

Another polio case reported

QUETTA (INP): The sixth polio case of the year was reported from Qila Abdullah district of Balochistan. According to National Institute of Health, poliovirus in the samples of one-and-a-half-year-old child resident of Union Council Gulistan 2 was confirmed. The affected child showed signs of disability on June 3. Samples taken from an infected child are genetically from the YB3A poliovirus cluster.



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PESHAWAR EDITION

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Cabinet okays Operation Azm-i-Istehkam

Action to energize IBOs sans any population displacement: PM tells cabinet

F.P. Report

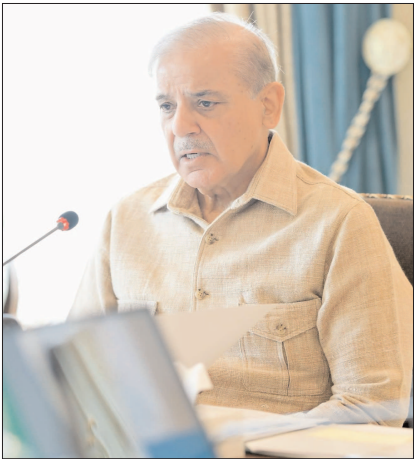
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, ruling out any large-scale military operation, on Tuesday said that Azm-e-Istehkam was a multi-domain, multi-agency and whole of system national vision, aimed at decisively rooting out the nebulous and shadowy presence of remnants of terrorists, and violent extremism.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting of the Federal Cabinet, took the members into confidence about the prevailing misunderstanding and speculations about the Azm-e-Istehkam, saying that instead of any large-scale operation, the already ongoing intelligence-based kinetic operations, would be energized and expedited. In his remarks, he informed the Cabinet members that no additional duty would be imposed on the low panels to ensure the accessibility of solar cost energy to every citizen.

He said the government was planning to put the national economy on a positive trajectory and expressed satisfaction over the country heading towards economic stability. The prime minister reiterated the resolve to boost the country's exports by promoting Small and Medium Enterprises and withdrawing privileges from the elite class and those exploiting the national resources. The economic protection of the common man and providing them equal opportunities were among the government's priorities, he added.

Discussing the annual budget 2024-25, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed the cabinet members to ensure their presence in the ongoing budget debate in the Parliament. During the briefing, the cabinet members were informed that the privatisation of the PIA was moving ahead swiftly as companies showing interest in the pre-bidding process, were visiting different PIA sites and bidding of the PIA will be held in the first week of August.

The prime minister instructed to accelerate the PIA privatisation while ensuring transparency in the process. On the Commerce Ministry's recommendation and request from the World Food Programme of Afghanistan, the federal cabinet approved transit of a truck from Karachi to Kabul carrying the spare-parts of the trucks, just for once on humanitarian grounds.



The body gave the go-ahead to signing of an MoU between the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Pakistan and that of Saudi Arabia. It also extended till March 2025 the time-frame of an implementation committee on the immovable property of late Ameer of Bahawalpur, in the light of the Supreme Court of Pakistan's ruling and recommendation of the States and Frontier Regions Division.

The Federal Cabinet also approved the appointment of the Executive Director of the Frequency Allocation Board. During the briefing on the Economic Coordination Committee's decision, the Cabinet meeting was informed that the country had sufficient stock of sugar and the Sugar Advisory Board and relevant departments had approved exporting the leftover stock of sugar after taking into account the expected consumption before the next crushing season and assessing the surplus stock.

The prime minister said the government would not tolerate any increase in the sugar price and instructed the formation of a committee to monitor the sugar price and stop its export in case of any possibility of a price hike. The meeting approved the annual report of the National Economic Council for fiscal year 2022-23, prepared by the Planning Ministry for tabling before the Parliament. The Federal Cabinet endorsed the Economic Coordination Committee's decisions of June 13, 2024; Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases of June 11, 2024 and Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises's decision of June 20, 2024.

Eight of a family killed over property dispute

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a gruesome incident, at least eight members of a family including women and children were killed and two others injured when armed men attacked a house in the vicinity of Badaber police station here on Tuesday.

DSP Badhaber Circle, Nazif ur Rehman told media persons that the incident took place in Baba Bagh area of Badhaber where armed men attacked the house of their opponents and started indiscriminate firing on them. As a result, he said eight people including four women and as many children were killed while two others injured.

Those killed were identified as Naureen w/o Ashfaq, Sidra d/o Amanat Ali, Hamida Begum w/o Malak Aman, Alibaba d/o Muhammad Asfaq, Akash s/o Muhammad Ashfaq, Tufail Afnan s/o Muhammad Ishaq and Inkhat s/o Muhammad Ishaq. The injured included Saba w/o Ishaq and Iqra d/o Ishaq.

Police said the gory incident was a result of money-take and property dispute between the two families. The armed assailants managed to escape the area after committing the gruesome crime. On receiving information, SP Sadar Division, Muhammad Zaman Khan, DSP Badhaber, Nazif ur Rehman, SHO Badhaber and other police officers reached the crime scene and started investigation from various angles.

Police said all the dead bodies and injured were shifted to hospital. Police collected empty shells of cartridges and other evidence from the crime scene and registered a case on the report of the heirs.

Govt to develop consensus on operation: Asif

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Tuesday the government would develop a consensus on the new anti-terrorism operation "Azm-e-Istehkam" to eliminate militants from the country, assuring the opposition that its reservations over the matter would be addressed.

Legal and constitutional process would be adopted to allay the reservations of all political parties including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) and Awami National Party (ANP), he said and added that parties were taking such type of stand only to capture vote bank, but their stand should be for the state only, and not for votes. Militants are being backed by the people abroad who want Pakistan to become "no go area".

Addressing a press conference here at Model Town, the defence minister said that operation Azm-e-Istehkam was a continuation of the National Action Plan, which had no political objectives, it was not correct to compare it with past operations, adding that actions would be taken based on classified information. Consensus among all institutions and political forces was essential for the success of operation, if terrorism was not controlled, it could affect the entire country, he remarked.

The minister called on politicians, the media, judiciary and armed forces to support the operation. He said that KP Chief Minister Gandapur did not express any reservations about Operation Azm-e-Istehkam during the apex committee's meeting on Saturday. "In fact, he also said indirectly that we will support this action, which will be mainly implemented in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan," Asif said.

Khawaja Asif said the government did not want to achieve any "political objectives" through the operation. Rather, he said it wanted to combat the surge in militancy in the country and eliminate it for good.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb addressing to wind up federal budget 2024-25 in National Assembly.

PPP will vote for budget to avoid instability: Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in his address to the National Assembly on Tuesday said that the time has come yet again for the annual budget discussion, the purpose of which is to help the Pakistani people emerge from the economic quagmire.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that representatives of the House have recently been elected in February, and they are aware of the actual plight of the people. The real problem is not our political narratives, statements, partisan politics or differences, nor is it the matter of who is in prison and who is not. The real issue is the basic, 'Roti, Kapra aur Makaan', as their only interest is the curbing of historic inflation, unemployment and poverty. The people look at the government and the opposition with the hope that they will sit together and form consensus to prioritise the solutions to the crises faced.

Bilawal said that PM Shehbaz Sharif in his previous tenure as both the PM and Opposition Leader talked about a 'Charter of Economy'. Without such a charter and consensus, we cannot address the long-term problems Pakistan is riddled with. The charter cannot be dictated by elsewhere or be an individual decision. The government would have to talk to benches on either of its sides. We should not only send our people and the business community this message, but also to the international community that the country has devised a ten or twenty-year long economic plan to be followed by those in the government, regardless of political affiliation. This would be the first step towards economic progress.

Bilawal said that when it was first decided by the PPP to support this government and PM Sharif, an agreement took place between the two parties.

According to the agreement, the budget and related decisions including the PSDP should have been made with the consultation of the PPP. Unfortunately, this prerequisite was not fulfilled and the members of the PPP believe that they would have contributed positively to the process. A consultation and resultant consensus would have produced a better outcome. Chairman Bilawal said that his advice to the PM and Finance Minister would have been to invite the allies as well as the opposition to collaborate. In this manner, those in the opposition too would contribute instead of protesting alone. This would have been a political victory as well as an economic one.

The country's economic situation is known to all, Chairman Bilawal said. It is hoped that the PM and his team are successful in helping the country emerge from the plethora of crises. Inflation is the most pressing concern in the country, and the indicators reveal that 10kg of wheat flour five years ago would cost less than Rs. 400. Today, it costs more than Rs. 1400. Similarly, in the last five years, electricity prices for up to 50 units have gone up by at least 277 percent and petrol prices by 195 percent. Milk, edible oil and lentils have increased by 113 percent, 21 percent and 353 percent respectively. Five years ago, a joint household income of Rs. 35000 would allow families to meet their nutritional, educational and medical needs. Today, if a family has to fulfil the same needs, their joint income should increase to Rs. 70000.

Bilawal complimented the government over the slight dip seen in inflation, and hoped that the policies conducive for this change would be continued. The 27 percent increase in the Benazir Income Support Programme is appreciated as it has become the gold standard to combat poverty not

only in the country but internationally. Moreover, aspects such as financial transparency and women empowerment further enhance the vital role played by the initiative. In the recently held elections in India, the opposition in its manifesto presented an initiative similar to the BISP.

Chairman PPP said that while in the government, all were aware of the dangers lurking in the country and the achievements targeted under the 'Bajwa Doctrine'. This was the basic reason which united us, and propelled us to defend the country, despite the political consequences. These achievements included the 18th Amendment, NFC Award and the conspiracy to halt the BISP. The BISP is the sole tool for the federal government to provide relief to the people, which we witnessed during the catastrophic floods.

It is unfortunate that attempts were made to discontinue such an initiative of ours under a doctrine. The PPP will work towards attaining constitutional protection for the BISP so that no such conspiracies can be successful in the future. The poor masses and women of the country should be given the confidence that this initiative would run in the future as it is running now.

Bilawal said that the government has taken decisions regarding taxation. He said that he made attempts to highlight the positive aspects here too, but it was a difficult task. The PPP's political philosophy revolves around progressive taxation. Every government claims that it wishes to increase the tax base and would burden the rich, not the poor. They claim that they will target mafias but provide relief to the common man. Unfortunately, we have been successful in seeing it that all these claims are made true. If we wish to expand the tax base, we should engage in competitive taxation and not punitive taxation.

New FY budget aimed at deficit reduction: NA told

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said the budget for the next fiscal (FY) year is aimed at reducing fiscal deficit by focusing on measures that enhance the government's revenues and reduce unnecessary expenditures.

Winding up discussion on the budget 2024-25 in the National Assembly on Tuesday, he said on the directions of the Prime Minister, the process of simplicity and austerity will be continued in the next fiscal year. He said a committee headed by him has been constituted which will present recommendations in this regard including closing down the ministries or their merger and devolution to the provinces.

The Finance Minister announced that the pension expenditures will be brought down through pension reforms in future. He pointed out that the home-grown reforms program is the basis of the next year's fiscal budget in order to steer the country out of a difficult economic situation. He said the reforms include enhancing tax to GDP ratio to thirteen percent, SOE (State-Owned Enterprise) reforms, public private partnership and energy sector reforms.

The Minister said the government is seriously committed to this plan and

started its implementation. He assured that all the stakeholders will be taken on board about the implementation of this plan. He said the digitization process of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is being accelerated. He said legislation is being introduced in the parliament to bring changes in the boards of the power sector. The privatization of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has been taken forward.

Highlighting other points of the home-grown reforms plan, the Finance Minister said these include targeted social protection, broad based fair taxation system and initiatives for the health and education sectors including skills development. Muhammad Aurangzeb was appreciative of the recommendations submitted by the Senate for inclusion in the next year's budget. He said the government has decided to include these recommendations in the budget keeping in view the public interest.

He said these include providing an opportunity to the non-filers for personal hearing before implementing the measures of SIM blockage and ban on foreign travel. He announced that the stationery items will remain exempted from tax. He said the current reduced rates for Hybrid-Electric Vehicles will remain intact. The Finance Minister said under Export

Facilitation Scheme 2021 policy, zero rating for the local suppliers is not being abolished.

The Finance Minister said agriculture, education and health sectors have been prioritized, while proposals such as exempting charity hospitals from sales tax will be given a serious consideration. He said the government is fast tracking reforms in the FBR and for this purpose, seven billion rupees have been earmarked in the budget. He said action will be taken against the retailers from the 1st of July failing to register them with FBR Tajir Dost Scheme.

As regards the defence budget, the Finance Minister said our armed forces have rendered immense sacrifices for defence of the country and are standing firm to meet the internal and external threats. He said national security is our foremost priority, assuring that the armed forces will be provided with the necessary resources.

The Finance Minister announced honoraria equivalent to three months basic pay for various departments including the staff of National Assembly, Senate, Press Information Department (PID), Radio Pakistan, PTV and Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), who performed duties in the Parliament House during the budget session.

Three new SC judges take oath

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Three new judges were sworn into the Supreme Court on Tuesday. Justice Malik Shahzad, Justice Shahid Bilal, and Justice Aqeel Abbasi took their oaths of office in a ceremony presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, says in media reports.

The swearing-in ceremony was held at the Supreme Court and was attended by all sitting judges of the apex court, as well as the attorney general for Pakistan. Notably, former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry also participated in the event.

In addition to the appointment of the new Supreme Court judges, Qibla Ayaz took oath as an ad hoc member of the Shariat Appellate Bench. CJF Isa administered the oath for this position as well.

On Monday, President Asif Ali Zardari had the appointment of the three new judges, following the issuance of a notification by the Federal Ministry of Law. Among the newly appointed justices, Justice Malik Shahzad was the chief justice of the Lahore High Court, Justice Shahid Bilal a judge of the Lahore High Court, and Justice Aqeel Abbasi the chief justice of the Sindh High Court. On the other hand, Justice Shujaat Ali Khan was appointed as the acting chief justice of Lahore High Court, as confirmed by an official notification.



Justice Shujaat Ali Khan takes oath as Acting LHC CJ



LAHORE (APP): Justice Shujaat Ali Khan on Tuesday took the oath as Acting Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) in a simple and dignified ceremony held at the Governor's House here.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan

administered the oath to Justice Khan.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, Justice Aalia Neelam, Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh, Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza, Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi, Justice Shahid

Karim, Justice Ch. Muhammad Iqbal, Justice Shehram Sarwar Ch., Justice Sajid Mehmood Sethi, Justice Farooq Haider, Justice Muhammad Waheed Khan and other judges working at LHC Principal seat attended the ceremony.

Assembly, Muhammad Ahmad Khan, provincial ministers, federal and provincial law officers, inspector general of police Punjab, Registrar LHC Ch. Abdul Rashid Abid, LHC officers and family members of the acting chief justice, also graced the occasion.

Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman read out the notification of appointment of the acting chief justice.

Moreover, in a gesture of humility and simplicity, the acting chief justice declined to receive protocol and guard of honor upon assuming his new role. After taking the oath of office, Justice Shujaat Ali Khan arrived at the LHC and chose not to take protocol and guard of honor. He will also perform his duties as acting chief justice from his own court, i.e. Courtroom No. 2.



KARACHI People suffering from a heat wave receive treatment at the heat stroke emergency ward at a hospital. —INP Photo

Sukkur Barrage to be made operational in 8 days

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Irrigation Minister, Jam Khan Shoro, on Tuesday

said that work for replacing damaged gates of Sukkur Barrage was continuing and the barrage will be made operational in the next 8 days and water will be released in all off-taking canals.

The minister, while speaking in Sindh Assembly, informed that Sukkur barrage irrigates 7.5 million acres of land in Sindh and provincial government was working day and night for restoration of Sukkur barrage at the earliest and transferring the gates to automatic system, said a statement issued here.

The irrigation minister informed the house that gate No. 44 has been prepared and the 50 percent work of Coffey Dam for installation of gate No. 47 has been completed so far. After completion of the Coffey dam a temporary door will be installed in the next 3 days while a permanent door will be installed at Gate No. 47 after July 20, he added.

He said that on reports of collapse of 2 gates installed

during the British rule, emergency was imposed on June 20, 2024 and immediate steps were taken for rehabilitation of the barrage. In the history of barrage, damage to any door of the barrage in June caused huge losses, he added.

When the Sukkur barrage was built, 66 gates and seven canals were constructed, he said adding that due to over silting of three right bank canals- Dadu Canal, Rice Canal and Kheerthar Canal- the then British government closed

10 gates and built a wall to prevent the silting of the right bank canals, he informed.

In the year 2018, some gates of the barrage were closed and a study was conducted, he informed adding that on the basis of findings and recommendations of the report six gates were replaced. Jam Khan Shoro said that an international bid was arranged with the support of the World Bank and the contract for changing the doors was allotted to a Chinese company.

Wafaqi Mohtasib directs PIMS admin to fill vacant posts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi on Tuesday directed the PIMS administration to take immediate steps to fill the vacant posts of Doctors, Nurses and Paramedical staff and make new MRI machine functional by November to provide better facilities to the patients.

He stated that there is no justification to stop the salaries of Emergency doctors and their pending salaries may be paid immediately.

He also directed the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) administration to increase the number of beds in emergency and install fans in all the wards.

He gave these directions on receiving a report from the Inspection team which visited PIMS Hospital, said a press release issued here.

Taking notice of specific complaints received against the hospital, Wafaqi Mohtasib sent an inspection team headed by Senior Advisor, Ahmad Farooq along with Registrar Saqib Khan and Consultant (Media) Khalid Sial, who submitted a preliminary report after visiting various departments of the Hospital. When the team reached there, it found rush of patients and lack of facilities for patients.

The inspection team was informed that 396 doctors are working in the



hospital, whereas 415 posts of doctors and 283 posts of Nurses are lying vacant. A total of 1265 vacancies are available including paramedical staff. Around 10,000 patients visit the hospital every day.

There is only one MRI machine in the hospital and the other machine, donated by Japan, will be ready by October.

There are 28 Ultrasound machines

which carry out ultrasound of more than 300 gynae patients every day.

Wafaqi Mohtasib has directed the PIMS administration to fill all vacancies according to rules and regulations and pay dues to emergency doctors immediately and ensure regular payment to them every month.

The team will submit its final report with its recommendations within a week.

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to the notice inviting a bidding for the works "Rehabilitation of Existing Protection Bund in Urban Area Development Authority Dera Township D.I. Khan and Reconstruction of Urban Area Development Authority office Dera Township D.I. Khan" published in daily newspaper vide INF(P)1268/24, the date and time for online apply may be read as 27/6/2024 (12.00AM) instead of 27/6/2024 (12.00 PM). Other terms and condition of the notice shall remain unchanged.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Urban Area Development Authority
Dera Ismail Khan

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICER, SWAT
GULKADA DISTRICT SWAT
Phone No: 0946-9240139, Fax No: 0946-9240215, Email: edohswat@yahoo.com

CANCELLATION OF TENDER NOTICE
DATED: 10-JUNE-2024 VIDE NO: INF(P)1271/24
IN DAILY MASHRIQ PESHAWAR FOR THE PURCHASE OF REHABILITATION EQUIPMENT UNDER THE PROJECT ReLAB-HS-MOMENTUM

It is for Information of all concern that the Tender Notice published in Daily Mashriq Peshawar dated 10-june-2024 Vide No. 1271/24 for the purchase of Assistive and rehabilitative product/Instrument item under ReLAB-HS/Momentum project shall be treated as cancelled due to some necessary change in requirement and specifications of Items to be procured.

