let out a deafening chorus of whistles and jeers when Portugal jogged out for their pre-match warm-up. However, once the match got underway there was a clear gap in class between the two sides and Portugal went deservedly ahead through Silva as the Manchester City midfielder confidently smashed in Nuno Mendes's deflected low cross. Soon after, Akaydin gifted Portugal a two-goal lead with his sloppy back-pass which turned into an

own goal as Zeki Celik and goalkeeper Altay Bayindir tried in vain to prevent the ball crossing the line. Those two goals and the dominance of the Portuguese players quietened down the partisan crowd and the result was sealed when Fernandes stroked home his former Manchester United teammate Ronaldo's present of a pass. The Portugal fans then turned up the volume to celebrate their country reaching the last 16. And cheers then rang around the ground from both sets of supporters as a pint-sized fan ran onto the pitch midway through the second half, just as the game was stopped to allow Nelson Semedo to replace Joao Cancelo for Portugal. The youngster was cool enough to grab an amused Ronaldo for a photo and then dashed off on a mazy run his hero would have been proud of, dropping his shoulder on security staff before eventually being carted away from the pitch. Ronaldo was less amused when five much larger fans then made copycat bids for selfies, only to be showered with boos and refused a photo before annoyed stewards reached them.



DORTMUND: Bernardo Silva of Portugal celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the UEFA EURO 2024 group stage match between Turkey and Portugal.

Pak cueists to participate in Asian Snooker, 6 Reds C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Five Pakistani cueists will feature in the Asian Team Men & U21 Snooker, 6 Reds Championships 2024 to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from June 26 to July 5. The Pakistan team players include Asjad Iqbal (Asian Team & 6 Reds Championship), Awais Ullah Munir (Asian Team & 6 Reds Championship), Ahsan Ramzan (Asian U21 Championship), Muhammad Hasnain Akhtar (Asian U21 Championship) and Muhammad Hamza Ilyas (Asian U21 Championship), said a press release. Naveed Kapadia would accompany the team as Referee/Team Manager. The training camp of the Pakistan snooker team players was held at NBP Sports Complex, Karachi, from June 20 to 25 from 10 am to 5 pm. The camp played an important role in honing the players' skills and preparing them for the mega-events. The Pakistan Billiards & Snooker Association (PBSA) was hopeful that the players would win laurels for the country, in all the championships. PBSA was waiting for the passports which were in the Saudi Embassy, Karachi for the visa process. The team players would depart for Riyadh on Wednesday (June 26) from Karachi.

Djokovic to travel to Wimbledon

LONDON (Agencies): Novak Djokovic has decided to travel to Wimbledon and is due to arrive on Monday - but the seven-time champion does not yet know if he will be able to compete after undergoing knee surgery. Serbia's Djokovic withdrew from the French Open after his fourth-round victory over Francisco Cerundolo, in which he tore the medial meniscus in his right knee. The 37-year-old had surgery in Paris just 17 days ago, but wants to give himself the best possible chance of playing by practising at the All England Club. Wimbledon, which starts on 1 July, seemed a long shot at the time, and his hopes of returning to Paris to try and win a first Olympic gold medal also appeared in the balance. But since then Djokovic has posted two upbeat videos on Instagram.

India thrash Bangladesh to close on semi-finals

ANTIGUA (Agencies): India edged closer to the T20 World Cup semi-finals with a statement 50-run win over Bangladesh. Hardik Pandya's unbeaten half-century helped India post an imposing 196-5 after being put in to bat in Antigua. Bangladesh's batting struggles continued in the chase as they stuttered to 146-8 in a curiously subdued effort, with leg-spinner Kuldeep Yadav taking 3-19. Quick bowler Tanzim Hasan's fiery double-wicket over and captain Najmul Hossain Shanto's 40 were the Tigers' only genuine performances of intent. The win sees India remain unbeaten in the World Cup so far, alongside South Africa and Australia. They are well-placed for a semi-final spot and are gathering momentum as they approach the knockout stages, with this victory following the preceding convincing effort against Afghanistan. Virat Kohli found form after just 29 runs in his previous four innings in the tournament, adding a fluent 37, followed by cameos from Rishabh Pant and Shivam Dube to support the destruc-

tive Hardik. After a strong fightback in the middle, Bangladesh wilted at the death with 76 runs coming from the final five overs as the bowlers lost all discipline in the face of India's aggression. If Australia beat Afghanistan later on Saturday night (Sunday, 01:30 BST) then they and India will progress to the semi-finals from Group One, but a surprise win for Afghanistan would keep all four sides in contention. India impress but Australia await. India's trophy hunt is gathering pace and the all-round team effort against Bangladesh will have boosted their hopes further. Kohli and Rohit provided a quickfire start, Pant maintained the acceleration and then Dube and Hardik finished the job with a brutal display to close the innings. There were 13 sixes hit in total, with plenty of intent shown throughout the innings, with Suryakumar Yadav's six the only batting failure but the world's best T20 batter certainly has plenty of credit in the bank. With the ball, they were clinical despite Bangladesh barely