INF (P) 1446/24

DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICER SWAT.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

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

Details
Branch Mingora Swat
Branch code 0026
Date of auction 27th June, 2024
Time 11:00 AM
Call deposit PKR 1000/-

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address
Muhammad Sadiq	15602-8376501-1	Post Office Khwaza, Chinkolai, Swat
Amir Akber	15102-0355286-7	Post Office Topi Not Soray, Tehsil G Swat, Buner.
Salman Khan	15607-0357422-3	Mohallah Cham Marghuzar, P/O Saidu Sharif, Mingora, Swat.

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

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Details
Branch Chakdara
Branch code 0022
Date of auction 27th June 2024
Time 12:00 PM
Call deposit PKR 1000/-

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address
Abdur Rahman	15307-3654983-5	Post Office Chakdara Darbaar, Tehsil Lower Dir.
Akhtar Zaman	15307-4011410-3	Post Office Asbanar Bochakay, Tehsil Lower Dir.
Hazrat Bilal	15401-3296377-7	Harian Kot, Tehsil Dargai, District Lower Dir.
Abbas Khan	15307-7637583-3	P/O Chakdara Seh sada, Tehsil Adenzai, Lower Dir.
Asad Ullah Faiz	15401-3209661-3	Garhi Usmani Khail, Tehsil Dargai, Malakand.
Imran Khan	15307-8930180-7	Mohala Darbaar Ramorhah, Tehsil Lower Dir.
Ajmal Khan	16102-4560922-3	Post Office Lonad Khorh Kalo Shah, Mardan.
Muhammad Abbas	17102-3741452-3	Jamal Abad Mandni, Tehsil Tangi, District Charsadda.
Naeem Khan	15401-2569677-1	Mohala Barh Shah, Post Office Gharhi, Malakand.
Muhammad Kabir	42201-0337242-9	Syed Khan Takhtbai, Mardan.
Sarfaraz Khan	15401-0693947-9	Mohala Bajezo Cham, Post Office Dargai, Malakand.
Zahid Khan	15307-6631661-7	Post Office Chakdara Darbaar, Tehsil Lower Dir.
Gulzar Alim	15307-0572358-9	Post Office Chakdara Ali Mast, Tehsil Lower Dir.
Gul Hazrat	15302-0948290-1	Post Office Chakdara Bagh Kan Daye, Lower Dir.
Junaid Khan	15307-0579820-5	Post Office Chakdara Chat Pat, Tehsil Lower Dir.

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

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Decision taken to evacuate dangerous buildings

KARACHI (PPI): The city administration has intensified its efforts to evacuate highly dangerous buildings, with the Sindh Building Control Authority taking immediate action to demolish such structures.

In a review meeting chaired by Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi, it was decided to take swift action to evacuate dangerous buildings before the monsoon rains. The meeting was attended among others by all the deputy commissioners and the senior officers of Sindh building control authority. The officers of the Sindh Building Control Authority briefed the commissioner about the progress of the efforts the authority was making. It was told that the Building Control Authority had completed a survey of dilapidated buildings and served notices to their residents advising them to vacate the buildings.

Utility agencies have also been requested to disconnect services to these buildings. The meeting decided that all deputy commissioners would hold meetings with building control authority's concerned officials in their respective districts to identify and prioritize actions against dangerous buildings, ensuring the safety of residents' lives.

MobilinkBank

PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

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

Details
Branch Haripur
Branch code 0017
Date of auction 27th June 2024
Time 11:00 AM
Call deposit PKR 2000/-

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address
Malik Muhammad Yasir	37405-3385526-3	Chachah Post Office Pind Gujran, Tehsil Khanpur, District Haripur.

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

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LIFE

IS A PRECIOUS GIFT OF GOD

LET US JOINTLY RESOLVE TODAY THAT

WE WILL PROTECT OURSELVES AS WELL AS OTHERS FROM NARCOTICS AND WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS AND STRUGGLE TO ERADICATE THIS MENACE FROM OUR COUNTRY.

NARCOTICS BRINGS A PAINFUL DEATH

ONE NATION, ONE DESTINATION, DRUGS FREE PAKISTAN

HELPLINE 1415

ANTI NARCOTICS FORCE OF PAKISTAN

26 JUNE 2024

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

PIUJ 7689-D / 23

UNIVERSITY OF PESHAWAR

FINAL NOTICE FOR RESUMPTION OF DUTY

You Mr. Muhammad Uzair, Senior Clerk, Office of the Editor Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences were granted (Ex-Pakistan) privilege leave for a period of 10 days, with effect from 29-05-2023 (i.e. the date of departure) for proceeding to Canada to participate and present your research paper in the annual conference of the Canadian Sociological Association, vide Office Order No. 321/Estt., dated 10-05-2023. Further, you were granted extension in Ex-Pakistan privilege leave for a further period of 170 days, with effect from 08-06-2023 to 24-11-2023, vide Office Order No. 599/Estt. dated 26-06-2023. After expiry of the said leave, you were required to join your duties at the office on 24-11-2023 but you failed to do so.

Further, the Editor Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences has forwarded your application for grant of 02 years Ex-Pakistan leave (without pay) but the same was refused due to shortage of manpower and accordingly, a notice for resumption of duty were issued upon you wherein you were directed to resume your duty within 15 days of the issuance of Notice vide No. 3289/A-V/Estt. dated 14-03-2024, but you failed to comply with till date.

You are therefore finally directed in terms of Section 4(7) (c) of the University of Peshawar employees Efficiency & Discipline Statutes-2016 to resume your duty at the Office of the Editor Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Peshawar within 15 days after publication of this notice failing which disciplinary proceedings will be initiated against you under the University of Peshawar Employees Efficiency & Discipline Statutes-2016 which may lead to your removal from the university service.

Registrar
University of Peshawar



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing a meeting regarding Rural Economic Transformation Project.

Global Anti-Narcotics Day Cricket matches, awareness walk organized



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of Global Anti-Narcotics Day, cricket matches were organized between the Excise & Taxation department and journalists aiming to raise awareness among the youth about the scourge of drugs and to encourage

them towards positive activities. The Journalists XI emerged victorious in the cricket matches. Following the match, both teams participated in an awareness walk regarding the dangers of drug use. The Excise team was led by ETO Counter Narcotics Operations Dr. Majid Khan, accompanied

by Ejaz Khan, Muhammad Ikram, Hameedullah, and other notable members of the Excise Department. The Journalists team was captained by General Secretary of the Peshawar Press Club Irfan Musazai. The matches were held at Sher Khan Stadium where two cricket match-

es were played between the Excise and Taxation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and journalists. The first match was highly thrilling ending in a tie as it went down to the last ball. The Journalists XI after winning the toss scored 117 runs for the loss of 4 wickets in the allotted overs with Shah Faisal scoring a notable 53 runs. In response the Excise team adopting an aggressive approach also scored 117 runs in the designated overs, with Majid Khan contributing a stellar 75 run innings. In the second match the Excise & Taxation team set a target of 63 runs in the allotted overs which the Journalists XI chased down without losing any wickets thanks to Waqar Ahmed's outstanding 40 runs and Shah Faisal's 25 runs. Consequently the Journalists XI was declared the winner of the event.

Govt taking steps to promote sports: Fakhar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jehan has said that the provincial government is taking far-reaching measures to promote sports in the province. After taking charge of his department, he organized various sports events in the entire province, in which games were specially organized for special persons. He was addressing the closing ceremony of the National Mixed Martial Arts Warrior and Kickboxing competitions under the auspices of the Mardan Sports Department and District Administration at the Mardan Sports Complex

where he was the chief guest. On this occasion, Provincial Minister Food Zahir Shah Toru, MPA Abdul Salam Afridi, Director General Sports Abdul Nasir Khan, Assistant Commissioner Ayesha Tahir, Assistant Commissioner Junaid Khalid, Regional Sports Officer Sulaiman, District Sports Officer Saeed Akhtar and President of Pakistan Mixed Martial Arts Federation were present. Adviser on sports and youth affairs said that the provincial government will continue its full support for the welfare of the sportsmen and they are being provided with sports opportunities without any discrimination. He said that the provincial government will

organize more events at the provincial level very soon. The main objective of the government is to attract the youth towards positive activities in order to avoid them from indulging in negative activities. On this occasion, the District Sports Officer said that 50 athletes from other provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province participated in these competitions. He informed that 52 fights were held in this event. In which 15 players won silver and bronze medals. While 10 players won gold medals. The title medal was won by Adil Kaka from Baluchistan. Adviser Sports and Youth Affairs also announced 2 lakh rupees for the winning players and also distributed medals among them.

Forest cutting banned

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Forests, Fazal Hakeem Yousafzai has imposed ban on cutting in private woodlots and certain forests of the province. The decision to this effect has been taken due to concerns and reservations of people and civil societies regarding wood cutting in forests. The ban has been imposed under Private Woodlots Rules 2017. Monitoring teams would also be constituted to implement rules and to monitor wood cutting according to approved working plans. The public would also be informed reasons and objectives of wood cutting. The minister has also directed to ensure transparency in the whole process and take effective measures to implement ban.

Ms Parveen Gul defends her PhD thesis

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ms Parveen Gul has successfully defended her PhD thesis at Qurtaba University, Peshawar. Her thesis title was "Pakistan compliance with intergenerational environmental equity: an analysis."

Dr. Aziz-ur-Rehman served as her supervisor, while external examiner was Professor Dr. Attaullah Khan Mohmand, Chairman Department of Law and Fiqah, Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad.



PESHAWAR: Business community addressing a press conference regarding federal budget, at Peshawar Press Club.

Minister directs third-party audit of Agri varsity budget

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal, the Agriculture Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has issued directives for a thorough audit of the budget of Peshawar Agricultural University for the fiscal year 2023-24 by a third-party entity. During a Senate session convened on Tuesday, he conditionally approved the university's budget for the year 2024-25, stipulating that discrepancies identified in the audit report must be rectified within six

months for presentation at a subsequent Senate review meeting. The Senate session, presided over by Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal, focused on deliberations regarding the university's annual financial plan. Notable attendees included Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi, along with officials from the treasury, establishment, and senior personnel from the higher education department. A budget amounting to Rs. 2600 million was tabled for the university, securing provisional

approval subject to further scrutiny. Detailed discussions ensued on various financial allocations, including grants disbursed by the provincial government and the Higher Education Commission in Islamabad. Additionally, there were comprehensive talks on the university's revenue streams, allocation for staff salaries, pensions, and other operational expenses. Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal underscored the urgency of addressing the audit findings promptly and presenting them at the

Senate's official session. Furthermore, Barkwal instructed authorities to compile a comprehensive list of all properties owned by Peshawar Agricultural University. He assured stakeholders that the provincial government is committed to taking proactive measures to resolve financial challenges faced by universities across the region. The session also explored several recommendations aimed at stabilizing the financial situation of the university and ensuring sustainable operations in the future.



PESHAWAR: Laborer busy in loading bark used for knitting traditional bed (charpoi) into a delivery truck at Dabgari area. — APP photo

MCMC group visits P&D

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Participants from 40th Mid-Career Management Course visit Planning and Development Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tuesday. The Secretary Planning and Development Department, Mr. Shahidullah Khan, chaired a meeting with them to brief them on the development landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the meeting, the Secretary provided in-depth information on the optimization strategy of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the merged districts and their potential. He shared insights into the province's development vision, goals, and initiatives aimed at promoting economic growth, social welfare, and infra-

structure development. The participants showed keen interest in the presentation and engaged in a productive question-and-answer session. The visit aimed to familiarize the mid-career professionals with the planning and development processes in the province. Additional Secretary, Planning and Development Department, Mr. Habibullah Wazir and Chief PSDP, Mr. Adil Saeed Safi also attended the meeting.



Rising tide of drug abuse

Maj. General Abdul Moeed-HI (M)

THE rising tide of drug abuse poses an unprecedented challenge to our society, fueled by insidious trafficking networks and influenced by modern trends. It imperils our communities and undermines our values. We must stand firm, crafting robust strategies that weave together prevention, treatment, and enforcement measures. By tackling root causes and embracing a multifaceted approach, we can safeguard our future and reclaim our streets from the clutches of addiction. Technology has revolutionized drug smuggling, moving beyond borders. From synthetic production to dark web trades with crypto currencies, enforcement faces new frontiers. The Pakistani government, through the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), collaborates with domestic and international partners to counter the production and spread of synthetic drugs. This effort aims to protect the youth and safeguard society from irreparable harm. ANF focuses on implementing strategies to reduce drug supply, including dismantling trafficking organizations, conducting controlled deliveries, eradicating poppy cultivation, and disrupting illicit drug supply chains. These efforts are crucial in combating drug-related crimes and safeguarding communities from the harmful effects of drug abuse. The ANF campaign focuses on Harm Minimization and Zero Tolerance strategies aligned with global drug policies. Presently, its Drug Demand Reduction initiatives prioritize awareness campaigns, addiction treatment centers, and community programs to decrease drug demand and assist affected individuals. ANF engages in international cooperation to combat trafficking effectively by collaborating with foreign law enforcement agencies, participat-

ing in joint operations, sharing intelligence and best practices, and adhering to international drug policy commitments to address the transnational nature of the trade. ANF's relentless pursuit against drug-related crimes is powered by a cutting-edge scientific approach. By harnessing modern forensic techniques, conducting meticulous data analysis, and fostering global partnerships, ANF ensures the gathering of irrefutable evidence. This commitment to scientific rigor not only bolsters investigations but also fortifies prosecutions, delivering justice with unwavering precision. We owe gratitude to the "Shuhada of ANF" who sacrificed their lives in the noble fight against drugs. Their dedication guides our quest for a drug-free society. Applauding the ongoing vigilance of all ANF personnel. May Allah be our Guide and Protector. Aameen... **Writer is Director General Anti-Narcotics Force**

"Khawaja Asif twists facts and presents them," Dr. Saif stated. "PTI's stance is clear that for any operation, confidence must be gained from all stakeholders including the Senate, National and Provincial Assemblies." Dr. Saif expressed these views in a recent statement, adding, "If Khawaja Asif had a shred of decency, he would resign and disappear." He criticized Asif for his insensitivity, particularly citing his defeat by PTI's resilient woman candidate, Rehana Durrani, through a fake Form 47. "Khawaja Asif is a manufacturer of fake Form 47s; his work revolves around spreading lies," Dr. Saif remarked. Despite numerous attempts by the Ministry of Defence to provide him opportunities, Khawaja Asif's performance remains zero, Dr. Saif asserted. He concluded that Asif's only redemption now lies in seeking forgiveness from Allah after betraying the nation's trust.

CM to call APC after holding tribal jirga

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, announced that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has called for an All Parties Conference (APC) following the Tribal Peace Jirga.

The APC will invite all political parties, with the date and time of the conference to be determined soon. The purpose of this conference is to brief all political parties on the current situation and build consensus. Dr. Saif stated that the Tribal Peace Jirga under the auspices of PTI will be held tomorrow, Wednesday.

The Jirga will take place near Rang Road, Hayatabad Toll Plaza at 3 PM. Tribal elders, along with central and provincial leaders of PTI, will participate in the Jirga. Discussions will focus on achieving peace, security, and strengthening resolve in tribal areas.

Agreements reached during the Jirga will be presented to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa later, and these agreements will also be tabled in the Parliament and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

Meanwhile, Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, has accused Khawaja Asif of consistently engaging in deceitful and dishonest politics. He clarified that the Chief Minister did not endorse any operation during the Apex Committee meeting; discussions only centered around strengthening resolve, with no decision taken.

"Khawaja Asif twists facts and presents them," Dr. Saif stated. "PTI's stance is clear that for any operation, confidence must be gained from all stakeholders including the Senate, National and Provincial Assemblies." Dr. Saif expressed these views in a recent statement, adding, "If Khawaja Asif had a shred of decency, he would resign and disappear." He criticized Asif for his insensitivity, particularly citing his defeat by PTI's resilient woman candidate, Rehana Durrani, through a fake Form 47. "Khawaja Asif is a manufacturer of fake Form 47s; his work revolves around spreading lies," Dr. Saif remarked. Despite numerous attempts by the Ministry of Defence to provide him opportunities, Khawaja Asif's performance remains zero, Dr. Saif asserted. He concluded that Asif's only redemption now lies in seeking forgiveness from Allah after betraying the nation's trust.



In brief

Govt releases funds for varsity F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: The Punjab government has released Rs. 2425 million to complete 400 beds state of the art District Headquarter Hospital Hafizabad and Rs. 1129 million for execution of ongoing project of establishment of University of Hafizabad. This was stated by the former Federal Minister and Central Leadr of PMLN Saira Afzal Tarar while addressing a press conference at Hafizabad, on Monday. MPA Aoun Intisar Bhatti, vice-president PMLN Hafizabad Ray Qamar Zaman Kharal, Secretary Information PMLN Muhammad Zaman Bhon, Rai Mukhtar Hussain Mukhi, Sheikh Naveed Ehsan, Khalid Mehmood Butt, Sijjad Zahor Matmal, Mehr Habibullah and other leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-N were also present on this occasion. Saira Afzal Tarar said that all roads in the city were reconstruct to lay carpet while the Punjab government was included five projects of rehabilitation of roads linked with other districts in Annual Development Programme 2024-25. She said that our political rivals we're trying to take credit for nothing without doing any struggle for the welfare of the people of the district whereas people were well aware of performance of PMLN Hafizabad and would not believe on falls claims of our pollical opponents.

Post-Haji operations F.P. Report

SIALKOT: Post-Haj operations continue at the Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL) on Tuesday. According to a SIAL spokesperson, the Pakistan International Airline (PIA) flight PK-746 reached back from Saudi Arabia at Sialkot with 320 pilgrims. The flight landed at the airport at 5:50am. SIAL administration and other officers warmly welcomed the pilgrims. International standard facilities are being provided to all passengers by SIAL administration, the spokesperson added.

Anti-India rally to be held today

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) will organize an anti-India rally in Muzaffarabad today (Wednesday), to be observed as International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, to express solidarity with the victims of Indian state terrorism in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The APHC-AJK Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi will lead the march towards the UN office in Muzaffarabad. APHC-AJK in-charge information section Mushtaq Ahmed Butt in a statement said that anti-India protest demonstrations and rallies would be organized and efforts would be made to convey the voice of Kashmiris to the international community. Mushtaq Ahmed Butt said the peace and freedom-loving people of Jammu and Kashmir are demanding freedom from Indian state oppression and violence with courage and are determined to continue their freedom struggle till it reached its logical conclusion. He added that the international community should break its criminal silence over the Indian atrocities on innocent Kashmiris and hold India accountable for serious crimes against humanity in the occupied territory.