playing a shot in anger. Ravindra Jadeja bowled three valuable overs having been scarcely used in the preceding games, Arshdeep Singh and Jasprit Bumrah provided their standard unwavering consistency at the top while it beggars belief that Kuldeep struggles to find a place in their usual starting XI. He bowled with remarkable control and utilised his canny variations and Bangladesh's batters had no answers. Opener Tanzid Hasan and Tawhid Hridoy were lbw for 29 and four respectively, before Shakib Al Hasan was caught at mid-off. While things are shaping up nicely for Rohit Sharma's men, their tournament is taking the same trajectory as the recent 50-over World Cup where they cruised through the group stage unbeaten only to lose to Australia in the final. They are yet to really be challenged, with a six-run win over Pakistan being their closest encounter so far. But that will come on Monday, with a mouth-watering test against Australia which may not have much bearing on the semi-final outcome, but will provide much-needed competition for both heavyweights.



BRIDGETOWN: Shai Hope hits through the off side.

Hope blasts West Indies to crucial win over USA

BRIDGETOWN (AFP): Shai Hope struck a magnificent unbeaten 82 from 39 balls as West Indies crushed the USA on Friday, winning their T20 World Cup Super Eights encounter by nine wickets and with 9.1 overs to spare. The Caribbean side bowled out the USA for 128 in the clash of the tournament co-hosts at Kensington Oval and then rattled off the target in 10.5 overs with local boy Hope smashing eight sixes as West Indies finished on 130-1. The win keeps West Indies in the hunt for a place in the semi-finals and leaves the USA, with defeats in both their Super Eights games so far, on the brink of elimination. Spinner Roston Chase did the main damage with the ball for West Indies with 3-19 in his four overs while Andre Russell also chipped in with three wickets. But, aware of the need for a strong run-rate in the qualification scenarios, Hope went on the attack

from the outset, reaching his half century in just 26 balls. West Indies, beaten by England in their opening Super Eights game, now have their destiny in their own hands -- if they beat South Africa in their final Group 1 game on Sunday they will make it to the last four. West Indies have a better net run rate than South Africa meaning they would advance with a win over the Proteas regardless of the outcome of England's final game against the USA. Hope's aggressive strokeplay helped the home side reach 58-0 in the six over powerplay with the opener, who was not in the side in the early group stage games, scoring 42 of them. It was merciless hitting from Hope who struck 12 boundaries and was helped at the end by Nicholas Pooran who joined in the fun with 27 off 12 balls including three sixes. Hope sealed the victory with his final six, smashing Saurabh Netravalkar over long off to the delight of the

home crowd. There were some brutal bowling figures from the Americans with Miland Kumar going for 22 off his sole over which saw him hit for three sixes. Barbadian Chase, whose figures were a career-best in T20I games, was delighted with the emphatic performance. "To do it at home is a great feeling, with my parents and my friends watching. It's something we talked about in the team meeting that if we don't get too many wickets in the powerplay, it's on the spinners to come back and pull the game back and that's what we did today," he said. "It's our destiny and our goal to win the World Cup so anyone we play we have to beat from here to go win it," he said. South Africa are top of the group with the maximum four points from their opening two games while England are level with West Indies on two points but with a worse run-rate than the Caribbean side.

PCB announces details of pre-season camp and Pakistan Shaheens' tour to Darwin

LAHORE (PPI): The Pakistan Cricket Board has announced details of the pre-season fitness and fielding camp, and Pakistan Shaheens' training camp, which will be held at Karachi's Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre. The pre-season camp, which will be attended by 25 cricketers, will take place from 24 June to 7 July. The squad will be trimmed to 15-member Pakistan Shaheens squad that will undergo a training camp from 8-13 July to prepare for their tour to Darwin. In Darwin, Pakistan Shaheens will play two four-day matches against Bangladesh 'A', two 50-over matches against Northern Territory and Bangladesh, and also participate in the nine-team Top End T20 Series. Pakistan red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie will supervise the Pakistan Shaheens' training

camp from 8-13 July and will also travel to Darwin as the team's head coach. He will return to Pakistan after the second four-day match against Bangladesh 'A', which finishes on 29 July, to assume responsibilities as the national side's head coach and commence preparations for the two-Test series against Bangladesh. The pre-season fitness and fielding camp will be supervised by Mohammad Masroor, who will also travel to Darwin as Assistant Coach-cum-Manager. Abdul Rehman will be the white-ball head coach and will join the Pakistan Shaheens side on 28 July for the two 50-over and Top End T20 Series matches from 4-18 August. National team players presently involved in competitive cricket in the United Kingdom and those who recent-

ly participated in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 have been exempted from the pre-season fitness and fielding camp. Following are the players invited by the national selection committee for the pre-season fitness and fielding camp as well as the Pakistan Shaheen squad: Players for pre-season fitness and fielding camp - Abdullah Shafique, Faisal Akram, Haseebullah, Hunain Shah, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Kashif Ali, Khurram Shahzad, Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Huraiba, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Mubasir Khan, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Sahibzada Farhan, Sameen Gul, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Shahnawaz Dahani, Tayyab Tahir, Umar Amin, Usman Qadir and Zahid Mahmood. One more player will be added to the camp next week