Quality technical education must for progress: Kundi

F.P. Report

SWABI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Tuesday said that quality technical education was imperative to achieve sustainable economic progress and development.

Addressing the 28th Convocation of Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute (GIK) at Topi here as chief guest, the Governor said that those countries, which had equipped its youth with quality education and technology achieved tremendous progress and height of economic prosperity in the comity of nations today.

He underlined the need of equipping young minds with ornament of technical education and science and technology to achieve the height of economic glory and make Pakistan an economic giant. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor distributed degrees among 475 boys and girls students after completion of their

graduates, masters and M. Phil degrees in engineering, management and applied sciences. The Governor also awarded gold medals to 15 position holder students.

Congratulating the passed out students, their parents and faculty members, the Governor said that Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute Swabi was a premier educational institute of the country that set high-quality standards in education. "The secret of GIK's education popularity was its non-compromise on merit and standard in quality education. It is my wish that GIK-like quality education institutes are established in other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," he said, adding it was the dream of every student and parents to get education from this premier institution of Pakistan and later contribute to the country's development progress.

To achieve the height of development and economic

prosperity, the governor emphasized the need to contribute a praised worthy share in the country's technology education, adding that unfortunately our province has been left behind in education standards.

Underlying the need for market based practical education, the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that we need such education, which inculcate the values of self-confidence and enhances students' abilities. He said the future of Pakistan was linked with an educated manpower. The educated manpower helps stimulate progressive and targeted production capacity of a country and steer the ship towards shores of economic self-sufficiency.

Earlier, the Executive Director GIK Shakil Durrani and Rector DI Khan Dir Fazal Ahmed besides senior faculty members, teachers and students welcomed the governor. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa upon arrival at the institute.



FAISALABAD: Elder man drinking water from water cooler to crunch their thirst during hot weather in the city.

Shandur Polo festival postponed F.P. Report

CHITRAL: The Shandur Polo Festival, which was due to be held in upper Chitral from June 28 to June 30, has been postponed.

In this regard, as per the notification issued by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Tuesday, the festival had to be postponed because of bad weather.

The Shandur Polo Festival is a sports festival held annually at Shandur Top, which is the world's highest polo ground at an altitude of 3,700 meters in Chitral. The tournament is played between the teams of Gilgit and Chitral districts under freestyle rules. Organised and financed by the KP government, the festival also includes folk music, dancing while a camping village is also set up.

Two robbers killed in encounter F.P. Report

LARKANA: Deputy Inspector General Larkana ordered operation against bandits and on intelligence-based information at Karampur in the limits of village Imam Bakhs Jafri. The robbers were standing nearby with the intention of robbery, where the Kashmore Police and Rangers of Larkana Range fought with the robbers, in a fierce exchange of fire, one robber identified as Salah Nandwani and Jatoi Nandwani was killed and two others were injured, while seeing the opportunity, the injured robbers escape with partners.

They were able to take place while till the latest information, the Larkana Range Police and Rangers personnel surrounded the area while a number of Kalashnikovs and bullets were recovered from the dead accused. Orders have been issued to give cash rewards and honors to the Kashmore Police for foiling the criminals present in their nefarious purposes and instructions have been given to protect the lives and property of the people.

Annual meeting held: Last day, the annual meeting of Larkana District Education Group was held under the chairmanship of District Education Officer Gulbahar Magsi.

The meeting was attended by District Education Officer (Primary), RSU District Officer Abdul Rehman, DEO Primary, TEOs of all taluks male and female, IBA District Manager Ijaz Ali Chandio and other officials. While the representatives of District Biometric Office Larkana and Education Works Larkana were absent, District Education Larkana Officer Gulbahar Magsi addressed the meeting and said that the main agenda of the meeting was to solve the problems related to school codes and semesters.

He stressed that the problems of the schools should be resolved immediately and their forms should be submitted as soon as possible so that the funds allocated for the schools can be used effectively. He said that the students' stipend funds will be distributed soon and the students will get the notification on their mobile numbers.

Tribesmen demand peace in Khyber

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: A mammoth of local tribesmen came to roads in a peace rally to seek justice for the Martyred local journalist, Khalil Jibrani and for restoration of sustainable peace in Khyber here in Landi Kotal, district Khyber on Tuesday.

Addressing to the peace rally Members Provincial Assembly (MPAs) Adnan Qadri and Sohail Afridi, Tehsil Chairman, Landi Kotal Shah Khalid, district chief of Awami National Party (ANP) Shah Hussain Shinwari, Political Alliance Bara head Shah Faisal Afridi, Pakistan People Party district President Hazrat Wali Afridi, Jamat-e-Islami, Tehsil Landi Kotal Ameer Murad Hussain Afridi, Malik Masel Khan, Aftab Shinwari, Malik Darya Khan, Ziaul Haq Afridi, Khyber Transport Association chief Shakir Afridi and others said that the martyrdom of deceased journalist awakened the whole nation who came to roads for seeking of durable peace in the area.



Provision of security to the citizens is promulgated on State therefore the security department should play its due role to re-establish peace in the area and the National Action Plan in true sense, they remarked. They maintained that those who raise voice for the rights of laymen will face the same fate, faced by the slain journalist, Khalil Jibrani; however they said that the tribesmen cannot tolerate additional martyrs in their area.

We are peaceful people but if war is deliberately imposed they will retaliate and jointly foil mal designs, they added. The tribesmen categorically rejected launching of forces operation, "Azm-e-Istehkam" and said experienced in previous purge operations, general masses

have suffered more than militants.

The protesters urged the prime witness, injured local advocate, to record their actual statement in the incident of late Khalil Jibrani and demanded of the Inspector General Police (IGP) to trace the culprits and grant them exemplary punishment. Earlier, a peace rally was conducted that took from Takya village of Sultan Khel, participated by hundreds of thousands protestors from across the tehsil to Bacha Khan Square, main bazaar, Landi Kotal that was converted into a public gathering. On the call of Anjuman-e-Tajeran Landi Kotal observed shutter down strike and business activities was completely halted in the bazaar.

Balochistan roads declared as 'bloody highways'

QUETTA (INP): Balochistan Medical Emergency Response Center Director General declared the national highways of Balochistan as 'bloody highways'. He said during the last five years, 64,000 people were injured in 46,000 traffic accidents. There are eight national highways covering 4,500 km in

Balochistan. The statistics of accidents in the last five years are alarming. Over 46,000 accidents occurred in the last five years while over 63,000 people were injured in the last five years. For most of the 20th century, the southwestern Pakistani province

of Balochistan lacked good tarmac roads. Its impoverished residents often cursed the bone-jarring journeys they were forced to take on dilapidated roads and dirt tracks in the vast region, which borders Iran and Afghanistan.

But over the past two decades, the construction of new infrastructure across the province is causing alarming numbers of road accidents due to narrow highways, poor safety, speeding traffic, disregard for traffic laws, and few emergency services.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and injured in traffic accidents across Balochistan since

the turn of the century. Ghazi Khan, a farmer, knows the danger of Balochistan's roads. Last month, he lost his 16-year-old son in a head-on collision between his motorcycle and a sedan. Khan says his son and his two friends riding with him fell on the asphalt after their motorbike hit a car. They were then crushed by a speeding flatbed truck. "He left home happy and was on his way to break the Ramadan fast with his friends," Khan recalled of his son's last hours. "But his blood-soaked body was soon brought back home," he added. "His mother and I are still in deep shock."

Civil society hold 'peace march' against militancy

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Hundreds of youths, social and political activists and local elders under the auspices of the Dir Qaumi Paseon (DQP), a citizens' body working for peace and development in the area, held a 'peace' march at Timergara. Local traders' community, civil society, lawyers and political workers participated in the event.

Carrying white flags and placards inscribed with slogans of 'we want peace on our soil', the marchers walked on the roads and chanted slogans for peace. DQP arranged the march to mobilize residents for maintaining peace in the district after the growing incidents of militancy in the Maidan area of Lower Dir. The frequent incidents of target killings and attacks on security forces in Maidan forced the peace-building bodies to unite people against militancy in the area.

The rally at the Timergara Shaheed Chowk was addressed by the political activists including Ali Shah Mishwani, Shuiab Ahmad and others. The speakers condemned the killing of Sheikh Inamullah and

attacks on security forces in Maidan and termed it a bid to sabotage peace. They also rejected the federal government plan to launch a fresh anti-terrorism operation especially in parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The speakers said that Dir was a peaceful district and its people knew better the hardships of 2009-10 mass displacement. "We are loyal and patriotic citizens and want peace on our soil", one of the speakers said, adding the government was planning to launch yet another military operation on the pretext of terrorism. The speakers said that local residents would prefer death rather than leave the area this time. They said that the people of Dir could not bear militancy or military operation.

The participants suggested the government should spend the budget allocated for eradicating militancy on education and health. They said the government should restore brotherly relations with neighboring Afghanistan, Iran and other countries so that their soils could not be used for anti-state activities against Pakistan. Later the marchers

dispersed peacefully.

Imbalance among population and resources a challenge: The special assistant to chief minister on population welfare and development Malik Liaqat Ali has said that imbalance between growing population and resources are a major challenge faced by the country. He was addressing a conference for prayers' leaders on the importance of proper interval in children's birth held at a local hotel in Timergara as chief guest.

The additional secretary population welfare department Noor Alam, additional director general Ikramullah, Maulana Inayatullah Islahi, Maulana Ihsanullah Khalis, social activist Kinaan Pasha and district population welfare officer Shahid Khan also spoke on the occasion. The conference was attended by religious scholars and clerics from parts of the district. The speakers said that the religion Islam emphasized breastfeeding of a child for two and a half years that showed there should be an interval in birth. They said that proper interval between birth of children was necessary for a child's health and nourishment.



University threatens pro-Palestine protesters with legal action

NEWCASTLE (BBC): A university has threatened to take legal action against pro-Palestine protesters camped on its grounds. The group, known as Newcastle Coalition Apartheid Off Campus, has been outside Newcastle University since 1 May.

A university spokesperson said the student demonstration had attracted people unconnected with the university that wished to carry out "disruptive activism". The protesters said they will not leave until the university cuts ties with businesses and universities connected to Israel. In a letter handed to protesters, Newcastle University demanded the demonstration was moved from its grounds within 48 hours. "Failure to do so will result in further action by the university to remove you from the lawn by the issue of court proceedings," the letter reads. Newcastle University said its priority was to ensure the campus was "a safe and inclusive environment for all". "We have previously made it

clear to protestors on campus that their occupation of university land is unauthorised and unlawful, and formally asked them to vacate the area," a spokesperson said. "We take seriously the safeguarding of colleagues and students, including those who are part of the encampment. "What began as a peaceful student-led demonstration has become a focus for disruptive activism attracting people who are not connected with the university. This has resulted in the targeting of university activities, people, and property." The university said it was committed to allowing peaceful protest and supporting free speech within the law". "We look forward to future dialogue about some of the issues raised during the protest," a statement added.

A spokesman for the encampment, who did not want to be named, said protesters planned to remain on the lawn for "as long as it takes" for the university to divest its interests from Israeli companies.

The protesters have increased their activism in recent weeks, and on 29 May occupied the university's Armstrong Building. Two men in their 20s were arrested in connection with public order offences, and a man in his 60s was arrested for breach of the peace.

Members of Newcastle University's Jewish Society said they "avoid" walking past the protesters and at times feel "terrified". The demonstration also spread to nearby Northumbria University, where masked protesters disrupted a talk on freedom of speech.

Addressing the university's concerns that some protesters were not connected with the university, the encampment's spokesman said: "There is a possibility people could be dangerous. "However, we have been here for 55 days now and that has not happened yet. If it has or would happen we will deal with it properly." The protesters have safeguarding, complaints and disciplinary procedures in place at the encampment, the spokesman added.

Five killed in Russian missile attack on Ukraine

KYIV (AFP): At least five people were killed and 41 injured, including four children, after Russia launched two missiles on the eastern Ukrainian town of Pokrovsk. "This is one of the largest enemy attacks on civilians recently," regional Governor Vadym Filashkin said on Telegram.

Three girls - aged 9, 11 and 13 - and a 12-year-old boy were injured, he added. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, speaking in his nightly video address, said that Ukraine would respond to the attack "in an absolutely fair manner". Petro, a local, was circling a badly damaged blue car, the driver's seat soaked with blood. His son had been killed at the wheel and his grandson was taken to hospital. "My son, he is dead already, it's done," he said, weeping. Six cars and 16 houses were damaged, and one house was destroyed, Filashkin said.

Russian troops had launched two Iskander-M ballistic missiles at the town, which is about 24km

(15 miles) from the front line, he added. The strikes were half an hour apart, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's office said. The attack left a huge crater, with nearby houses in ruins; their windows blown out and roofs ripped away. The town had a population of about 61,000 before Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Nikolay Kurilov said he was watering flowers in his garden when the first missile landed fewer than 500 metres (about a third of a mile) away.

"And boom. I almost fell over," the 70-year-old told the AFP news agency. "And about 15 minutes later, there was another boom. We started calling relatives." Over recent weeks, Moscow has concentrated its firepower on Ukraine's eastern industrial region of Donetsk, which the Kremlin claims is part of Russia. The area around Pokrovsk has seen some of the heaviest fighting along the 1,000km (600-mile) front line in recent months, with the Russians advancing

ing towards the town after capturing Avdiivka in February. "Today, the hottest area is the Pokrovsk direction, where the aggressor continues attempts to break through our defence," the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces said, citing 45 enemy attacks in the vicinity.

"The defence forces are taking measures to exhaust the Russian occupation troops and prevent their advance deep into Ukrainian territory." Separately, Filashkin said a 62-year-old man had been killed in a Russian bomb attack on the town of Kurakhove, south of Pokrovsk. He said Russian forces had also killed a 63-year-old civilian in the town of Toretsk, where Moscow's troops have stepped up attacks following a protracted lull. Russia claimed to have annexed Donetsk in late 2022, along with three other regions of Ukraine it had partially occupied. Parts of Donetsk have been controlled by Kremlin-backed armed groups since 2014.

Deadly crush at rally as Rwanda election drive starts

KAMPALA (BBC): One person has died and dozens were injured during a crush at an election rally for Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, officials say. Campaigning for July's general election began, with Mr Kagame holding two rallies in northern Rwanda over the weekend.

The crush happened in Rubavu district, where 37 people were injured, four of whom were hospitalised with serious injuries, a statement from the ministry of local government said. It apologised to the deceased's

family, adding that a medical team on site "did everything possible". Mr Kagame is running for a fourth term. He has been the country's de facto leader since 1994, when his then rebel group, the Rwanda Patriotic Front, seized power at the end of the genocide directed at members of his Tutsi ethnic group.

He won the last presidential election in 2017 with nearly 99% of the vote. The 66-year-old president has faced criticism from rights groups for cracking down on the

opposition - but he has fiercely defended Rwanda's record on human rights, saying his country respects political freedoms. After stampede, the ministry of local government reminded "those participating in campaign activities... to follow the instructions given by those in charge to ensure the safety and tranquility of those participating in campaign activities". Mr Kagame's RPF-Inkotanyi party said it was "deeply saddened" and sent its condolences to the deceased's family.

Millions of children going hungry in Sudan

KHARTOUM (BBC): The head of the United Nations children's agency, Unicef, says Sudan is one of the worst places in the world for children. Catherine Russell says it now has the largest displacement of children anywhere, with millions facing malnutrition and most not in school.

She is travelling to the country torn apart by more than a year of brutal civil war as warnings of famine grow louder. The pillars of Sudan's food economy have collapsed, and both warring parties - the Sudanese army and a paramilitary group called the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - are restricting the delivery of desperately needed aid. Children were at the sharp end of this hunger crisis, Ms Russell told the BBC while en route in Nairobi: nine million don't get enough to eat regularly, and nearly four million face acute malnutrition. "We're long past time where we need to act, we need to act now or it's just going to get worse," she said. "You can always eventually make progress on something, so nothing is completely impossible. But for individual babies, for children, who are starving now, who are hungry, who are now severely malnourished, it will be too late for them." Earlier this month, the BBC spoke to a food security expert who said that by September, 70% of Sudan's population will be extremely hungry.

"That could lead to two-and-a-half million deaths, or more" Timmo Gaasbeek said. "It could be as many as four million. There is just not enough food." The Sudanese Armed Forces and RSF, have divided the country roughly in two, and plunged it into a humanitarian catastrophe. The army has restricted access for food deliveries across conflict lines into areas controlled by the RSF.

RSF fighters are accused of widely plundering resources, and have been besieging a city of nearly two million people, El Fasher, for more than a month. Ms Russell said she couldn't speak to whether they were using hunger as a weapon of war. But she said the crisis was "100% man made." "The challenge for us is not that we don't have the food, it's that we can't get it to the people who need it. And that is really a crisis."

Ms Russell said Sudan had the highest number of displaced children in the world - five million - and nearly all of its children were out of school, in danger of becoming a lost generation that could contribute to future instability. "It's hard to re-teach them, because that's a lot of lost learning. But it's also hard, in many cases, to get them back into the classroom," she said.

"So in that sense, they can become lost... And if you lose that, what do we think the future is going to be like? It's going to be unstable." She will add her voice to the chorus of demands for an end to the fighting. But a recent UN appeal for calm in El Fasher was ignored, and US efforts to restart peace talks have so far failed.

Medics aim to screen thousands of Gaza children for malnutrition

GAZA STRIP (Reuters): Medics in Gaza said they were working to step up screening of young children for severe malnutrition amid fears that hunger is spreading as people flee to new areas.

Aid group International Medical Corps (IMC) and partners are planning to reach more than 200,000 children under five-years-old as part of a "Find and Treat" campaign over coming months, one of its doctors, Munawwar Said, told Reuters by phone. "With the displacement, communities are settling in new locations that do not have access to clean water, or there is not adequate access to food," he said. "We fear there are more cases being missed."

Over the weekend, families were already coming into an IMC clinic in the central city of Deir al-Balah, opened after the agency said it had to shut down two centres in the southern city of Rafah due to insecurity. Five-year-old Jana Ayad had weighed just 9 kilograms when she arrived, suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting, Nutrition Officer Raghda Ibrahim Qeshta told Reuters as she carefully held the child.

"My daughter was dying in front of me," said Nasma Ayad as she sat next to the bed. "I didn't know what to do." Jana had started putting on some weight after treatment, medics said, but she was still painfully thin with her ribs showing as she lay listlessly in her bunny pyjamas. Staff can gauge nutrition levels by measuring the circumference of children's arms. During a Reuters cameraman's short visit at least two of the measurements were in the yellow band, indicating a risk of malnutrition. IMC data so far shows the most vulnerable are babies and infants up to two-years-old.

A group of UN-led aid agencies estimates that around 7% of Gaza's children may be acutely malnourished, compared with 0.8% before the Israel-Hamas conflict began on Oct. 7. Until now the worst of severe hunger has been in the north, with a UN-backed report warning of imminent famine in March. But aid workers worry it could spread to central and southern areas due to the upheaval around Rafah that has displaced more than 1 million people and constrained supply flows through southern corridors.



More than 37,600 Palestinians have been killed during Israel's military offensive in Gaza, according to Gaza's health ministry. Israel began the operation after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 hostage, according to Israeli tallies. It says it has expanded efforts to facilitate aid flows into Gaza and blames international aid agencies for distribution problems inside the enclave.

Meanwhile, nearly 21,000 children are missing in Gaza, British aid group Save the Children has claimed. In a report published, the group said the thousands of missing Palestinian children are believed to be trapped beneath rubble, buried in unmarked graves, harmed beyond recognition by explosives, detained by Israeli forces, or lost in the chaos of conflict.

"It is nearly impossible to collect and verify information under the current conditions in Gaza," the group said, "but at least 17,000 children are believed to be unaccompanied and separated and approximately 4,000 children are likely missing under the rubble, with an unknown number also in mass graves". Israel has killed more than 14,000 children in Gaza since October 7, while others are suffering from severe malnutrition and do not "even have the energy to cry", the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), said in a report earlier this year.

"Since October, Gaza has faced relentless violence which has killed over 37,000 people, including thou-

sands of children. It follows an attack in Israel by Palestinian armed groups that killed over a thousand people, including at least 33 children," the Save the Children report reads. It also notes that about 250 Palestinian children are also missing in the occupied West Bank, as of 9 June.

Jeremy Stoner, Save the Children's regional director for the Middle East, has called for an independent investigation into the situation surrounding Gaza's missing children, and for accountability. "Families are tortured by the uncertainty of the whereabouts of their loved ones. No parent should have to dig through rubble or mass graves to try and find their child's body. No child should be alone, unprotected in a war zone. No child should be detained or held hostage," he added.

Khaled Quzmar, the general director of the child rights organisation Defense for Children International Palestine, told Al Jazeera that the impact that they have witnessed in the conflict in Gaza is at a level previously unseen, even during the second world war. "It is a war against children. Children in Gaza are the big cost of the Israeli genocide in Gaza," Quzmar said. International criticism has mounted amid the growing death toll in the war, as well as the deteriorating humanitarian crisis. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated that he would not agree to any deal that stipulated an end to Israel's war on Gaza.

Philippine court clears Duterte critic of charges

MANILA: A Philippine court has dropped the last of three cases against former Senator Leila de Lima, a longtime critic of former President Rodrigo Duterte and his "war on drugs". De Lima was targeted with various charges in 2017 within months of launching a senate inquiry into Duterte's bloody anti-drugs campaign, in which thousands of users and dealers were killed by police or in mysterious circumstances.

Critics and rights groups accuse the police of the summary execution of drug suspects. The police deny the charges, saying they acted in self-defence. Duterte, whose single term ended in 2022, accused de Lima of colluding with drug gangs while she was justice minister.

"I am now completely free and vindicated. It's very liberating," an emotional de Lima told reporters as she emerged from the southern Manila court, where the case against her was dismissed due to insufficient evidence. "My heart is full with all the love pouring in today after the dismissal of all my cases," she wrote in a post on X. De Lima was spent more than six years

in jail while on trial for three drug-trafficking charges.

She was freed on bail in November last year, having earlier been cleared of the two other drug charges. The final drug case that was overturned concerned the years 2010-2015 when she was justice minister, with allegations that she took money from inmates inside the country's largest prison to allow them to sell drugs. De Lima maintained that the charges, which carried a maximum penalty of life in prison, were fabricated in an effort to support the narcotics crackdown.

Multiple witnesses, including prison gang bosses, died or recanted their testimonies during the lengthy trials. The court also dismissed another charge alleging de Lima pressured a former employee to ignore a 2016 summons issued by the House of Representatives for a hearing in relation to the trade of illegal drugs in Philippine prisons. That case, the only other criminal proceeding against her, had carried a penalty of anywhere between a fine and six months in prison.

welcomed the dismissal of the "bogus charges" against de Lima, saying it was long overdue. "This is full freedom and vindication, finally for Leila de Lima after her nearly seven years of arbitrary detention, as well as relentless political persecution," Montse Ferrer, Amnesty International's Deputy Regional Director for Research, said in a statement. The court's decision was also welcomed by ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights.

"Despite the apparent flaws in the Philippine justice system, its judiciary remains independent and was able to see what activists, experts and human rights defenders the world over have known for years: that the drug charges brought against Senator de Lima are baseless and that she should not have spent a day in detention," APHR Board member and Malaysian member of parliament Wong Chen said in a statement. Duterte is facing an investigation by the International Criminal Court over the anti-drugs campaign. De Lima said that she would continue to help the court in its work. — Aljazeera

US reels under scorching temperatures

NEW YORK: Soaring temperatures have placed more than 50 million people in the United States under extreme heat advisories, while flooding has spurred rescue operations and evacuations throughout the Midwest.

The National Integrated Heat Health Information System said that about 57.4 million people across the country were under active extreme heat advisories, watches, and warnings, down from 123.8 million. "The arrival of this more intense heat early in the Summer season leads to a higher level of heat-related stress, especially for those outdoors and without reliable air conditioning available," the National Weather Service said in a report.

The soaring temperatures and deadly flooding underscore the risks of extreme weather fuelled by climate change, which has increased the frequency and intensity of such events. The governor of the midwestern state of South Dakota said that at least one person was killed in flooding over the weekend. In neighbouring Iowa, Governor Kim Reynolds told reporters that more than 1,000 displaced people had spent the night in shelters. — Aljazeera

Wikileaks founder to be freed in deal with US

LONDON: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been freed from prison in the United Kingdom and is set to travel home to Australia after he pleads guilty to a single charge of breaching the espionage law in the United States.

Assange, 52, will plead guilty to one count of conspiring to obtain and disclose classified US national defence documents, according to a filing in the US District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands. He was freed from the UK's high-security Belmarsh prison and taken to the airport where he flew out of the country. Assange will appear at a court in Saipan, a US Pacific territory at 9am on Wednesday (23:00 GMT on Tuesday) where he will be sentenced to 62 months of time already served.

"Julian Assange is free," Wikileaks said in a statement posted on X. "He left Belmarsh maximum security prison on the morning of 24 June, after having spent 1901 days there. He was granted bail by the High Court in London and was released at Stanstead airport during the afternoon, where he boarded a plane and departed the UK."

A video posted on X by Wikileaks showed Assange dressed in a blue shirt and jeans signing a document before boarding a private jet. He will

return to Australia after the hearing, the Wikileaks statement added, referring to the hearing in Saipan. "Julian is free!!!!" his wife Stella wrote on X. "Words cannot express our immense gratitude to YOU - yes, YOU, who have all mobilised for years and years to make this come true. THANK YOU. iHANK YOU, THANK YOU." Assange rose to prominence with the launch of Wikileaks in 2006, creating an online whistleblower platform for people to submit classified material such as documents and videos anonymously. Footage of a US Apache helicopter attack in Baghdad, which killed a dozen people, including two journalists, raised the platform's profile, while the 2010 release of hundreds of thousands of classified US documents on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as a trove of diplomatic cables, cemented its reputation. Wikileaks published material about many countries, but it was the US, during the administration of former US President Donald Trump, that decided to charge him in 2019 with 17 counts of breaching the Espionage Act.

US lawyers had argued he conspired with Chelsea Manning, a former army intelligence analyst, who spent seven years in prison for leaking material to WikiLeaks. She was

freed when US President Barack Obama commuted her sentence in 2017. The charges sparked outrage, with Assange's supporters arguing that, as the publisher and editor-in-chief of Wikileaks, he should not have faced charges usually used against government employees who steal or leak information. Press freedom advocates, meanwhile, argued that criminally charging Assange was a threat to free speech. "WikiLeaks published groundbreaking stories of government corruption and human rights abuses, holding the powerful accountable for their actions," Wikileaks said in its statement announcing the plea deal.

"As editor-in-chief, Julian paid severely for these principles, and for the people's right to know. As he returns to Australia, we thank all who stood by us, fought for us, and remained utterly committed in the fight for his freedom." Assange was first arrested in London in 2010 on a Swedish warrant accusing him of sexual assault. Allowed bail pending the extradition case, Assange took refuge in Ecuador's London Embassy in 2012 after a court ruled he could be sent to Sweden for trial. He spent the next seven years in the tiny embassy - during which time Swedish police withdrew the rape charges - before

UK police arrested him on charges of breaching his bail conditions. Assange was being held in prison in the UK as the US extradition case went through the courts. Plea deal comes as pressure mounted on US President Joe Biden to drop the long-running case against Assange.

In February the government of Australia made an official request to this effect and Biden said he would consider it, raising hopes among Assange supporters that his ordeal might end. At the time, the Australian government said Assange's case had "dragged on for too long and there is nothing to be gained by his continued incarceration". A spokesperson for the Australian government declined to respond to news of the plea deal, saying it was "not appropriate to provide further comment" until the proceedings were concluded. Prime Minister Albanese has been clear. Mr Assange's case has dragged on for too long and there is nothing to be gained by his continued incarceration," the spokesperson added.

Assange's mother, Christine, in a statement to Australian media, meanwhile said she was grateful that her son's "ordeal is finally coming to an end". "This shows the importance and power of quiet diplomacy," she said in the statement carried by public

broadcaster ABC and other media. Jodie Ginsberg, chief executive of the Committee to Protect Journalists, told Al Jazeera she was "delighted" at the news of Assange's expected release.

"If Julian had been extradited to the US and prosecuted under the Espionage Act [...] it would have had serious implications for journalists globally who seek information in the public interest, classified documents, and who then publish them in the public interest," she said from New York. "Remember, of course that Julian is not a US citizen. He is an Australian citizen and if he had been brought to the US and had been prosecuted, that could have meant that journalist anywhere seeking to publish information about human rights abuses, as Wikileaks did, could have found themselves pursued and prosecuted as the US had done with Julian." She added that the plea deal was a way for the Biden administration to save face, amid the increased pressure to release Assange, especially from Australia.

"They [the Biden administration] have a guilty plea on a criminal charge, but only on one criminal charge of course, and not the 18 that he was being prosecuted for and that could have seen him face 175 years in

total in jail. And Julian has been released to his home country and will now be able to spend time with his family and with his loved ones." In Australia, legislators who fought for Assange's freedom also welcomed news of his expected return. Barnaby Joyce, a former deputy prime minister, told ABC that it was greatly encouraging to see Assange on a plane, but cautioned that the "finish line" was not yet reached. The National Party legislator added that he was "pleased" that the outcome would set "an incredibly strong precedent" that Australians should not be charged by other countries for alleged crimes that are not committed on their soil.

"[Extraterritoriality] is a principle, and if you let it lapse for one then it lapses for all," he was quoted as saying. Australian Greens Senator David Shoebridge said he was looking forward to welcoming Assange back home. "Let's be clear, Julian Assange should never have been charged with espionage in the first place or had to make this deal," Shoebridge said. "[He] has spent years in jail for the crime of showing the world the horrors of the US war in Iraq and the complicity of governments like Australia and that is why he has been punished." — Aljazeera

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Alarm bells ring over heat waves

A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) survey of 75,000 people in 77 countries, released on June 20, showed that more people in 62 countries want a quick transition from fossil fuels to green technology because of the climate change implications, including 80 per cent in China and 54 per cent in the United States, the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases.

The survey's responses gain importance as world leaders meet at Baku in Azerbaijan this November at CoP29. Said UNDP global climate director Cassie Flynn, "As world leaders decide on the next round of pledges under the Paris Agreement by 2025, these results (survey's opinion) are undeniable evidence that people everywhere support bold climate action." The extreme heat conditions prevailing across continents this year, from India through Saudi Arabia and Egypt to Greece and Portugal and eastern United States, which has affected the lives of millions of people and caused hundreds of death has made the issue of climate change more urgent than ever. Temperatures are expected to reach 45 Degrees Celsius in Arizona in the United States.

According to World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), one of the next five years will surpass the temperatures of 2023, which has been declared the warmest in 2000 years. It is also expected that if in the pre-industrial era, heatwaves would have occurred once in a decade, the probability is that it will now occur 2.8 times in a decade, and it will be 1.2 Degrees Celsius warmer above the pre-industrial era temperature. If the global temperatures were to cross 2 Degrees Celsius, then the heatwaves would occur 5.6 times in a decade – a little more than every alternate year – and the temperatures would be 2.6 Degrees Celsius hotter. The rise in global temperatures has now moved from the theoretical to the critical zone. Action cannot be deferred any more.

Studies also show that in cities over the US there is the phenomenon called the "heat dome", where hot air is trapped and there is no way that cool air can break through the barrier. It also means that night temperatures would remain higher making extreme heat the new normal.

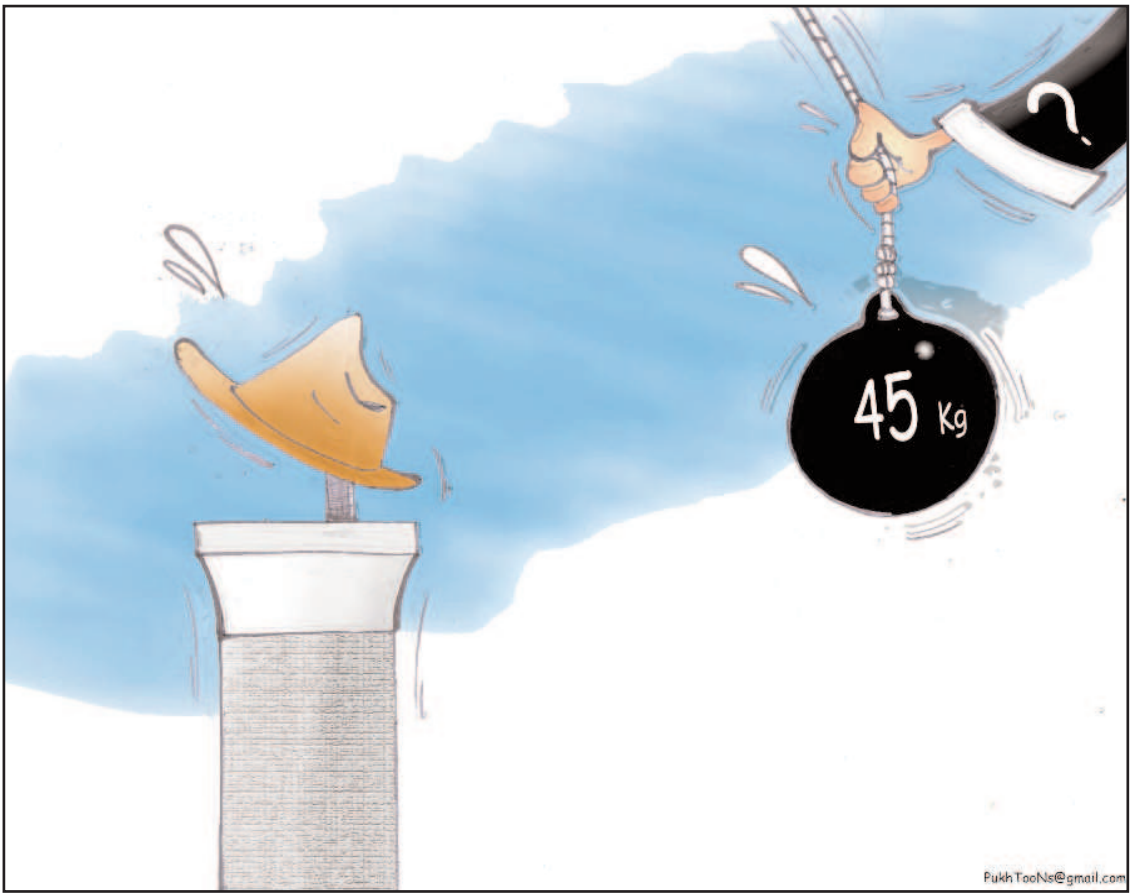
Governments and policy-makers are forced to reckon with the question of climate change, and the need to transit to green energy systems from the greenhouse gas emissions-driven fossil fuel energy systems in as quick a time as possible. The net-zero carbon emission target is now placed between 2050 for many countries, and 2070 for others. But the carbon emission curve has to take a dip gradually if the net-zero carbon emission target is to be met.

The other consequences of the rise in the frequency of extreme heat events is that governments are forced to issue public advisories to people as to when they should say inside, and when they can work. This will impact economic activity. Public health systems will be under pressure to handle the impact of the rising frequency of heat waves and the persistence of maximum temperatures. In the India capital, New Delhi, the maximum temperature hovered above 40 Degrees Celsius for 38 consecutive days. It is these long stretches of extreme heat that is raising the alarm in the local authorities as well as among people.

More people and more governments now agree that they have to do more in curbing rising global temperatures. But there is no unanimity as to the action plan. Developed countries are not willing to put their shoulder to the wheel, and help the poor and developing countries to transit to green technologies through financial and technological aid.

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Backfire controls

HAN ZHAOYING and LIU JIN

THE United States House Foreign Affairs Committee overwhelmingly passed the Enhancing National Frameworks for Overseas Critical Exports Act, or the ENFORCE act, by a vote of 43 to three, on May 23. This legislation aims to enhance the US government's ability to restrict the export of artificial intelligence models, thereby preventing China from developing advanced AI technologies. Since Joe Biden took office, high-tech export controls have become a key tool in the US' strategy to curb China's technological advancements. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has described export controls as "a new strategic asset in the US and allied toolkit". In recent years, the US has significantly expanded its export controls targeting China, intensifying restrictions on both traditional competitive strategic technologies and critical frontier technologies. This approach aims to transform the US' technological edge into permanent dominance, maintaining the nation's hegemony. However, these protectionist measures, instead of securing a competitive advantage for the US, may backfire.

The continuous escalation of US export controls against China has indeed adversely impacted China's high-tech development. Various essential materials, components and equipment needed for next-generation technology research and development have been included in the export control list. US technical personnel are prohibited from participating in and assisting Chinese enterprises in developing related technologies, and technological exchanges and cooperation are restricted to a small, exclusive anti-China circle. This has created short-term obstacles for Chinese companies in securing tech breakthroughs and revenue. It has also brought uncertainty to China's efforts to realize industrial transformation and upgrading.

However, the actual consequences of arbitrarily imposing high-tech export controls are more detrimental to the US than beneficial. Export controls are a "double-

edged sword"; moderate controls can help leading technology countries gain economic benefits and slow down the technological catchup of latecomers. Excessive controls, on the other hand, weaken the technological innovation capability and industrial competitiveness of leading technology countries. Washington's excessive high-tech export controls against Beijing have already caused severe negative impacts for the US itself.

First, these controls harm US business interests. According to a report by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, export controls have caused a significant reduction in the market value of US companies and a substantial loss of jobs. It estimates that export controls cost the average affected US supplier \$857 million in lost market capitalization, with total losses across all the suppliers of \$130 billion, and the total number of employees in affected companies has decreased by 7.1 percent. On May 7, the Biden administration further tightened export restrictions on Huawei Technologies Co, revoking licenses for US chip companies Qualcomm and Intel to sell semiconductors to the company. Both Qualcomm and Intel saw immediate impacts on their second-quarter revenue, with Intel's stock price dropping 2.2 percent the next day. Statistics show that the Chinese market accounted for 27 percent of Intel's turnover and 62 percent of Qualcomm's turnover in 2023. Due to export controls in the chip sector, Intel's stock price had already dropped nearly 38 percent in 2024, and Qualcomm's business with Huawei is expected to shrink to zero soon. In the long run, US companies will lose the vast Chinese market as a result of the export controls.