Pakistan Shaheens - Haseebullah, Hunain Shah, Kamran Ghulam, Kashif Ali, Khurram Shahzad, Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Huraiba, Mubasir Khan, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Sahibzada Farhan, Shahnawaz Dahani, Tayyab Tahir and Umar Amin. Captain and one more player will be confirmed in due course. Player Support Personnel - Jason Gillespie (head coach for red-ball matches, will also supervise camp from 8-13 July), Abdul Rehman (head coach for white-ball matches and will join the side on 28 July), Mohammad Masroor (Assistant coach-cum-manager and camp commandant from 24 June-7 July), Mohammad Asad (physiotherapist), Imranullah (trainer) and Usman Hashmi (analyst). ABOUT THE DARWIN TOUR:

This is the second successive year Pakistan Shaheens will feature in the Darwin series. Last year, Pakistan Shaheens participated in the six-team Top End T20 Series, which was followed by 50-over matches against Papua New Guinea (PNG) and NT Strike. NT Strike had defeated Shaheens in the Top End T20 Series final by 46 runs, while in the 50-over matches, Pakistan Shaheens beat PNG by 224 runs and Northern Territory by 84 runs. The two four-dayers are part of bilateral series fixtures, which are hosting on behalf of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). The PCB is scheduled to host Bangladesh A at home in August. PCB Director International Cricket, Usman Wahla: "I am grateful to Northern Territory for inviting the

Pakistan Shaheens for the second successive year. Last year, the players had a memorable experience and enjoyed playing and performing in excellent playing conditions, in front of enthusiastic cricket fans. "This year we have added red-ball cricket matches to give more exposure to our cricketers and I am confident the players will benefit from this tour and will return as better cricketers." Schedule (all matches in Darwin) 14 Jul - Arrival in Darwin 19-22 Jul - Four-day vs Bangladesh 'A' 26-29 Jul - Four-day vs Bangladesh 'A' 4 Aug - 50-over match vs Northern Territory (NT) 6 Aug - 50 over match vs Bangladesh 'A' 9-18 Aug - nine-team Top End T20 Series.



In brief

Amjad death anniversary held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 8th death anniversary of legendary Qawwal and Naat Khawan Amjad Sabri was observed on Saturday. Amjad Sabri's most famous kalaam 'Tajdar-e-Haram' and 'Bhar Do Jholi' are still in the hearts of his fans. He was awarded Pride of Performance and Sitara-i-Imtiaz for his meritorious services in the field of Sufi music. Sabri was tragically shot on June 22, 2016, 16th of Ramadan. Unidentified shooters opened fire near his home in Liaquatabad, Karachi, at 4:00 p.m. Sabri suffered several head injuries and died on June 22, 2016.

One killed in car accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Woman was killed while her husband was seriously injured after being hit by a speeding car in Defense Phase 6, Lahore on Saturday. According to a private news channel, the accident took place during a race between two cars. The rescue team reached the accident site as soon as the incident was reported and shifted the injured husband and wife to the hospital in critical condition. According to General Hospital sources, the injured woman, 45 year old Iffat, died during treatment, while Imran was in critical condition.

ADC issued directives

RAWALPINDI (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Headquarters Zaneera Aftab on Saturday directed the officials concerned to expedite anti-dengue surveillance activities for tracing larvae. Chairing a meeting to review the anti-dengue arrangements, she directed the officials to visit the field area regularly for the effective monitoring of anti-dengue surveillance. The ADC said that the government was making all-out efforts to control the spread of dengue larvae, however, no campaign could be substantiated without the active participation of the people. On the occasion, the health officials briefed the meeting that 999 anti-dengue teams including 788 indoor teams and 211 outdoor teams were carrying out the surveillance in various areas of the district. During indoor surveillance, the teams detected larvae at 6,735 homes while during outdoor surveillance, the larvae were found at 1,361 sites, they told.

Mobile phone snatchers held

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad Police on Saturday arrested two culprits involved in snatching mobile phones, other valuables, recovered snatched cell phones and arms from their possession. According to details, the police during routine checking in jurisdiction of Shalimar police station arrested two accused including Imran Masood and Zeeshan Haider. The detainees were involved in snatching cell phones, valuables and other crimes. The police recovered 13 snatched precious cell phones, arms and a motorcycle used in crimes from possession of the nabbed culprits. Several cases against the detainees were registered and investigations were kicked off.

Police arrest decoits

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad police arrested two decoits on Saturday who were involved in the snatching of mobiles and other valuable items in the vicinity of Shalimar Police Station. According to a private news channel, Police said during their routine duty checkup, they had arrested two decoits, identified as Imran Masood and Muhammad Zeeshan Haider, both of whom were involved in several crimes and robberies.

Sanaullah, AJK PM discuss budget and development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah and Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwarul-Haq on Saturday discussed the upcoming budget and development projects in the region.

Anwar-ul-Haq expressed his gratitude to the government of Pakistan for its unwavering support, emphasising the administration's commitment to ensuring good governance

and the welfare of the people, said a press release.