Second, these controls have weakened strategic trust in the US among its allies. The US is attempting to shift the back-blow pressure of its high-tech export controls against China onto its European and Asian allies through long-arm jurisdiction measures such as the Foreign-Produced Direct Product Rule. However, these measures face resistance from allies due to their different levels of

economic dependence on China and their different levels of advancement in tech industries. The Biden administration is currently pressuring allies such as the Netherlands, Japan, Germany and the Republic of Korea to take further steps to restrict China's access to advanced semiconductor technology. However, both the Netherlands and Japan have expressed resistance to these additional restrictions. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has stated his opposition to placing all exports to China under regulation, and the ROK government believes it should be cautious in participating in export controls against China. To maintain its dominance, Washington politicizes, instrumentalizes and weaponizes economic and technological issues, disregarding the economic and technological sovereignty of its allies and sacrificing their economic and security interests. The so-called export control alliance has not helped the US achieve its goal of containing China.

China. Instead, it has prompted countries to introduce competing technological subsidy policies, damaging trust and cooperation between the US and its allies and increasing the coordination costs for the Biden administration.

Third, these controls reduce the US' competitive edge. While export controls can help the US restructure its industrial chains and limit China's access to certain emerging technologies in the short term, this only temporarily delays China's progress without long-term prevention of China's technological strength enhancement. If the US wants to maintain its technological edge, it should actively boost domestic technological competitiveness and upgrade the R&D capabilities of high-tech companies. However, by implementing various containment measures on high-tech exports to China, the US is instead forcing China to seek self-reliant technological alternatives and industrial upgrades. Despite the targeted containment measures from Washington, Huawei still led the global patent application rankings in 2023. The company registered a revenue of approximately 178.45 bil-

lion yuan (\$24.6 billion) in the first quarter of 2024, a year-on-year increase of 36.66 percent. Moreover, Huawei has made breakthroughs in the MetaERP system, Harmony OS, Euler OS, EDA software, and 5G core components, achieving partial de-Americanization of its high-tech sector.

The US has abandoned maintaining "relative technological advantages" with other countries and instead strives for absolute dominance in key tech sectors. The US perceives China's technological innovation as a fundamental "threat" to its national security and will continue to expand the scope of high-tech export controls against China, imposing unreasonable unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction on Chinese high-tech companies. Although these high-tech export controls may seem profitable in the short term, they are essentially self-imposed shackles.

In light of this, China should try to further enhance the level of the dependence of US tech companies on its high-tech sector. It is important to leverage the strength of the nation's sound manufacturing system and its large market volume to attract greater US high-tech investment in China, thereby increasing the cost of "decoupling from China" for US companies. It is also important for the nation to actively integrate more into the global innovation network, explore new models of international cooperation, share more of China's development dividends, and promote global knowledge sharing. The differences between the US and its allies in technological development and industrial planning can be employed to break through the US technological blockade. Third, China must expedite its efforts to ensure its core technologies are independent and under its own control, form its own technological advantages, and help domestic companies in building an independent technological supply chain. Meanwhile, China must actively participate in the formulation of global technology standards, and enhance its discourse power in technological standards to precisely counteract the implementation of the US' unequal policy practices against China.

Will Hungary's EU presidency moderate its views?

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

HUNGARY will next week assume the rotating EU presidency, to the chagrin of many European leaders, who consider the country to be an outlier, to say the least, in terms of domestic governance, immigration and foreign policy, including the war in Ukraine and relations with Russia.

In addition to these intra-EU differences, Budapest has at times been the sole dissenter to the bloc's attempts to forge a united front on the Gaza war and help reach a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hungary has also been one of the main places where Islamophobia has been weaponized in domestic politics. Since the Gaza war started on Oct. 7, Hungary has been consistently pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian within the EU. For example, in February, all EU countries jointly called for a ceasefire in Gaza and urged Israel not to launch its planned assault on Rafah. But Budapest refused to endorse the call, despite pressure from other capitals. It also single-handedly derailed EU plans to collectively slap sanctions on violent Israeli settlers, first introduced in December following repeated attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank. In a rare airing of foreign policy differences, 26 of the 27 EU member states isolated Hungary and issued a statement calling for "an immediate humanitarian pause that could lead to a sustainable ceasefire" in besieged Gaza.

In May 2021, during an earlier Israeli attack on Gaza, the EU foreign ministers called for a ceasefire but failed to reach unanimity because of Hungary's sole objection, as the EU's chief diplomat Josep Borrell revealed at the time.

That pattern has been consistent. Hungary has joined a handful of countries at the UN in voting against resolutions on Palestinian rights and ceasefire calls. It has also opposed action by the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Activists and academics in Hungary have reported bans on pro-Palestine protests and other forms of peaceful expression.

In addition to the particulars of the Palestine-Israel conflict, Islamophobia has been weaponized in Hungary's politics. This is a departure from the historically amicable relations between the country and the Muslim and Arab worlds. It is also at odds with Prime Minister Viktor Orban's declared desire to forge strong ties with Muslim and Arab countries, along with the positive statements made during his frequent visits to the region and meetings with leaders from these countries.

Given the absence of a sizable Muslim population in Hungary — there are about 5,000 in a population of 10 million — Muslim-bashing has been almost cost-free. They have served as a scapegoat for the far-right parties, which fancy themselves as defenders of Europe in the face of both the "corrupt, liberal West" and the imagined "invading Eastern hordes."

According to research conducted at the Budapest-based Political Capital Institute, in collaboration with the Brookings Institution, Hungary underwent a dramatic transition after gaining independence in 1989, following four decades of Soviet control. This research is part of the multiyear Brookings project "The One Percent Problem:

Muslims in the West and the Rise of the New Populists."

In 1999, Hungary became a full-fledged NATO member and it joined the EU in 2004. Until 2010, Hungary was cited by Western observers as a prime example of a successful political and economic transformation. However, since then, it has departed somewhat from the EU-preferred political model to what has been described as a "competitive authoritarian" or "hybrid" model.

The EU and US have lamented that democratic institutions exist in theory in Hungary, but the rule of law and civil liberties have been "severely limited" in practice. Reflecting the drastic changes in Western perspectives, in 2010, the country scored 1 in Freedom House's Freedom of the World rankings, its highest score, as a "fully free democracy," but that fell to 2.5 in 2018 and the country was also downgraded to "partly free" status in terms of press freedom. In 2021, press watchdog Reporters Without Borders put Orban on its list of "predators," the first time a Western European leader had been placed in the lineup of heads of state or government who "crack down massively" on press freedom. According to the Political Capital Institute, there has been a rising trend of intolerance in Hungary since 1989 and xenophobia has been higher there than in most of the former Soviet republics. In 1992, 15 percent of Hungarians expressed xenophobic attitudes, but that figure increased to 39 percent by 2014 and reached a peak of 67 percent in October 2018. These views are particularly strong when it comes to Muslims. According to the Pew Research Center, 72 percent of Hungarians had unfavorable views of Muslims in 2016 compared to the EU median of 43 percent, even though (or rather because) Hungary has practically no Muslim population.

Hungarians were also more likely to consider refugees a burden or a major threat than the average European. In a 2017 survey, 64 percent of respondents from Hungary agreed with the statement that "all further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped." The refugee crisis was also weaponized in Hungarian politics. In 2014, 18 percent of Hungarians said immigration was one of the most pressing issues for the EU and only 3 percent thought it was one of the main challenges for Hungary, but in 2018, 56 percent of Hungarians said that immigration was one of the two most pressing issues facing the EU. While fear of uncontrolled illegal migration is understandable, turning it into irrational xenophobia directed mostly at Muslims is not. And translating that into taking extreme views on the Gaza war is destructive.

Budapest's defiance of EU consensus has been a thorn in Brussels' side and has isolated Hungary within the bloc, although recent gains by far-right parties in the European Parliament's elections may make it less isolated. However, being a spokesman for the bloc for the next six months may propel Hungary to become more conciliatory and closer to the center of the EU consensus. Hopefully, its presidency will drive Hungary to reassess its extreme positions on the Gaza war and the wider Middle East conflict and work to improve its relations with Muslims, both within the country and at large.

NATO chief's nuclear saber-rattling threatens mankind

Chen Weihua

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has always been known as a warmonger. But just weeks before his scheduled retirement after the NATO summit in Washington, he wants to add the nomenclature of a nuclear warmonger to his sordid legacy.

Stoltenberg told The Telegraph on Sunday that NATO is mulling the increasing number of available nuclear weapons to counter the alleged threat from Russia and China. "I won't go into operational details about how many nuclear warheads should be operational and which should be stored, but we need to consult on these issues. That's exactly what we're doing," he said.

Such irresponsible, beligerent remarks coming from a NATO chief is shock-

ing, because it is an invitation to a nuclear arms race and even a nuclear war which would wipe out the entire human race.

According to the estimates of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which was released on Monday, global spending on nuclear weapons is estimated to have jumped to a record \$91.4 billion in 2023. The United States' share of the total spending, \$51.5 billion, is more than all the other nuclear-armed states put together and accounts for 80 percent of the increase in nuclear weapons spending last year. The global increase of \$10.7 billion from the previous year was largely driven by the rapid increase in the US military budget.

The US has 1,770 nuclear warheads fitted to missiles or located in bases with operational forces, accord-

ing to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute on Monday, while Russia has 1,710. Together, the two countries account for 90 percent of the global nuclear arsenal.

Besides, three of the world's top five nuclear powers are NATO members — the US, the United Kingdom and France. It is absurd for Stoltenberg and some in Washington to try to spread fear across the world by claiming that China, whose nuclear arsenal is a fraction of that of the US, poses a nuclear threat to NATO.

More importantly, China has long maintained a minimum deterrence strategy of nuclear weapons. China is the first country to pledge no first use of nuclear weapons; it has also promised not to

use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states.

For decades, China has been urging the US and other countries to make the same pledge but its pleas have fallen on deaf ears in Washington and other capitals.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian reiterated this week that China's strategy is one of maintaining a high level of stability, continuity and predictability, and asked reporters to pay attention to the huge US investment in upgrading its nuclear arsenal.

Moreover, in December, the Scientific American, in its editorial, warned of the dire consequences of the US' plan to modernize its unwanted, unneeded and unsafe nuclear triad of land-, sea- and air-based weapons. "Perfectly poised to

refight the cold war, these overhauled bombs will waste \$1.5 trillion and threaten life on Earth for the century to come. We should rethink this miserable folly rather than once again squandering our wealth while driving a new arms race," the editorial said.

As for Stoltenberg's saber-rattling, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a UK-based organization, condemned him for conjuring up the phantom of a nuclear war. CND General Secretary Kate Hudson said "Stoltenberg's suggestion that NATO make more of its nuclear weapons operationally available is a further step towards nuclear war. The latest NATO insanity must be opposed."

The lack of public endorsement for Stoltenberg's nuclear warmongering by European leaders of NATO shows that

he may have been echoing the voices of certain Pentagon officials.

NATO has been sabotaging global efforts to promote nuclear disarmament since it bombed and invaded Libya to effect a regime change by abusing a United Nations resolution on no-fly-zone in 2011, years after Muammar Gaddafi had abandoned his nuclear program. NATO has made it much harder, if not impossible, for countries feeling threatened by the transatlantic military alliance to shelve their nuclear programs. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a case in point.

The whole world, including European Union leaders, should denounce Stoltenberg's nuclear saber-rattling because he has just pushed the world a step closer to nuclear annihilation.

Should we fear a far-right resurgence in Europe?

Dimitar Bechev

WHEN Emmanuel Macron decided to enter the French political fray in 2016, he did so by launching a new centrist-liberal political party called “En Marche” (On the Move). Eight years later, however, it is embattled President Macron’s far-right nemesis, Marine Le Pen, who appears to be marching forward to power.

At the June 6-9 European Parliament elections, Le Pen’s National Rally secured 31.5 percent of the vote, more than double the meagre 14.6 percent Macron’s party, since renamed “Renaissance”, managed to get.

What is more, the National Rally is projected to win a plurality of votes in the forthcoming snap legislative election Macron called in reaction to the debacle at the EU elections.

As a result, France may be on the cusp of electing a far-right government promising to clamp down on immigration, to further suppress the rights and liberties of French Muslims, and to push back against what they deem to be EU impositions.

Liberal pundits are already lashing out at Macron for making a gamble that could backfire in a big way, comparing his move to call snap elections to then-British Prime Minister David Cameron’s 2016 decision to hold a referendum on Brexit.

Since the European Parliament elections, the situation in France has come to dominate Europe’s headlines, and led to fears of a far-right resurgence on the continent. Looking at the larger picture, and the political composition of the new parliament in Brussels, however, could help calm nerves, at least for now.

As was the case in previous European elections, mainstream forces – the centre-right

European People’s Party (EPP), The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, the liberal Renew and the Greens – secured a majority in the European Parliament this month. In other words, the centre held and the EPP does not need to seek support from the far right, including Italy’s Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni whose deputies form the largest caucus within the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) grouping.

This means, at least for the next five years, business will continue as usual in Europe, with the mainstream most likely remaining in control. EPP’s Ursula von der Leyen could secure a second term as head of the European Commission, Socialist former Prime Minister of Portugal Antonio Costa, could become the president of the European Council, and so on.

Yet the concerns over a far-right resurgence are not entirely without merit. It is not only France where the far right is on the rise, but also Germany.

At this latest European election, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) came second with 16 percent in Germany, beating Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s Social Democrats. The anti-immigrant party drew massive support in the former East Germany and among young voters. AfD is so radical that even Le Pen’s National Rally cannot stomach some of its positions and statements.

National Rally recently demanded, and secured, the German party’s expulsion from the Identity and Democracy (ID) grouping in the European Parliament partly in response to positive comments one of its bigwigs made about Hitler’s Waffen SS.

With two major EU states – France and Germany – are experiencing a far-right surge, a far-right takeover of Europe through national politics appears entirely plausible. A potential Trump victory in the US presidential elections will only embolden nationalists and populists across the EU to seek more power and influence in both member-states and in Brussels.

There is, however, still much cause for optimism. Beyond continued centrist control in Brussels, the situation in the eastern EU is not looking promising for the far right either. In key countries like Hungary and Poland, the right-wing populists are now on the back foot.

This is somewhat unexpected given the historical record. The states that joined the Union in 2004-2007 have been a breeding ground for nativism and far-right politics. Viktor Orban’s Hungary championed “illiberal democracy” – the rule of a strongman dismantling checks and balances, clamping down on civil society and the free media and defying the EU mainstream. He has an international following, too – from Slovakia’s Prime Minister Robert Fico, to the Georgian Dream governing in Tbilisi, all the way to Donald Trump and the US Republicans.

In Hungary, the European Parliament election saw Orban suffer setbacks. His FIDESZ party failed, by the thinnest of margins, to re-capture the capital Budapest in a local election bundled with the European vote.

The governing party’s vote share went down from 52 to 44 percent compared with the last EP polls in 2019. Respect and Freedom (TISZA), established by a prominent former FIDESZ member, Peter Magyar, secured

30 percent. Orban celebrated a victory but in reality, he is bleeding support to a youthful and dynamic challenger who can peel off conservative voters.

In Poland, Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s Civic Coalition (KO) finished first with 37.1 percent of the vote. KO overtook Jaroslaw Kaczynski’s Law and Justice (PiS) by about one percentage point, but the symbolism of the victory matters. Last year, Tusk came to power by winning 30 percent but then building a coalition government with the left and a centrist bloc.

The conservative PiS, under whose rule between 2015-2023 Poland shifted into an illiberal and anti-EU direction, still secured the largest number of MPs. But like his ally Orban, Kaczynski is clearly losing popularity at home.

It is easy to dismiss Hungary and Poland as secondary players in the EU. Many believe it’s what happens in France and Germany that really matters in the grand scheme of things. However, there is also a lesson to be learned.

Even in places where far-right populists seize power and capture the state, democracy could prove resilient. Elections matter and they could provide an opportunity to clip the wings of illiberal politicians and would-be autocrats. Or indeed force them to compromise and, in some cases like, like Meloni in Italy, move towards the centre.

This, of course, is small consolation if Le Pen wins in France – and even goes on to succeed Macron as president in 2027. Thanks to integration, domestic politics in EU member states have become intertwined and co-dependent. What happens by the banks of the Seine in the coming weeks will have knock-on effects across Europe.

The US and Israel missed many opportunities for peace with Hamas

Sandy Tolan

THE continued failure of the Biden administration to secure a full and lasting ceasefire in Gaza may go down as the most terrible and deadly diplomatic catastrophe of our time. The principles have been in place for weeks; Hamas has agreed to the general terms, and endorsed the June 10 ceasefire resolution by the UN Security Council. Yet US deference to Israeli intransigence – no matter that it stubbornly blames Hamas – is costing thousands of Palestinian lives.

Any close follower of US-Israeli relations might have predicted this. US acquiescence to Israel’s unprecedented onslaught in Gaza has powerful roots in the last 30 years – ironically, since the beginning of the Oslo “peace process” in 1993. US reluctance to confront its ally, save it from itself, and insist on a visionary path of reconciliation, has brought us to this latest precipice.

Let us travel, for example, to June 2006, when a private US citizen named Jerome Segal left the Gaza Strip carrying a letter for Washington. The letter was from Ismail Haniyeh, then and now the Hamas leader. Segal, founder of the Jewish

also labelled terrorist by the British authorities – two of them, Yitzhak Shamir and Menachem Begin, became prime ministers of Israel. Yet they all navigated a way to a reconciliation, albeit with sharply divergent goals and degrees of success.

A few voices in Israel’s security establishment endorsed engagement with Hamas. Shmuel Zakai, former brigadier general and commander of the Israeli military’s Gaza division, pressed Israel “to take advantage of the calm to improve, rather than markedly worsen, the economic plight of the Palestinians in the [Gaza] Strip... You cannot just land blows, leave the Palestinians in Gaza in the economic distress they are in, and expect Hamas just to sit around and do nothing”.

Another advocate for dialogue was a former director of the Mossad. “I believe there is a chance that Hamas, the devils of yesterday, could be reasonable people today,” said Efraim Halevy. “Rather than being a problem, we should strive to make them part of the solution.”

But we’ll never know if Hamas really wanted to help forge a solution. The US did

became essentially sealed off from Gaza, and the dream of a corridor between the two territories in a sovereign Palestine effectively died.

The US also has abetted Israel’s policy of splintering Palestine from itself, weakening the dream of self-determination and making a two-state solution all but impossible. In the last 30 years, since the Oslo deal was signed, the settler population in the West Bank has quadrupled, hundreds of military checkpoints remain in place, and over a dozen Jewish settlements now ring East Jerusalem, which Palestinians still consider their capital. Yet in those three decades, no US president has been willing to hold Israel to account by linking US military aid to ending its ongoing colonisation of the West Bank. The last US official to do that was Secretary of State James Baker, in the first Bush administration in 1992. US inaction has consequently enabled Israel’s settlement expansion and the indiscriminate killing of tens of thousands of Gaza’s civilians.

Now, with Gaza in ruins, Hamas has agreed in principle to a ceasefire, both on May 6 and again after the June 10 UN Security Council Resolution. Reports

Hamas had just been elected by the Palestinian people, who had grown exhausted and angry with the corruption of the ruling, Fatah-led Palestinian Authority, and voted for change. Haniyeh, long the leader of the Islamist opposition in Palestine, was suddenly confronted with the real prospect of navigating through humanitarian and economic crises, not to mention ongoing military pressure from Israel and a looming economic siege on Gaza. In the back-channel letter, Haniyeh sought compromise. Despite Hamas’s charter calling for the elimination of Israel, Haniyeh’s note to President George W Bush was conciliatory. “We are so concerned about stability and security in the area,” Haniyeh wrote, “that we don’t mind having a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders and offering a truce for many years”. This was essentially de facto recognition of Israel, with a cessation of hostilities – two of the key US and Israeli demands of Hamas. “The continuation of this situation,” Haniyeh added prophetically, “will encourage violence and chaos in the whole region”. Was Hamas serious? It was at the time in negotiations with the PA to form a unity government – suggesting the letter wasn’t just a ruse. Haniyeh now appeared to accept the concept of a two-state solution. If true, it was a stunning concession.

Peace Lobby at the University of Maryland, was bound for the State Department, where he would deliver a surprising offer.

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It would hardly be unprecedented for a militant revolutionary group, considered terrorist by the US, to come to the negotiating table. After all, the PA’s predecessor, the PLO, long carried the terrorist label, as did Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress. For that matter, Jewish militias fighting for Israel’s independence before 1948 were

not respond to Haniyeh’s letter. Instead, in 2007, it launched a covert effort to foment a Palestinian civil war, trying and failing to oust Hamas. In hand-to-hand street combat, Hamas battled the US-backed PA fighters. Hamas prevailed in the Battle of Gaza, and has ruled ever since. True to Haniyeh’s prediction, violence and chaos has followed, almost without pause. In war after war, Israel has pledged to destroy Hamas, and failed.

In 2014, the Obama administration would follow the same path as Bush’s when it rejected another deal with Hamas, which was in new unity negotiations with the PA, and had again agreed to a deal with Israel and the West – this one even more accommodating than Haniyeh’s appeal eight years earlier. The new effort at reconciliation “could have served Israel’s interests,” wrote Jerusalem-based author and analyst Nathan Thrall.

“It offered Hamas’s political adversaries a foothold in Gaza; it was formed without a single Hamas member; it retained the same Ramallah-based prime minister, deputy prime ministers, finance minister and foreign minister; and, most important, it pledged to comply with the three conditions for Western aid long demanded by America and its European allies: nonviolence, adherence to past agreements and recognition of Israel.”

Instead, the US tacitly backed Israel’s “splintering strategy” to divide the Palestinian factions, and, with it, the land itself. In a State Department cable, published by WikiLeaks, the director of Israel’s military intelligence told the American ambassador in Tel Aviv that a Hamas victory would allow Israel “to treat Gaza” as a separate “hostile country”, and that he would be “pleased” if PA leader Mahmoud Abbas “set up a separate regime in the West Bank”.

Thus the West Bank

suggest Hamas wants to ensure guarantees of Israeli withdrawal and a lifting of the siege on Gaza. A senior Hamas official told Reuters that any requested changes are “not significant,” and Haniyeh claimed Hamas’s position is “consistent” with the agreement’s principles. Israel, meanwhile, is balking, saying, again, it won’t rest until Hamas is no more. Yet none of Israel’s previous promises to destroy Hamas have come true. With the group’s popularity surging among Palestinians, Israel’s continued insistence on eliminating Hamas amounts to a fantasy to justify the ongoing slaughter.

US Secretary of State Blinken, on his recent trip to the region, didn’t exactly inspire confidence. In his June 10 remarks in Cairo, he put all the blame on Hamas, without once mentioning the killing of 274 Palestinians in the Israeli military operation to extract four hostages in Nuseirat. If the Biden administration had a shred of political vision, not to mention humanity, the US would end its acute deference to Israel, flex its muscle, and use the leverage it somehow refuses to exercise. Whatever scant credibility the US maintains internationally is at stake. Far more important, the lives of over two million Palestinians in Gaza depend on it. But with Biden’s own party inviting Netanyahu to address the US Congress on “the Israeli government’s vision for defending democracy”; with the so-called leader of the free world playing a willing punching bag for Israel’s prime minister; with all moral clarity and political logic abandoned by a Washington intelligentsia held captive by pro-Israel interests; it may be too much to expect a change in behaviour any time soon.

Still, it must be said. It is time for the US to stop accommodating Israel’s rogue and ruinous behaviour, and insist on an immediate, full and lasting ceasefire.

Election offers little hope of change for Iran’s youth

Osama Al-Sharif

IRANIAN voters will head to the polls on Friday to pick the country’s next president. This special presidential election was necessitated by the death in a helicopter crash of President Ebrahim Raisi, along with top aides, last month. His death came a year before his first four-year term as president was due to end.

Raisi, a hard-liner, had little impact on the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy and many wonder if he had done much to improve the lives of the 85 million Iranians. His death upset the plans of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to prepare Raisi as his possible successor. Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian also succumbed in the crash, dealing a blow to the country’s robust new approach to normalize ties with its neighbors, pursue a strong anti-Israel policy and initiate indirect dialogue with the Biden administration through mediators to lift sanctions and renew the nuclear deal.

The election will take place almost two years after the Islamic Republic was rocked by nationwide protests in the wake of the death of a young Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini, in police custody in 2022. Protesters challenged the country’s 45-year-old clerical rule, demanding an end to the suppression of personal freedoms and denouncing the dire economic conditions.

The government’s ruthless clampdown on protesters resulted in at least 200 deaths, according to the government, but the real figure may be in the thousands, according to rights groups. Thousands were arrested, several activists were tried and seven were executed. The crackdown on the protests underlined the clerical regime’s refusal to make concessions or revise its policies.

In March, a UN fact-finding mission accused the regime of serious rights violations, many amounting to crimes against humanity. The mission found that the Iranian authorities committed murder, torture, rape and other crimes during the crackdown.

The aftershocks can still be felt across Iran, especially by the youth. According to a Dutch survey, at least 65 percent of voters will boycott the upcoming election. There is a feeling among the youth that, whoever becomes president, little will change.

Under the 1989 constitutional reforms, the prime minister’s office was abolished and his powers were transferred to the president. However, the supreme leader holds the real power, especially concerning foreign policy, the nuclear program and significant domestic reforms.

Since then, Iranians have elected five presidents: two reformists and three conservatives, including Raisi. All had gone through a rigorous vetting process by the Guardian Council, which is affiliated with Khamenei, before they were allowed to run. Even then, there have always been allegations of election fraud. In 2009, reformist Mir-Hossein Mousavi, a former prime minister, was believed to have won the election but was denied victory, prompting protests, especially by the youth, in what became known as the Green Movement.

This time, only six candidates – five conservatives and one reformist – have been allowed to run out of at least 80 applicants. The moderate candidate, Masoud Pezeshkian, is believed to have been allowed to run to appease the reformists. When Raisi ran in

2021, no reformist candidates were allowed to contest the election.

Pezeshkian’s candidacy may be to woo back the disgruntled youth following the 2022 protests. Still, he faces tough competition in the poll. Among his main rivals is Parliament Speaker Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf, who is also a former mayor of Tehran. He has run before without success. Other candidates include former Interior Minister

Mostafa Pourmohammadi, Saeed Jalili, a former chief nuclear negotiator, and current Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani.

Pourmohammadi is proving to be the biggest threat to Pezeshkian, as he is also targeting the youth. Departing from the main conservative line, Pourmohammadi has vowed to end the controversial morality police, relax the blocking of social media networks and push for negotiations with the US. Last week, he appeared on state TV with his daughter, who holds a doctorate in economics and is his senior adviser. He asked her to speak about the pain of US sanctions and the need to lift them through talks.

He is now pushing himself as a moderate conservative to distance himself from the more extreme conservatives. On the other hand, Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon, former health minister and longtime member of parliament, has won the endorsement of Javad Zarif, who served as foreign minister under President Hassan Rouhani. This could endear him to the West if he wins – Pezeshkian has vowed to push diplomacy to revive the nuclear deal and lift US sanctions.

Reformist presidents in Iran tend to prioritize issues such as social freedoms, human rights and diplomatic engagement with the international community. They often advocate for more moderate policies compared to the hard-liners within the government. Some key characteristics of a reformist president in Iran include a willingness to negotiate with other countries, support for greater civil liberties and a desire to improve Iran’s image on the world stage.

The other candidates are more in line with the ayatollah’s anti-Western position and his rejection of concessions on diverse issues, from talks with the US to easing the grip of the morality police and revising women’s rights. They are also close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its policies, especially concerning the backing of pro-Iran proxies.

It remains unclear who will win and whether the state will interfere in the election’s outcome. There will likely be a runoff before the new president’s name is known.

But the real question remains: Who will replace Khamenei, who is now 85? He holds the real power in Iran and it is he who will have the final say on how the country proceeds on crucial issues such as its nuclear program, its relations with its neighbors and how it runs its proxy wars. Discussion of a successor to the supreme leader is not a public issue in Iran.

For most Iranian youth, little is expected to change regarding the challenges facing them, such as unemployment, personal freedoms and women’s rights. For most, Iran’s regional ambitions are not a priority and, until there is a significant shift in the country’s national priorities, apathy and indifference are likely to prevail.

— Arab News

Are Hezbollah and Israel on the brink of open warfare?

Ali Hamade

THE military stand-off between Hezbollah and Israel has intensified dramatically since Oct. 8, with recent clashes edging the two sides closer to full-scale warfare. The frequency and severity of the confrontations have surged in recent days, pushing the situation to the brink of open conflict.

When we talk about the brink of war, we mean a full-scale conflict that both Hezbollah and Israel are perilously close to. The recent surge in hostilities suggests a significant shift in the conflict’s dynamics, with both parties shedding their previous caution, potentially setting the stage for a protracted and perilous engagement.

This month’s retaliation by Hezbollah following the assassination of Abu Taleb, one of its highest-ranking field commanders, was

forceful yet restrained. Israel, for its part, has been cautious not to cross any red lines. However, rising concerns center on the increasing intensity of strikes between the two parties.

Despite both Hezbollah and Israel’s apparent intent to avoid crossing dangerous thresholds, the ongoing war of attrition and the political deadlock over ending the conflict in Gaza heightens the risk of a major miscalculation by either side. Additionally, any sudden shift in the current rules of engagement could trigger a major war that neither side initially intended.

The concerned parties are closely monitoring the gradual decline in the US administration’s interest in the Gaza war. This shift is primarily due to the conflict’s diminishing importance as an element in the

US presidential election campaign, as it is being overshadowed by more pressing domestic issues.

American voters are reportedly more focused on economic matters and immigration. The two leading presidential candidates are deeply engrossed in domestic politics, limiting the maneuverability of the incumbent and his administration.

The election campaign is expected to limit the Biden administration’s ability to exert pressure on conflicting parties in the region, particularly Israel. This scenario empowers the pro-Israel lobby in America to more effectively defend Israel’s stance against Hamas and hinder the Biden administration from applying more pressure on Benjamin Netanyahu’s government.

This context underscores the gravity of the upcoming period. The departure of Benny Gantz – a key moderating influence who is often seen as a US-friendly figure – from the Israeli war council has not yet sealed the fate of the Israeli government.

However, Netanyahu’s dissolution of the war Cabinet could have a detrimental impact on the Lebanese front.

Lebanon is currently navigating a perilous phase, teetering precariously on the edge of the abyss. The country is threatened with becoming a major theater in a regional conflict that pits the Iran-backed Hezbollah against Israel.

Israel perceives Hezbollah’s military posture, right on its doorstep, as a more profound existential threat than even Hamas in Gaza. This complex situation presents a

formidable challenge not just for Israel but for the broader Western interests in the region.

Hezbollah’s recent display of military prowess on the global stage, rather than bolstering its position, may in fact be setting the stage for its potential downfall.

This heightened visibility raises concerns about the sustainability of the coexistence between Israel and Hezbollah. If not now, against the backdrop of the Gaza conflict, the likelihood of a major escalation in the coming years looms large.

Such a scenario would undoubtedly escalate tensions to a catastrophic level.

Meanwhile, ordinary Lebanese citizens are grappling with a pressing question: Is it not time to halt this conflict, which poses a far greater threat to Lebanon than to Israel?



PSX stays bearish, loses 291 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 291.52 points, a negative change of 0.37 percent, closing at 77,940.58 points against 78,232.10 points on the last working day.

A total of 292,186,284 shares were traded during the day as compared to 385,176,598 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 11.414 billion against Rs 15.450 billion on the last trading day.

Around 433 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 144 of them recorded gains and 219 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 70 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pervez Ahmed Company with 26,808,974 shares at Rs 2.29 per share, K-Electric Limited with 17,900,691

shares at Rs 4.43 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 16,871,942 shares at Rs1.28 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 71.43 per share price, closing at Rs 18,300.00, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with a Rs 39.96 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,388.94.

Sapphire Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 84.32 per share closing at Rs 1,300.45, followed by Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with a Rs 74.94 decline to close at Rs 7,625.06.

Rupee gains 12 paise against Dollar

Pakistan Rupee on Tuesday gained 12 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.50 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.62.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan

(FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.75 and Rs 280.6 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 30 paise to close at Rs 298.74 against the last day's closing of Rs 298.44, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.74, whereas an increase of 92 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 353.51 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 352.59.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 03 and 04 paise to close at Rs 75.82 and Rs 74.23.

Gold rates dip by Rs500 per tola to Rs241,500

The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 500 and was sold at Rs 241,500 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 242,000 on last trading day.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, TSS Amber, SinarMendawai, Horizon 1 and Gaslog Geneva carrying Containers, Palm oil, LPG and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Engro Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on.

Meanwhile three more ships, Hanfnia Turquoise, Gaschem Fuji and Serenity Gas carrying Mogas, Chemicals and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them gas carrier Al-Jassasiya is expected to sail on today afternoon, and three more ships, TSS Amber, Horizon-1 and Chem Trans Ionian is expected sail on same day afternoon.

Cargo volume of 161,353 tonnes, comprising 128,100 tonnes imports cargo and 33,253 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,980 Containers (1,160 TEUs Imports and 1,820 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Four ships are at outer anchorage of port, out of them a chemicals carrier 'Serenity' & two more container ships, Atlantic Ibis and Maersk Kinloss are expected to take berths at EVTL and QICT respectively on Tuesday, while containers ship 'Maersk Cairo' is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

GCAA of UAE aviation security assessment started



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A two-member team of GCAA-UAE, led by Abdullah Al Kaabi, Senior Director of Avsec Affairs, arrived at IIAP Islamabad for Avsec assessment of the airport. Air Cdre (R) Shahid Qadir, Director Avsec PCAA, on behalf of Secretary Aviation, welcomed the team.

Abdullah re-affirmed UAE commitment in strengthening aviation security

system of Pakistan through capacity and capability building.

The opening meeting was attended by the APM/COO Aftab Gilani and all the concerned airport stakeholders.

During the three-day assessment till 27 June, the team will be inspecting implementation of various security measures at the airport, with specific focus on the measures being adopted for flights to the

UAE.

The assessment is being hosted by the Aviation Security Directorate of the PCAA and is a continuation of collaborative efforts between GCAA-UAE and PCAA for enhancing Aviation Security standards in the country.

The UAE-GCAA Team's visit also includes aviation security assessment of Karachi's Jinnah International Airport from 2-5 July.

Tax net to be broadened for revenue generation

FAISALABAD (APP): The tax net will be broadened with the active cooperation of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) so that much-needed revenue could be generated without adding more burden on the existing taxpayers, said Irshad Hussain, Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue (Operation) Faisalabad.

Talking to a delegation of the business community, the Chief Commissioner said that he had already served in Faisalabad and had intimacy with business leaders. "I also understand the tax related problems confronted by the business community", he said and added that he would try his best to facilitate them within the given circumstances.

Dr Sajjad Arshad, Senior

Vice President FCCI, led the delegation and met the Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue (Operation) in his office. The delegation comprised Vice President FCCI, Hajji Muhammad Aslam Bhatti, Chaudhary Talat Mahmood, Abaid-ullah Sheikh, Idrees Sadhey Sheikh, Rehan Ashfaq, Chaudhary Taimoor Talat, Muhammad Qasim, Muhammad Shahzad and Ifukhar Hussain Ansari.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Vice President FCCI, Dr Sajjad Arshad, congratulated Irshad Hussain on assuming the office of the chief commissioner inland revenue and assured him of his full cooperation.

He said that the proposed budget had fomented serious apprehensions,

however, they could resolve the issues in close collaboration. He also extended an invitation to Irshad Hussain to visit the FCCI at a time and date convenient to him. It would provide a chance to FCCI members to directly interact with the chief commissioner and explain their unresolved issues, he added.

Vice President FCCI, Hajji Muhammad Aslam Bhatti, said that traders were patriotic Pakistani and ready to contribute their role but they must be taken into confidence about the "Tajir Dost Scheme".

The chief commissioner accepted the invitation to visit the FCCI and assured to extend maximum facilitation to the business community.

POL import bill decreases by 0.28 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall petroleum group decreased by 0.28 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-May (2023-24) stood at \$ 15,338.947 million, as against the imports of \$ 15,382.307 million during the same period of last year, according to PBS data.

Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 11.69 percent, from \$ 6,748.197 million last year to \$ 5,959.417 million during the time period under review.

However, the imports of petroleum crude increased by 12.06 percent, from \$

4,522.559 million to \$ 5,067.850; natural gas liquefied by 3.04 percent, from \$ 3,471.608 to \$ 3,577.164 whereas the imports of petroleum gas liquefied went up by 14.80 percent and reached to \$ 639.625 million as compared to \$ 734.305 last year.

The imports of all other petroleum group products decreased by 33.37 percent and went down to \$0.212 million from \$0.318 million.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed an increase of 12.09 percent during the month of May 2024 as compared to the same month of last year.

The petroleum imports during May 2024 were recorded as \$ 1,577.878 million against the imports of \$ 1,407.698 million during May 2023.

However, on a month-on-month basis, the petro-

leum imports into the country decreased by 5.90 percent during May 2024, as compared to the imports of \$ 1,676.753 million in April 2024, according to the data.

It is pertinent to mention here that the trade deficit contracted by 15.25 per cent during the first 11 months of the current financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-May 2023-24, exports grew by 10.65 per cent as these were recorded at \$28.070 billion as compared to the exports of \$25.368 billion during the same period of the last year.