However, he highlighted the need for an increase in the budget grant, which has remained stagnant for the past five years. The prime minister stressed that a boost in funding is essential to meet the targets of annual development projects, particularly in light of the current political and security landscape.

Sanaullah, who holds the portfolio of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC), assured that the proposal to

increase the budget grant would be given due consideration. He reaffirmed the government's dedication to utilising available resources to drive economic development and social prosperity in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

He also pledged to provide necessary support to alleviate the difficulties faced by the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, underscoring the federal government's unwavering commitment to the region's well-being.

DIG Islamabad visits Police Khidmat Markaz, reviews security measures, public facilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza on Saturday visited Police Khidmat Markaz F-6 and reviewed security measures, scrutinized records and assessed the welfare and public facilities for police officers and the general public.

A police spokesman said that during the visit,

the DIG Islamabad evaluated the services offered to citizens and emphasized the Markaz commitment to providing every possible facility to the public.

He highlighted the deployment of trained officers within Police Khidmat Markaz, dedicated not only to serving Pakistani citizens but also

delivering exceptional services to foreign nationals.

He issued directives to senior officers to ensure immediate solutions and the provision of all feasible amenities for their benefit. SSP Traffic Muhammad Sarfraz Virk was also present on the occasion.

EU urged to play role in resolving Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman of Kashmir Council Europe, Ali Raza Syed, highlighted the European Union's influence and commitment to peaceful solutions, emphasizing the significant role the powerful bloc can play in resolving the Kashmir dispute peacefully.

Ali Raza Syed was speaking at a reception held in his honor at a hotel in Islamabad. The event was hosted by senior journalist and intellectual Mohsin Raza Khan, with journalist Ali Farqan serving as the moderator. Prominent attendees included Afzal Butt, President of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Prof. Mohammad Saeed, Prof.

Tahir Naeem Malik, and various journalists from television channels and newspapers.

Ali Raza Syed stated that they made significant efforts to raise awareness about the Kashmir issue, particularly the human rights abuses faced by the oppressed Kashmiris, during the recent European Parliament election campaign. He mentioned meeting leaders of political parties, key European figures, and active election candidates to inform them about the background and current situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

He asserted that India cannot suppress the Kashmiris' freedom movement through brute

force and expressed confidence that the struggle will eventually succeed, leading to Kashmir's freedom from Indian bondage. He also thanked media professionals and social media activists for their efforts in highlighting the Kashmir dispute.

During the ceremony, Muhammad Afzal Butt praised the awareness campaign led by Kashmir Council Europe in the European Union and acknowledged the organization's crucial role in bringing attention to the Kashmir dispute under Ali Raza Syed's leadership. Host Mohsin Raza Khan also expressed gratitude to Ali Raza Syed and other participants for their contributions to the event.

CDA Chairman arranges reception

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa on Saturday arranged a reception in honor of sanitary workers who served on Eid-ul-Azha on the instructions of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

He announced to pay one month basic salary as bonus to CDA workers who performed best sanitation duty during Eid holidays in Islamabad.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, the sanitary workers who made the Zero Waste City operation a success deserve to be congratulated and encouraged, said Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in his message.

He said that Islamabad got the honor of being the cleanest city due to the excellent communication and mutual cooperation of

all the departments and the citizens including the employees and officers serving the city will be encouraged at all levels.

Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa, IG Islamabad Police, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and other officers attended the reception, a large number of sanitary workers served on Eid-ul-Azha also attended the reception. CDA sanitary workers are grateful to the Federal Home Minister for encouraging them by sitting with their officers for the first time, the workers expressed their joy.

Addressing the reception, Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that all the officers and our heroes sanitary workers, worked with zeal. "I salute our heroes for making the Islamabad

Zero Waste City operation a success", Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said. "May Allah honor us all and the name of Islamabad emerges as a unit", Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said.

He said that for the first time, the Prime Minister of Pakistan congratulated everyone of you for your hard work. The prestige of Islamabad has increased because of the sanitary workers, said CDA Chairman adding that the development work continued even during the days of Eid ul Azha, which has restored the confidence of the citizens in the institution.

Setting up a control room at Safe City and introducing biodegradable bags helped make the operation a success, CDA Chairman said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing an important meeting at the Ministry of Interior. —APP Photo

SP holds Khuli Kutchery

RAWALPINDI (APP): Superintendent of Police (SP) Rawal Faisal Saleem on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani, held a 'Khuli Kutchery' in Police Lines Headquarters here Saturday to address the grievances of the people.

According to a Police spokesman, the police officers under the Punjab's open door policy, were holding 'Khuli Kutcheries' to provide relief to the citizens.

He informed that the SP issued directives to the officers concerned to take action and submit a report on the complaint submitted by the citizens in 'Khuli Kutchery'.

On the occasion, the SP said that 'Khuli Kutcheries' were being held to provide the citizens immediate relief and addressed their complaints besides it also helped improve standards of policing. The SP issued orders to the officers concerned to complete inquiries and send reports within given time frame.

He said that all-out efforts were being made to ensure dispensation of speedy justice purely on merit to the people and improve service delivery standard. The spokesman informed that the SPs were holding 'Khuli Kutcheries' to provide relief to the citizens.