The imports into the country during the period under review decreased by 2.37 per cent to \$49.802 billion as against the imports of \$51.010 billion in the same period of last year.

Europe stocks dropped

LONDON (AFP/APP): European stock markets slid Tuesday as jitters resurfaced over impending French elections but US tech shares bounced following a selloff led by investor darling Nvidia.

Wall Street's tech-heavy Nasdaq and the broad-based S&P 500 rose in opening deals while the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell.

In Europe, Paris, London and Frankfurt were all in the red in afternoon trading.

Nvidia was back in the green on Tuesday after diving by 15 percent from its high on Thursday over concerns that the tech sector's rally had gone too far.

The US company had briefly become the world's biggest publicly listed firm last week, with a market capitalisation of more than \$3.3 trillion.

The Nvidia selloff "was not driven by fundamental factors", said Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB trading platform. "The company is still expected to generate epic profits for this quarter."

Analysts are also keeping tabs on the outlook for interest rates in the United States.

With US data indicating the world's top economy remains in rude health and the jobs market is still tight, investors are unsure about the Federal Reserve's plans for interest rates, with debate centred on when -- or even if -- it will cut this year.

The focus is now on the release Friday of the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index -- the Fed's favoured inflation gauge -- with traders hoping for another slowdown that would give decision-makers room to start loosening policy.

In Europe, the focus was on the upcoming elections in France on Sunday, which will be followed by a second round on July 7.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging and displaying tomatoes on handcart to attract customers at Fruit & Vegetable Market.

CDC announces further tariff reductions

— to facilitate Capital Market Investors

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC) has completely eliminated Annual Maintenance Fee for the Sub-Account Holders, as well as announced a full waiver of the CDS connection fee and minimum fees for Securities Brokers.

However, in order to make the transaction fee equitable, the Intra account movement transaction fee has been introduced. The revised tariffs reflect CDC's commitment to enhancing market accessibility and cost reduction for all capital market stakeholders.

CDC has announced the additional reduction and rationalization in tariffs, effective July 1, 2024. In alignment with the Secu-

rities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's (SECP) vision for investor facilitation and reducing the cost of doing business, CDC has, since its inception, reduced its transaction and custody fees by nearly 95%.

Commenting on the above reductions, Chairman CDC Farrukh H. Sabzwari and CEO CDC Mr. Badiuddin Akber said, "CDC has consistently passed on these benefits to investors through significant tariff reductions under the visionary guidance of CDC Board.

The current tariff rationalization is in line with CDC's Management Strategy of reducing cost of doing business and facilitating the Investors and other market players, including Securities Brokers." They further

mentioned that they are thankful to SECP in this regard, especially SECP Chairman Mr. Akif Saeed and Commissioner (SMD) Mr. Abdul Rehman Warraich, for their continued support and encouragement towards CDC for coming up with reforms to enhance ease of doing business and tariff reductions and rationalizations.

Since its inception in 1997, CDC has consistently prioritized the delivery of efficient, cost-effective services to its diverse clientele, including market participants and general investors. During the last five years, CDC has been at the frontline of spearheading the digitization drive and has launched numerous groundbreaking initiatives in a very cost effective manner, most of them at even

NO COST to investors.

These include implementation of Professional Clearing Member regime with the formation of a separate company named ECLEAR Services, and introduction of many digital solutions and services such as CDS Access, Dividend Repository, eIPO, eLOR, eVoting, e-Meeting, Zakat Repository, Emlaak Financials for mutual fund investments, and the Centralized Gateway Portal, among many other initiatives aimed at streamlining payments and business processes.

CDC has been functioning as an indispensable pillar of the capital market infrastructure by driving innovation and efficiency in the financial sector with innovative and efficient financial solutions.

POL import bill decreases by 0.28 per cent: Report

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The imports into the country during the period under review decreased by 2.37 per cent to \$49.802 billion as against the imports of \$51.010 billion in the same period of last year.

Asian markets bounce on bargain-buying

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets edged higher Tuesday after recent losses as investors ignored another tough day for tech titans on Wall Street that has raised concerns about a correction in markets following a string of record highs.

Investors are also keeping tabs on Tokyo after Japan's top currency official warned authorities were ready 24 hours a day to intervene to support the yen as it sits around three-decade lows against the dollar.

With US data indicating the world's top economy remains in rude health and the jobs market is still tight, investors are unsure about the Federal Reserve's plans for interest rates, with debate centred on when -- or even if -- it will cut this year.

The focus is now on the release Friday of the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index -- the Fed's favoured inflation gauge -- with traders hoping for another slowdown that would give decision-makers room to start loosening policy.

Uncertainty surrounding rates has done little to hold back US equities as a blistering surge in tech giants - fuelled by an explosion in all things linked to artificial intelligence -- has helped

push the S&P 500 and Nasdaq to multiple records this year.

However, profit-taking and worries that the rally has gone too far has started to weigh on the sector, with the latest market darling Nvidia leading the losses by diving more than 15 percent from its high on Thursday.

It had briefly become the world's biggest publicly listed firm two days earlier, with a market capitalisation of more than \$3.3 trillion.

The recent sell-off has led to fears of contagion setting in, sending stocks into a downward spiral.

Still, while the S&P 500 and Nasdaq retreated Monday, Asia mostly enjoyed a positive day.

Hong Kong, Tokyo, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Mumbai, Bangkok, Wellington, Taipei and Manila were all in the green, though Shanghai dipped after giving up early gains.

London rose while Paris and Frankfurt fell.

The yen strengthened, having edged close to 160 to the dollar Monday on fading expectations for a US rate cut any time soon and the Bank of Japan's slow pace of tightening.

The unit's weakness led vice finance minister Masato Kanda to reiterate officials' determination to

step in with support, having done so in April after the currency hit 160.17 to the greenback.

However, some observers warn that the yen could fall to 170 as they say the impact of any intervention is usually short-lived.

"The pair continues to find resistance around the big (160 per dollar) figure with Japanese officials increasing verbal intervention," said National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril.

He added that the BoJ had left many investors disappointed this month when it delayed cutting back its bond-buying activities, which are used to keep borrowing costs down.

"After the BoJ failed to deliver... the market has been encouraged to increase the pressure on the yen given a BoJ too slow on its policy-normalisation process while the Fed stays higher for longer, waiting for the inflation data to make the case for easing."

The euro held its own against the dollar ahead of the first round of French elections this weekend.

President Emmanuel Macron called the snap legislative polls after his centrist party was trounced by the far-right National Rally (RN) in European Parliament elections two weeks ago.

Tokyo stocks close higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks closed higher on Tuesday as bargain-hunting supported the market.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index advanced 0.95 percent, or 368.50 points, to 39,173.15 while the broader Topix index ended up 1.72 percent, or 47.18 points, at 2,787.37.

"With a dearth of market-moving events, bargain-hunting is supporting share prices," Daiwa Securities said.

IwaiCosmo Securities concurred, adding that moves to reinvest dividend cash was also boosting the Tokyo market.

The dollar fetched 159.29 yen in late Asian trade, against 159.63 yen in New York on Monday.

Among major shares in Tokyo, Sony Group rallied 1.90 percent to 13,170 yen, Toyota jumped 4.63 percent to 3,296 yen, and Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing added 1.06 percent to 40,890 yen.

Mizuho Financial group jumped 4.41 percent to 3,265 yen. Shipping firm Mitsui O.S.K Lines added 1.27 percent to 4,868 yen.

Chip-linked shares were lower after the US tech shares dropped with Nvidia falling by more than six percent overnight on Wall Street.

Tokyo Electron slipped 1.69 percent to 34,400 yen and Renesas Electronics fell 1.19% to 2,978 yen.



In brief

Pre-season fitness camp begins

KARACHI (APP): A pre-season fielding and fitness camp started here on Tuesday. During the morning session, Camp Commandant Muhammad Masroor briefed the players about the camp. The players participated in the gym session. Two of the 24 players in the camp, Tayyab Tahir and Mubaser Khan, will report on June 26. Mohammad Wasim Junior will not participate in the camp as he will complete his rehab at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore.

PFF conducts referees acceleration course

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has conducted the referees refresher/talent acceleration course 2024 in Rawalpindi. The four-day course, organized in collaboration with Army Sports Directorate, enhanced referees' physical, technical, tactical and theoretical knowledge, said a press release. A total of 34 participants took part in the course, gaining valuable insights and skills to uplift their refereeing capabilities. The course was led by PFF referee Manager Khurram Shahzad and physical instructor Muhammad Shafat, who provided expert guidance throughout the sessions. The PFF spokesperson expressed the Federation's commitment to the development of refereeing standards in Pakistan, saying, "PFF is making serious efforts to improve refereeing through various developmental courses. We aim to equip our referees with the necessary knowledge and skills so they can represent Pakistan on international platforms. Additional courses focusing on different aspects of refereeing are being planned for the coming months to further support this initiative."

Inter-Provincial Netball C'ship kicks off Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Inter-Provincial Netball Championship organized by Pakistan Netball Federation would kick off at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex from Wednesday. According to Chairman, Pakistan Netball Federation, Mudassar Arain all arrangements for the Championship have been completed and seven team of men and women each from across the country were participating in the championship. The teams include Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, he said and added that Punjab and Sindh would defend their men's and women's title respectively. In the first round of men's event, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would face Gilgit-Baltistan in the first match. Meanwhile, Balochistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir teams would meet in the second match and the third match will be played between Islamabad and Sindh. In the first round of women's competitions, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would meet in the first match. The second match would be played between Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. In the third match, Islamabad and Punjab would face each other, while defending Sindh team has received a bye. Prizes would be distributed among the winning players at the end of the Championship.

Afghanistan into semi-finals after Bangladesh thriller, Australia out

ARNOS VALE (AFP): Afghanistan advanced to their first-ever senior world tournament semi-final with a nerve-jangling eight-run victory over Bangladesh at the T20 World Cup on Monday that eliminated mighty Australia.

Amid excruciating tension at the Arnos Vale Stadium in St Vincent, Afghan captain Rashid Khan and seamer Naveen ul Haq were the heroes as Afghanistan battled through three rain stoppages to secure a famous victory under the DLS scoring method that was sealed after 1am local time.

Defending a modest total of 115-5 on a bowler-friendly surface, Rashid finished with figures of 4-23 while Naveen took 4-26 as Bangladesh were dismissed for 105, chasing a revised target of 114 off 19 overs.

An unbeaten 54 from Bangladesh opener Litton Das (49 balls, five fours, one six) threatened to deny Afghanistan's fairytale win and earn Australia the last semi-final spot.

But pacer Naveen claimed the last two wick-

ets - Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman - off consecutive deliveries to trigger delirious Afghan celebrations and leave a disconsolate Das stranded at the non-striker's end.

"We have worked so hard over the past few years and we were dreaming of this day. It's a surreal experience," said a relieved but delighted "Man of the Match" Naveen.

"We always knew they were going to be coming hard at us to try to get the target in 12.1 overs but we stuck to the task and kept getting wickets."

"Make the country proud"

With India defeating Australia earlier in the day and advancing to the second semi-final against England in Guyana on Thursday, this result assured the Afghans of second spot in the group and eliminated the Aussies and Bangladeshis.

Afghanistan will now face South Africa in the first semi-final in Trinidad on Wednesday.

Earlier, leg-spinner Rishad Hossain claimed

three for 26 to lead the impressive Bangladeshi bowling effort.

Despite another good opening stand - 59 off 10.4 overs - the Afghans failed to capitalise on that platform with topscorer Rahmanullah Gurbaz's laborious 43 off 55 balls typifying the struggle to get the ball away. Ibrahim Zadran and Azmatullah Omarzai managed to get into double-figures but the rate of scoring remained pedestrian throughout.

Seamer Taskin, one of two changes to the Bangladesh team which lost heavily to semi-final qualifiers India in their last match two days ago, produced a superb four-over spell, conceding just 12 runs for the wicket of former captain Mohammad Nabi.

"I think through the whole tournament we've been bowling pretty well," said a disappointed Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto.

"As a batting group though we have a lot of improvement to make. We didn't make good decisions and going forward we need



to think about our batting."

It was left to Rashid (19 not out) to belt three sixes - there was only one more in the entire innings - in the final two overs to help

dribble the score over the 100-run mark.

"The belief came when we beat New Zealand (at the group stage)," said the Afghan captain in explain-

ing his team's journey to this unprecedented achievement. "We thought 130-135 would be a good total on this wicket, but still, we knew if we stuck to our

plans we would have a good chance to defend the total. We just gave 100 percent effort, to make the country and the people back home proud of us."

Australia's Warner bows out of int'l cricket



ST LUCIA (Agencies): David Warner's international cricket career is over after Australia were eliminated from the T20 World Cup.

Afghanistan's dramatic victory over Bangladesh ensured they progressed from the Super 8s to the semi-finals at the expense of the Aussies.

It denied 37-year-old opening batter Warner the possibility of two more matches at the tournament, including the potential

swansong of a World Cup final.

In his final innings Warner made six runs against India on Monday as Australia slipped to a 24-run defeat in St Lucia.

Warner announced his decision to quit one-day internationals in the lead-up to his final Test match at the start of the year - although he said in May he would consider playing in the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan if he was called up

by the Australia selectors.

Warner made his T20 international debut in January 2009 and has scored 3,277 runs at an average of 33.43 in 110 innings.

He scored 6,932 runs at 45.30 in 159 ODI innings, including 22 centuries.

In Test matches he made 8,786 runs at 44.59 with 26 hundreds, including a top score of 335 not out against Pakistan in December 2019.

Australia bowler Josh Hazlewood acknowledged the team will "miss him around the group, out in the field and off field" after an "amazing all-format career".

Hazlewood said: "It's sort of been a slow burn [retirement] with Test cricket and ODI cricket and now T20. "So, life without him, we've sort of gotten used to it a little bit [but] it's always different when you lose a player that's been there for so long."

Mbappe, Lewandowski score penalties as France and Poland draw at Euro 2024

DORTMUND (AFP): Kylian Mbappe scored a penalty on his return after breaking his nose but Robert Lewandowski's reply meant France and Poland drew 1-1 in their final group game at Euro 2024 on Tuesday.

The result, combined with Austria's 3-2 victory over the Netherlands at the same time, means France finish second in Group D with one win and two draws.

Wearing a mask to protect his injured nose, Mbappe rolled in a spot-kick to put France ahead early in the second half in Dortmund after Ousmane Dembele was brought down in the Poland area. It was Mbappe's first ever goal at a European Championship, and the first scored by a France player at this year's tournament -- their only prior counter was

an own goal by Austria's Maximilian Weber.

Yet Lewandowski, Poland's all-time top scorer who was himself starting for the first time at Euro 2024 after a thigh injury, equalised from a penalty at the other end 11 minutes from time. His first kick was saved by Mike Maignan, but Lewandowski was allowed a retake as the France goalkeeper came off his line before the ball had been struck.

France will now head to Duesseldorf for a last-16 tie next Monday against the runners-up in Group E, which will be Belgium, Romania, Slovakia or Ukraine. More significantly, they are now on the same side of the draw as Portugal, Spain and Germany, which they would have avoided by topping the group.

Often imprecise and lacking in intensity here, the 2022 World Cup runners-up will certainly need to improve on this performance, and their previous group outings, if they are to win the competition.

Poland had already been eliminated before this game, becoming the first team to go out after losing their opening two matches. This result at least allowed Michal Probierz's side to rescue some pride and gave some cheer to their large support.

Griezmann dropped It was not just the return of the masked Mbappe -- who missed France's 0-0 draw with the Netherlands -- that was notable when the line-ups were announced, with Antoine Griezmann unusually left out of the starting XI.

Djokovic will only play at Wimbledon if he can 'fight for title'

LONDON (AFP): Novak Djokovic says he will only play at Wimbledon if he is fit enough to "fight for the title" but his recovery from knee surgery is going well.

The seven-time champion at the All England Club was forced to withdraw ahead of his French Open quarter-final against Casper Ruud earlier this month after tearing the medial meniscus in his right knee.

His chances of competing at Wimbledon, which starts on July 1, initially looked bleak but he has made rapid progress and had a two-hour training session at Wimbledon's Aorangi Park on Monday. The 37-year-old Serbian

world number two says he will make a decision before Friday's draw.

"I didn't come here to play a few rounds," he told the BBC. "If I know I can play close to my maximum or at maximum, then I'll play. If not, then I'll give somebody else a chance to play."

"I really will only play if I know I am in a state which is good enough to go far in the tournament and fight for the title, so that's the condition."

"Rehab is going in the right direction every single day, a few percent better and better. That's what's giving me hope and encouragement to keep going."

"I'm taking things gradually. I'm not pushing myself yet 100 percent but I'm hoping that's going to come in the next few days."

Djokovic, who has won 24 Grand Slams, has reached the Wimbledon final for the past five years, losing a thrilling five-setter last year to Carlos Alcaraz.

He will attempt to win an elusive Olympic gold medal at the Paris Games, which start on July 26. Djokovic's long-time rival Andy Murray is also in a race to be fit for Wimbledon after undergoing back surgery last week while Rafael Nadal is missing the tournament to focus on the Olympics.

Asian Jr Squash C'ship kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first round matches of the Asian Junior Individual Squash Championship 2024 for Boys & Girls U-13, 15, 17 and U-19 age categories, were played on Tuesday.

Squash contingents from Hong Kong-China, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Macau-China, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore and Sri Lanka have turned up for the championship. Squash legend Qamar Zaman graced the opening ceremony as Chief Guest and large number of players, officials and parents were also present on the occasion.

In Boys U13, Faizan Ali (Pak) beat Harshitha Taruka (SRI) 11-4, 11-3, 11-1, Danish Sikandar (Pak) beat Leung Nok (HKG) 11-5, 11-9, 11-5, Jackrishi Kumar (SPR) beat Li Tsz Ho (HKG) 11-2, 11-2, 11-6, Km Akayne (SRI) beat Saleh Khalifa (QAT) 11-8, 7-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-5, M Fawad Khan (Pak) beat Hamad Al Khalaf (QAT) 11-4, 11-3, 11-2, Mamoon Khan (Pak) beat Fong Seng (MAC) 11-2, 11-4, 11-5.

In Boys U15, Rehan Alamgir (Pak) beat Chin Ka (MAC) 11-4, 11-5, 11-5, Yeung Tsung Chit (HKG) beat Ranuka Senal Bandara (SRI) 11-6, 11-7, 11-4, Shiv Kaul (SPR) beat Abdulaziz Al-Banihussain (QAT) 11-1, 11-4, 11-2, Abdullah Zaman (Pak) beat Manuth Sandira (SRI) 11-9, 11-4, 11-6 and Rayyan Bahadur (Pak) beat Talal Al-Badr (QAT) 11-4, 11-3, 11-4.