IRSA releases 255,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 255,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 312,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1459.68 feet and was 61.68 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 144,500 cusecs and 100,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1181.00 feet, which was 133.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 37,600 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 184,500, 170,700, 102,200 and 70,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 83,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 15,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Ahsan Iqbal for constituting body

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday proposed to constitute a committee to probe the burgeoning incidents of lynching in the name of desecration and blasphemy across the country.

Speaking at the floor of the National Assembly (NA) on a 'point of order', he strongly condemned the Swat lynching incident stating that it had brought a bad name to the country in the comity of nations.

Ahsan, expressing his personal experience, informed that a religious extremist made an assas-

sination attempt on him but he was survived by the grace of Allah Almighty.

Taking law into own hands, he said, it was against the spirit of Islam and as well as the Constitution and law of the land.

Ahsan said it was high time to control 'street justice' as it was responsibility of the state and judiciary to administer punishment to a suspect of blasphemous actions. Highlighting an incident from the Islamic history, he emphasized that Islam lays great importance to the dead bodies of non-Muslims therefore it was the violation of basic

Islamic injunctions immolating any human being on the basis of mere allegation.

Ahsan said, "Due to ongoing trend of individuals acting as judge, jury, and executioner, we are far behind other nations at the global stage".

Responding to Minister Ahsan, NA Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah suggested him to take up the issue in the federal cabinet as he was the part and parcel of it. He further asked him to discuss it with his worthy colleague Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to devise a mechanism in order to cope with this social evil once for all.

'Masoor Rahi Cubism Award' launched



ISLAMABAD (APP): A celebrated Cubist artist from Pakistan Mansoor Rahi whose recent passing left an indelible mark on the global art landscape, was honoured by his disciples of the Generation Rahi at a memorial event held here on Saturday.

To commemorate his legacy and contributions to the world of art, Devcom-Pakistan announced the launch of the Masoor Rahi Cubism Award on the occasion, said a press release.

An open competition would be announced soon in collaboration with the Rahi General and other art galleries and organizations.

Speaking at the reference in memory of Mansoor Rahi, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said, Rahi was the only Pakistani artist widely recognized for his significant work in Cubism art, a genre that he not only mastered but also imparted to countless aspiring artists who became known collectively as the

Generation Rahi. His influence extended far beyond Pakistan, influencing the international art community with his unique artistic vision and technique, he said.

The memorial event, attended by prominent figures from the art world, served as a tribute to Rahi's life and career, highlighting his impact on contemporary art practices.

Devcom-Pakistan, took the opportunity to announce the establishment of the Masoor Rahi Cubism Award. This award aims to recognize and encourage excellence in Cubism in Pakistan, celebrating artists who demonstrate innovation, creativity, and a commitment to pushing artistic boundaries, much like Mansoor Rahi did throughout his illustrious career.

Ahmed said the Masoor Rahi Cubism Award would be a symbol of honour and inspiration for artists dedicated to the Cubist tradition, fostering a spirit of creativity and innovation in the art community.

Hajra Mansoor appreciated the Generation Rahi for organizing the reference in memory of his late husband, Mansoor Rahi. This award will not only celebrate his artistic legacy but also inspire future generations of artists. The launch of the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award by Devcom-Pakistan.

"I am deeply touched and grateful for honoring my late husband, Mansoor Rahi. This award will not only celebrate his artistic legacy but also inspire future generations of artists. The launch of the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award is a fitting tribute to Mansoor's lifelong dedication to the art of Cubism."

"As Mansoor's wife and lifelong supporter of his artistic journey, I am moved by the recognition bestowed upon him through this prestigious award. I believe it will encourage artists to explore and innovate within the Cubist tradition, just as Mansoor did. This award embodies Mansoor Rahi's passion for artistic exploration and innovation."

On behalf of our family, I extend my sincere gratitude to Devcom-Pakistan for creating the Mansoor Rahi Cubism Award. It is a testament to Mansoor's enduring impact on the art world and a source of pride for all who admired his work, she said.

Nahida Raza, artist and organizer of the Reference, said the Generation Rahi will keep up the Mansoor Rahi's tradition of promoting the art fraternity and the upcoming artists through various initiatives.

CDA to hold 'Margalla Tree Drive Session' on June 27

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is going to hold a 'Margalla Tree Drive Session' on June 27 (Thursday) at the Jinnah Convention Center from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 pm.

This decision was made during a meeting chaired by Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, which was also attended by environmental expert Rizwan Mehboob and other CDA officers.

Muhammad Ali said that the authority would also invite all the stakeholders such as the corpo-

rate sector, volunteers, the general public and educational institutions in the session.

He said the basic purpose of this session is to involve the community in the upcoming Margalla Hills Tree Plantation Drive, scheduled for the first week of July.

Muhammad Ali emphasized that the open house session will focus on ensuring the participation of all stakeholders in the preservation of the Margalla Hills.

He also mentioned that efforts will be made to

address the damage caused by recent fires in the area.

The campaign, which will run under the hashtags #CDACares and #TreeDriveMargallahHills, aims to protect and enhance the wildlife and vegetation of the Margalla Hills.

The corporate sector and other stakeholders will collaborate with the CDA for the plantation drive and the discussions during the session will center on measures to improve the beauty, greenery and protection of the Margalla Hills.



ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwarul Haq calls on the Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination, Rana Sanaullah. —APP Photo

Drugs seized at border

KABUL (Khaama Press): An Iranian official announced the discovery of 198 Kilograms of drugs at the Taybad border post near the Afghanistan border. Majid Shoja, the border commander of Khorasan Razavi in Iran, said that drug traffickers intended to enter Iran through mountainous routes. The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) reported that Iranian border forces launched an operation following reports of drug smuggling into Iran.

Parwan draws tourists

KABUL (BNA): The beautiful nature, pleasant climate, and delightful atmosphere of Parwan province drew thousands of tourists during the Eid holidays, making it a popular destination for holiday revelers. Over twenty thousand tourists visited the province's historical and natural attractions during the Eid holidays. The lush valleys of Ghorband, Salang, and Jabal al-Siraj were among the most popular destinations, attracting significant attention from tourists.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Hajj 16 1445 — Sunday, June 23, 2024

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

Badakhshan: Lack of healthcare cause of maternal mortality

BADAKHSHAN (TOLONews): Residents of Yamgan district in Badakhshan said that due to the lack of medical centers and poor road conditions, maternal mortality in this district has increased.

According to them, the lack of health facilities has caused at least five women to die during childbirth in each village every year.

Fazl-ul-Haq Niazi, a resident of Badakhshan whose home is hours away from the district center, says that due to the lack of access to medical centers, one of his relatives died during childbirth.

Fazl-ul-Haq Niazi told TOLONews: "My brother's wife was living in our house. We brought her to

the clinic wrapped in a blood-stained blanket, but the doctor couldn't even administer a serum to her."

Abdul Rauf, a resident of Yamgan, said: "Almost five or six people from our village have died during childbirth, one of them was my own sister."

Ziauddin, another resident of Yamgan, added: "Several times, we have transferred pregnant patients from here to Jurm, Baharak, and Faizabad. Along the way, our patients have died."

However, local officials in Badakhshan pledged that they are addressing the health challenges of residents in remote districts of this province.

Khan Jan, the head of the

health center in Yamgan district, said: "Yamgan district has a population of about five thousand people, but the existing clinics do not meet the people's needs. We need good doctors and midwives."

Aminullah Tayeb, the deputy governor of Badakhshan, added: "The Minister of Public Health came to Badakhshan province, and we discussed the lack of medicine and problems with him. So far, some assistance has been provided, and we hope for more help to come."

Previously, residents of other remote parts of Badakhshan had also called on the officials of the interim government to address their health challenges.

Reports of cholera cases denied

KABUL (BNA): In recent statement, the Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan has categorically refuted the published reports regarding the presence of cholera cases and deaths within the country.

The ministry has highlighted that the information shared by certain media outlets is inaccurate and misleading, calling for professionalism and accuracy in reporting health-related matters.

The ministry's statement references a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) concerning the Eastern Mediterranean region, which allegedly utilized data on acute diarrhea, mistakenly associated with cholera. The Ministry of Public Health clarified that the data used in the report does not reflect the actual situation of cholera cases in Afghanistan.

Expressing concern over the dissemination of false information, the ministry has called upon the media to exercise caution and responsibility when reporting on health issues. They emphasized the importance of sharing accurate and verified data related to diseases, both for the benefit of citizens and to maintain transparency within the international community.

Cholera, a bacterial infection that causes severe diarrhea and dehydration, has been a significant health concern in many parts of the world. While the presence of cholera remains a serious issue in some regions, the Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan asserts that the reported cases within the country have been incorrectly attributed to cholera.

The ministry's statement aims to rectify any misconceptions caused by the inaccurate reports and assures the public that they are actively monitoring and addressing health concerns within the country. They have reaffirmed their commitment to providing reliable and up-to-date information on public health matters.

Hajj rituals process reviewed

KABUL (BNA): Dr. Noor Mohammad Saqib, the Acting Minister of Hajj and Islamic Affairs, and General Director of the Afghan Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia, convened a meeting at the Hajj Mission office in Mecca after the successful completion of the Hajj rituals.

The gathering included the head and members of the Hajj Consulate, committee officials, and leaders from both central and provincial departments.

During the meeting, Minister Saqib highlighted various aspects of the Hajj process, after reviewing the reports from the committee officials, he urged to focus on strengthening the positive aspects and addressing the existing challenges and issues.

Minister Noor Mohammad Saqib directed that the current issues be promptly communicated to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah and Saudi Arabia's service institutions for swift resolution and careful consideration ahead of the upcoming Hajj season.

ing agreements with several Afghan universities to foster academic cooperation and exchange experiences across various sectors between Afghan institutions and Taylor's University.

Notably, the meeting also addressed student exchanges during academic terms and emphasized collaboration to bolster research capabilities in various fields.

He said that Afghanistan is still a source of security threat, as there are cells and combat-ready groups of Daesh, al Qaeda and affiliated organizations.

"The Taliban (IEA) government is working to eliminate these terrorist groups. We consider it a matter of principle to help it in that struggle," he said.

Lavrov emphasized that

CSTO countries "stand for developing a more regular, sustainable and substantive dialogue with the Taliban (IEA), who effectively control the country, for implementing concrete projects."

He also said that a draft program to strengthen the Tajik-Afghan border will be submitted for approval to the CSTO heads of state.

The Islamic Emirate has previously dismissed the security concerns of the countries over Afghanistan, saying that there is no terrorist group in Afghanistan.

Hanafi meets provincial figures to discuss issues



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, convened a meeting with a group of mujahideen and prominent figures from the provinces of Jawzjan and Kunduz provinces.

During the meeting, mujahideen and influential figures discussed social, economic, and security issues. They presented

reports to the attention of Deputy PM Hanafi, on local authorities' efforts in ensuring security, maintaining peace, and delivering services.

Additionally, they expressed satisfaction with the joint efforts of Islamic Emirate's officials and mujahideen in addressing these concerns.

They also urged officials of the Islamic Emirate of

Afghanistan to prioritize education, establish health clinics, improve transportation infrastructure, initiate development projects, and generate employment opportunities for youth in their provinces.

In response, Deputy PM, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, underscored the Islamic Emirate's commitment to inclusivity, inviting citizens to openly share

their suggestions, opinions, and concerns.

He also reiterated that serving the people across various sectors remains a primary duty and responsibility of IEA officials.

Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi emphasized that both central and provincial authorities are committed to addressing the people's needs to the best of their abilities.

Girls protest exclusion from university entrance exam

KABUL (TOLONews): With the start of the second round of university entrance exams in the capital, school-aged girls have protested their exclusion from the exam.

These girls, who have been deprived of participating in this exam for two consecutive years, expressed that all their hard work has gone to waste.

They once again called on the interim government to ensure their basic rights.

Nazanin, one of the students, said, "The feeling I have today is probably understood by most girls my age who have stayed up nights and studied, with all the difficulties, in the hope of participating in this exam."

Several other girls who were kept from the exam expressed concerns

about their uncertain future and emphasized the need for girls to participate in the university entrance exam and for schools and universities to reopen.

Hajar, another student, said, "We call on the Islamic Emirate to lift the ban on girls' right to education."

Some women's rights activists described the continued ban of girls from schools and universities as increasing their life challenges.

Humaira Rasa Siddiqui, a women's rights activist, said, "Today, for the second time, the university entrance exam is being held without the presence of girls, which has caused psychological harm to all girls, as they constitute half of Afghanistan's society."

Professor Tafsir Siahposh said, "If



the doors of schools and universities are not opened, we cannot say that only women will not have a good future, but Afghanistan will also not have a good future."

The National Examination Authority announced that the second round of the 1403 (solar year) university entrance exam will be held in the capital on the 1st of Saratan and will continue for two days.

Naqib met president of Taylor's University



KABUL (BNA): The Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, reported on the meeting between the head of the embassy and the President of Taylor's University.

The press office of the embassy reported in a statement that Naqibullah Ahmadi, the Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, met with Professor Barry Winn, the President of Taylor's University.

During the meeting, Mr. Barry Winn shared insights about Taylor's University, while Naqibullah Ahmadi expressed optimism about increasing educational opportunities for Afghan students at the university.

Additionally, discussions centered on establish-

ing agreements with several Afghan universities to foster academic cooperation and exchange experiences across various sectors between Afghan institutions and Taylor's University.

Notably, the meeting also addressed student exchanges during academic terms and emphasized collaboration to bolster research capabilities in various fields.

UN reports 55% rise in security related incidents in Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): In his new report on Afghanistan, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that between February 1 and May 13 of this year, 2,505 security incidents were recorded in Afghanistan, which shows a 55 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Guterres in the report to the United Nations Security Council, added that narcotics-related incidents increased from 212 to 418 during the period, and this is due to the enforcement of a ban on poppy cultivation.

Based on the report, the armed opposition attacked during this period but did

not significantly challenge the IEA's hold on territorial control. Daesh carried out six attacks between February 28 and May 15, four of which targeted the Islamic Emirate.

The United Nations has also stated that between February 1 and May 13, the organization recorded 13 robberies or thefts, 7 incidents of harassment and intimidation, 2 arrests, 1 case of explosion an improvised explosive device detonation and 8 other incidents.

Attacks using improvised explosive devices caused at least 98 civilian casualties, it said.

The Ministry of Interior,



however, rejects the United Nations report on security incidents.

"The security that has been provided in Afghanistan is nationwide and unprecedented, and we have not had any security incidents recently. It has

been very limited," said Abdul Matin Qani, the ministry's spokesman.

Qani said that the United Nations may have included counter-narcotics operations or operations against kidnappers in security incidents.

'No recognition of IEA until women's rights, constitution issues addressed'

KABUL (TOLONews): The United Nations envoy for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, said Afghans broadly agree that it is important for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to attend the upcoming Doha format meeting, but that there should also be no recognition of IEA until the issues of women's rights, girls' education, and an acceptable constitution were broadly addressed.

Addressing the Security Council in New York, Otunbayeva said that Afghans expect that the restrictions on women's rights will be forcefully addressed in the upcoming meeting, but noted that expectations cannot realistically be met in a single meeting.

"We are trying to establish a process and preserve an important mechanism of consultation. We must be realistic about how much each meeting in this process can deliver, especially at this early stage

where confidence and trust are insufficient," she said.

The envoy said that engagement has led to some flexibility by IEA. "It has at the very least led to greater understanding and trust-building on all sides," she said.

US deputy envoy Robert Wood said that the international community must insist on reversing IEA restrictions on women and girls.

"We must ensure that women and civil society participants have a voice in Doha at the UN-hosted meeting of Special Envoys coming up in a few weeks. Their concerns must be highlighted in all deliberations on Afghanistan's future," he said.

The envoy noted that the UN has an important role to play in Afghanistan's reintegration into the international system.

UK Political Counsellor Fergus Eckersley also called for the IEA to reverse all policies restrict-



ing human rights and fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan.

Noting that the 2024 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan is only 20 percent funded, he urged the international community to increase their support. He said that the UK is on track to deliver over \$190 million in aid this year.

The Islamic Emirate has repeatedly emphasized that it is committed to ensuring the Shariah rights of women and girls, and that countries should not interfere in this matter.

The third Doha meeting on Afghanistan is scheduled to be held on June 30. The Islamic Emirate, which did not attend the previous meetings, has announced that it will participate in the upcoming meeting.

Zakir Jalali, Director of the Third Political Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, said that the discussions of the third Doha meeting on Afghanistan will focus on private sector, financial, banking, counter-narcotics and alternative livelihood issues.

CSTO countries call for more substantive dialogue with IEA



KABUL (Ariana News): Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the members of the Collective Security Treaty

Organization (CSTO) stand for developing a more regular, sustainable and substantive dialogue with the Islamic Emirate of

Afghanistan (IEA). Lavrov made the remarks at a press conference after a meeting of the CSTO Council of Foreign Ministers in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

He said that Afghanistan is still a source of security threat, as there are cells and combat-ready groups of Daesh, al Qaeda and affiliated organizations.

"The Taliban (IEA) government is working to eliminate these terrorist groups. We consider it a matter of principle to help it in that struggle," he said.

Lavrov emphasized that

CSTO countries "stand for developing a more regular, sustainable and substantive dialogue with the Taliban (IEA), who effectively control the country, for implementing concrete projects."

He also said that a draft program to strengthen the Tajik-Afghan border will be submitted for approval to the CSTO heads of state.

The Islamic Emirate has previously dismissed the security concerns of the countries over Afghanistan, saying that there is no terrorist group in Afghanistan.



F.P. Report

They added that due to an amendment in the recent finance bill, sales promotion and advertising expenses, up to 25% of a company's total, will not be available for adjustment in the income tax return. "In other words, the tax liability of the large multinational companies will increase significantly, moreover, the additional tax liability will attract super tax," read the letters.

The media and press bodies emphasised that their members were under constant pressure, had reached a threshold, and could not face a further decline in our business. "The consequence of further decline means unemployment due to closure of small media channels and newspapers and its eventual negative impact on the overall community," read the

"Those who stayed with us for many decades should not be punished, for short term gains by increasing their cost of doing business and adopting knee jerk measures to collect revenue, which is not sustainable and in the longer run will impact the documented economy," they said in the letter. The press and media bodies insisted that the proposed change is "also very weak, neither the intent of global best practices were considered, nor the local environment has been evaluated". "Additionally, it will discourage any future Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan."

F.P. Report

The forces retaliated and surrounded the three different locations of the militants. Later the hideouts were also shelled from helicopters. According to locals the suspected locations were also fired from the artillery. The situation prompted high ups to send regular troops of the army. According to unconfirmed reports, SSG Commandos were also sent to the area to source the attackers. Sources said the troops had cordoned off the suspected locations and the search and strike operation was continued till the filing of this report.

NAWABSHAH (INP): A judicial magistrate on Saturday rejected the police request for further physical custody of six suspects allegedly involved in mutilating a camel's leg near Mund Jamrao in Sanghar district and sent them to jail on judicial remand.

Sanghar SSP took notice of the incident after the video of camel with chopped legs went viral on social media. Police lodged an FIR on behalf of the state against unknown persons under sections 429 and 34 PPC.

While welcoming the Taliban's announced decision to participate in the upcoming UN-sponsored meeting in Doha, Ambassador Akram underlined the need for both the international community and the Afghan interim Government to "be clear about the overall objectives they seek". "Unless we know where we are going, we will never get there," he added.

While there is no substitute for engagement with Afghanistan, "it cannot be repeated enough that this sort of engagement is not legitimization or normalization," Ms Otunbayeva added. While the Taliban have maintained political stability, they continue to place severe restrictions on women, and there is little space for internal dissent. Stressing the need for internal political legitimacy, she added that although more than \$7 billion have been provided for humanitarian assistance, "Afghanistan remains beset by massive poverty."

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