In Boys U17, Abdullah Nawaz (Pak) beat Mohammad Al-Khalaf (QAT) 11-2, 11-2, 11-6, Altamis Aghar Salam (MAS) beat Ibrahim Zeb (Pak) 11-7, 11-6, 17-15, Renshi Maki (JAP) beat Umair Arif (Pak) 11-8, 5-11, 12-10, 14-12, Nikhleswar (MAS) beat Seoyoul Jun (KOR) 11-2, 11-1, 11-1, Wong Wook Lee (KOR) beat Wong Sze Yu (HKG) 12-10, 11-9, 7-11, 11-7, Khalid Al-Hammadi (QAT) beat Sandanu Induwara (SRI) 11-6, 11-8, 11-2.

In Boys U19, Lee Tin Hang (HKG) beat Am Aritha Minsandu (SRI) 11-2, 11-3, 11-0, Muhammad Ammad (Pak) beat Kosei Toki (JPN)

11-7, 11-2, 11-5, Wong Wing Kuen (HKG) beat Minaga Devanmith (SRI) 11-2, 11-3, 11-6.

In Girls U13, Sehrish Ali (Pak) beat Janani Sarovanan (MAS) 11-8, 11-13, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8, Mahnoor Ali (Pak) beat Hm Methuki (SRI) 11-1, 11-2, 11-2, Sadia Zahoor (Pak) beat Huang lok long (MAC) 13-11, 3-11, 3-11, 11-9, 11-9, Maliha Shah (Pak) beat Navya Caell (SRI) 11-3, 11-4, 11-5 and Wong Chi (MAC) beat Zyna Zubair (Pak) 11-1, 11-0, 11-1.

In Girls U15, DI Senudi (SRI) beat Bushra Shahbaz (Pak) 11-1, 11-3, 11-3, Ifra Shasmin (SRI) beat Ayesha Shahbaz (Pak) 11-3, 11-5, 11-3.

In Girls U17, Baran Mohammadpour (IRI) beat Sameera Shahid (Pak) 11-4, 11-4, 11-5.

In Girls U19, Parmin Nekopayantak (IRI) beat Hafsa Yousaf (Pak) 11-2, 11-6, 11-4, Valerie Kaitlyn (HKG) beat Naheed Faiz (Pak) 11-1, 11-4, 11-2.

The 2nd round matches would be played on Wednesday along with Plate Event for 1st round losers.



Babar Azam returns to Pakistan from USA

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's white-ball captain Babar Azam returned to Pakistan earlier this morning after a disastrous ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign in the United States of America (USA).

He reached Lahore from New York after a brief layover in Dubai.

The star batter did not return to the country with the team after getting knocked out from the mega-event in order to spend time with his family in the USA.

He is expected to meet the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi and discuss the reasons for the team's dismal performance in the tournament.

It is worth mentioning here that Babar Azam has been under hot water following the national men's team's early exit from the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024.

Pakistan had a disastrous start to their campaign as they suffered a shock loss against the co-host United States of America (USA) after a Super Over.

The 2009 champions then succumbed to a gut-wrenching defeat at the hands of arch-rivals India at a jam-packed Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York on June 9.

The back-to-back defeats put Pakistan on the verge of an early exit and despite their victories over Canada and Ireland, they failed to reach the Super Eights stage.

Sabitzer snatches Austria Euros group win against Netherlands

BERLIN (AFP): Marcel Sabitzer lashed home to earn Austria a thrilling 3-2 win against the Netherlands on Tuesday and send his team through top of Euro 2024 Group D, ahead of tournament favourites France and the third-place Dutch.

All three nations are through to the last 16 but Ralf Rangnick's intense Austria side showed why some consider them dark horses to win the tournament for the first time on a rollicking afternoon in Berlin.

Donyell Malen's own goal sent Austria ahead but Cody Gakpo pulled the Dutch level early in the second half.

Romano Schmid headed home for Austria with Memphis Depay pegging them back once more, before Sabitzer settled the frantic, end-to-end tussle.

Rangnick made four changes for Austria from the side that effectively knocked out Poland, with defender Gernot Trauner, who scored in that victory, injured, while Christoph Baumgartner also netted and was left on the bench.

Meanwhile Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman selected Malen in attack as one of three changes from the goalless draw against France last week.

The Borussia Dortmund forward got off to an unfor-

tunate start though when he slid in to deflect Alexander Prass' cross into his own net, as he tried to stop it reaching the lurking Marko Arnautovic.

Dutch midfielder Tijjani Reijnders had a fine chance to swiftly equalise, scuffing his shot badly wide after a neat exchange with Gakpo.

Netherlands supporters have lit up the tournament with their vibrant orange glow but Austria fans outnumbered and outsmarted them in Berlin.

As Rangnick's men fizzed the ball around their struggling Dutch counterparts, supporters gleefully cheered each successful pass.

Koeman seethed on the touchline and flung his arms down in frustration as Malen sent a bobbling shot beyond the far post when well placed.

Frantic The former Barcelona coach brought on Xavi Simons after only 34 minutes for midfielder Joey Veerman to add more spark and creativity to his team's disjointed display.

However it was Austria who carved out the next big chance, with Bart Verbruggen saving Sabitzer's drive and Arnautovic unable to get his footwork right to turn home from close range moments later as his team

kept the move alive.

Netherlands came out for the second half fired up and pulled level as soon as the 47th minute when Simons fed Gakpo, who sent an assured curling finish beyond Austria goalkeeper Patrick Pentz.

Austria kept their heads and Schmid nodded them back in front after 59 minutes from Florian Grillitsch's cross, with Stefan de Vrij unable to hack the ball clear on the line.

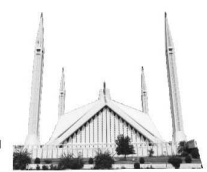
The goal sucked the life out of the Netherlands, who turned to their super sub against Poland and at the 2022 World Cup against Argentina, burly hitman Wout Weghorst, to put their plan B into action.

It worked almost immediately, with the striker nodding down for Depay to smash home and pull the game level.

Austria struck back yet again to move ahead for the third time when Sabitzer superbly rifled home at the near post, after Netherlands captain Virgil van Dijk played him inside.

Substitute Baumgartner produced a fine finish for what would have been Austria's fourth but was offside, and Weghorst headed over a final chance for the downcast Dutch.



**In brief****ANF recovers 2.5 kg drugs in two operations**

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting two operations managed to recover 2.5 kg drugs and arrested an accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 1.9 kg Ice was recovered from a parcel sent to Australia at a cargo office in Lahore. In another operation, 640 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Karachi from Peshawar Airport. Cases have been registered against the accused and further investigations are under process.

IRSA releases 223,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 223,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 274,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.78 feet and was 69.78 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 125,900 cusecs and 85,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1182.40 feet, which was 134.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 39,900 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 114,400, 133,600, 114,900 and 88,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 67,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 10,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

PFA discards 9,000 liter adulterated milk

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Tuesday discarded 9,000 liters of adulterated milk, and fines Rs 310,000 on 11 vehicles involved in transporting on Islamabad Motorway during an operation. Under the directives of the Director General PFA, the teams inspected 33 milk-carrying vehicles during a blockade aimed at curbing the sale of adulterated milk. Samples collected revealed that the milk lacked natural nutrients and was excessively diluted with water. Over 223,000 liters of milk were subjected to rigorous testing during the operation. "This is part of our daily vigilance," remarked the DG Food Authority, emphasizing the ongoing scrutiny of milk transportation vehicles to safeguard public health. PFA fully committed to ensure the availability of safe and nutritious milk for consumers across the region, he concluded.

06 stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested three members gang involved in motorcycle theft and recovered six stolen motorcycles from their possession during crackdown here on Tuesday. According to police spokesman, R.A Bazaar police held three members gang lifting motorcycles who were identified as Junaid, Karamat and Daim. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SP Potohar Nasir Nawaz commended police team effort for arresting the gang adding that the arrested accused will be challaned in court with concrete evidence and will be punished. Strict action will be continued against the accused who deprive the citizens of their valuable assets, he added.

Gilani for enhancing inter-parliamentary cooperation between Pakistan, Australia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday stressed for increased exchange of parliamentary delegation to enhance the inter-parliamentary cooperation between Pakistan and Australia.

During a meeting with High Commissioner of Australia to Pakistan, Neil Hakin who called on him here, he said that Pakistan accorded high value to its relations with Australia and wanted to further strengthen the ties between the two countries.

He also highlighted

Pakistan's significant sacrifices in the war against terror and its humanitarian efforts, including the support extended to hundred thousands of Afghan refugees.

Yousaf Raza also emphasized Pakistan's proactive role in combating climate change, underscoring the country's ongoing initiatives and achievements in this critical area.

The High Commissioner commended Pakistan for its unwavering commitment and efforts in the fight against terrorism.

He particularly praised

Pakistan's humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees and acknowledged the country's constructive contributions to global climate initiatives.

Furthermore, the envoy conveyed Australia's commitment to accommodate 8,000 Afghan refugees as a gesture of solidarity and support.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with the existing bilateral relations and reiterated their commitment to further strengthening cooperation in various fields, especially agriculture and education for the mutual benefit of both nations.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Australian High Commissioner Mr. Neil Hawkins at Parliament House. —APP Photo

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period From 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Sohtran Road, Ghor Garden, Sharifabad, Burma, Khanna Dak Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Zia Masjid, Iqbal Town, Highway, Service Road East, Fazahia, Sohan Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Rata, Noon, Raja Sultan, Range Road Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Swan Garden-I, Major Riaz, Lala Zar, Jhawara, Dhanyal-I, Gulshan Saeed, Lalkarti, Cantt, UC Lakhani, Shah Jeevan, Quaid-e-Azam Colony, Qasim Base, Morgah, Pindi Board, Park View, Car Chowk, Jail Park, Fuji Foundation, Mehboob Shaheed, Mohra Nagyal, Wilayat Complex, X-Liar, AOWHS Feeders, Attock Circle, Colonel Sher Khan, Hussainabad, Wahdat Colony, Kohsar Colony, Kala Khan, Mansar, Haji Shah, Kamra Rural, Gondal, Hameed, Muslim Town Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Basharat, Dhoda, Megan Feeders and surrounding.

The Chairman PMYP and HEC expressed optimism about the future of youth development in Pakistan and reiterated their commitment to work together towards the common goal.

They said that the joint efforts of the Prime Minister Youth Program and HEC will enable to utilize resources and expertise to effectively maximize the impact on youth development.

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All constructions banned in Murree

RAWALPINDI (APP): The District Administration has imposed ban on all types of constructions in Murree.

The notification issued by the Commissioner Rawalpindi office, here on Tuesday states that the ban will remain enforced till the completion of Murree master plan. According to the notification violations of government construction policy, illegal constructions causing serious disruption to the peaceful life of the local population, soil erosion and encroachments and illegal deforestation damaging the natural environment are the main reasons for putting the ban on constructions.

The ban will also be enforced on construction along the Murree Expressway. However, it will not affect the government's development projects, says the notification. The ban has been imposed under Section 4(d) of the Punjab Civil Administration Act.

Political stability essential for country's development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that the key prerequisites for moving forward include policy continuity, political stability, and peace in the country.

Without these basics, the country's progress will be stunted, he said while talking to a private news channel. In response to a question about CPEC, he said that from 2013 to 2018, work on the project progressed speedily, but gov-

ernment changes later slowed down progress in Gwadar and the Special Economic Zones (SEZ).

The current administration has since reignited these efforts, working at full speed, he added. The second phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is going to start, which will focus on five key corridors, Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green, and Open corridor, he added.

These corridors were designed to foster regional

cooperation and ensure comprehensive development, he further added.

Recent terrorist attacks aim to cast a shadow over the development and hinder business activities in the country, he said.

Despite these challenges, Pakistan has assured full security for all the ongoing projects, he further said. Ahsan stressed that economic progress hinges on improving the law and order situation, which requires the collective efforts of all stakeholders.

Role of scholars important in maintaining peace: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner of Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak on Tuesday said that role of the scholars is very important in maintaining peace during Muharram.

The Commissioner chairing a meeting of District Peace Committee held in Attock said that the role of district peace committee and inter-faith harmony committee is important in maintaining peace and order.

He said, the suggestions of the scholars are important in maintaining peace in Attock. According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, the Divisional Coordination Committee had earlier

directed all Deputy Commissioners of Rawalpindi division to take all possible steps to maintain peace during Muharram.

He informed that presiding over a meeting, the Commissioner told them that before issuing the duty roster, the arrangements of the previous year should be critically reviewed and in the light of that, a better and organized plan should be made to ensure peace.

The DCs along with the religious scholars should hold the meetings of peace committees and District Intelligence Committees to ensure foolproof security during the holy month, he added. The Commissioner

said, "Muharram teaches us patience and perseverance. It is the duty of our scholars to forget the differences and bring the people towards commonality on this occasion."

In this critical economic situation that the country is going through, the Commissioner said, "We need to support each other instead of dividing into sects." He directed that along with ensuring peace and order during Muharram, all other arrangements should be finalised.

All necessary arrangements for the participants at the places of the processions and the security of Imambargahs should be given top priority, the Commissioner ordered.

Excise continues crackdown against illegal car

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Excise and Taxation (E&T) Department has continued its crackdown against illegal car modifications, targeting vehicles with tinted glasses and unauthorized number plates.

On the directive of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the Excise Department has intensified its efforts to enforce the law, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory Administration here on Tuesday.

During recent checks, a total of above 300 vehicles were inspected, leading to the removal of

about 150 tinted windows and 100 unauthorized number plates. Additionally, 10 vehicles had their registrations suspended, while five received warnings.

The crackdown, led by Assistant Commissioners alongside Assistant Excise & Taxation Officers (AETOs) and Traffic Police, focused on areas including Faizabad bus stand, Zero Point, 9th Avenue near IGP, and Marriott Hotel checkpoint. Vehicles found in violation had their registrations suspended until the illegal modifications were rectified.

In response to the ongo-

ing enforcement, the Deputy Commissioner urged citizens to adhere to regulations by removing tinted windows and using only approved number plates. This joint effort between the Excise and Taxation Department and the Islamabad Transport Authority aims to maintain road safety and uphold the law.

On the occasion, DC urged the citizens of the federal capital to remove tinted glasses and fancy number plates from their vehicles and use only approved number plates issued by the Excise and Taxation Department to avoid any action.

Mashhood, HEC Chairman discuss strategies to empower youth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme, (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that empowering youth with required resources and development opportunities is the need of the hour as today's youth, are leaders of tomorrow.

He said this during a meeting with the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr Mukhtar Ahmed here on Tuesday.

The meeting discussed various ways to promote positive engagement and

development opportunities for the country's youth.

During the meeting, Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan and Dr Mukhtar Ahmed both emphasized the importance of collective efforts for skills, education and overall empowerment of the youth population across the country.

They discussed various initiatives and programs namely the Prime Minister's National Innovation Award, Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme, National Volunteer Corps and sev-

eral other schemes that could be implemented to effectively engage and empower the youth.

They said that the joint efforts of the Prime Minister Youth Program and HEC will enable to utilize resources and expertise to effectively maximize the impact on youth development.

The Chairman PMYP and HEC expressed optimism about the future of youth development in Pakistan and reiterated their commitment to work together towards the common goal.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed.

CPO urges IOs to expedite crime cases resolutions

RAWALPINDI (APP): A meeting was held at Police Lines Headquarters in chair of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani with investigation officers (IOs) from New Town and Civil Lines Circle Police Stations.

Among others, SSP Investigation Zunaira Azfar, SP Potohar, SP Rawal, DSP Legal, DSP Investigation, SDPOs, SHO and IOs were present in the meeting.

During the meeting, CPO Hamdani reviewed the performance of IOs

and issued vital directives concerning the apprehension of suspects involved in various criminal activities such as robbery, street crimes, vehicle, motorcycle theft, murder and heinous crimes. He emphasized the prompt completion of challan processes and the meticulous gathering of evidence.

CPO Hamdani stressed the importance of proactive suspect arrests in ongoing cases. He mandated that all IOs under the active supervision of SDPOs procure comprehensive evidence,

including CCTV footage where available. Addressing procedural shortcomings, he urged IOs to diligently complete case details to ensure effective investigation.

The CPO underscored the priority of preventing street crimes through enhanced special picketing and robust city-wide patrolling initiatives. He highlighted the use of police digital apps to expedite case investigations, ensure timely submission of challans, and maintain efficient case follow-ups.

Book titled "Ujagh Mein Pari Hai Raakh" launched

RAWALPINDI (APP): A book launching ceremony was held in which renowned poet Aftab Khan's poetry collection "Ujagh Mein Pari Hai Raakh" was launched.

The event which was organized by Qalam Qafila Islamabad here at Punjab Arts (PAC) Rawalpindi on Tuesday, was presided over by Professor Dr. Munawwar Hashmi.

In his address, Dr. Munawwar Hashmi remarked that poetry revolving around high standards of thought and art achieved the distinction in the poetry world. Aftab Khan is a multifaceted creative poet whose

artistic maturity establishes him as an important 'ghazal poet' he added.

Director Arts Council, Sajjad Hussain stated that Aftab Khan's poetry was a beautiful reference to the modern literary scene. His presence in the literary circles of Rawalpindi is a pleasant literary development, he said.

While expressing his thoughts, the poet and writer Aftab Khan thanked his literary friends for their hospitality and received much applause for his thought-provoking poetry. Dr. Junaid Azhar, Brigadier M.D. Malik, Syed Jamal Zaidi, Saleem Akhtar, Tajammul Shah,

Rafat Anjum, and Imran Rushdi expressed their views and presented papers on the book, declaring "Ujagh Mein Pari Hai Raakh" to be poetry of a unique style.

The book's title "Ujagh Mein Pari Hai Raakh" meaning "Ash in the Stove" presents 36 poetic collections which engulfs lyrical depiction of various topics. The prologue of the book has been framed by Nauman Manzoor, a famous poet and member of the Editorial Board monthly Biaz. Dr. Nisar Tarabi, Naseem Sehar, Dr. Nazar Abid, Professor Irfan Jamil and Nayyar Sarhadi also attended the ceremony.

Empowered girls can play key role in development: Ayesha

ISLAMABAD (APP): The young girls can play a key role in development of the country if they are empowered, given proper guidance and confidence, said Chairperson National Commission on Rights of the Child Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq.

She was addressing as the chief guest to the opening ceremony of the Youth Forum organized by Pakistan Girl Guides Association National Headquarters from 25th to 28th June 2024. More than 50 Young Leaders from all regions of the country are participating.

The theme of the Youth Forum is "Empowering Youth for Leadership and Governance", said a press release. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq appreciated the Pakistan Girl Guides Association for its efforts to empower young girls and said it is a unique program offered to Girls which helps them develop into confident and responsible citizens.

She also highlighted the role youth can play for the betterment of the country. She said that in a world that is constantly evolving, the skills

and principles instilled through Girl Guiding are more important than ever. Guides' ability to adapt, lead with empathy, and embrace diversity and inclusion are qualities that will serve girls not only today but throughout their lives.

She hoped that during the coming days of the Youth Forum, the participants would discover their potential and polish their leadership skills.

She informed the participants about the work of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and looked forward to young leaders to becoming her supporters of Child Rights in their communities.

Earlier, Mrs. Maria Maud Sabri, National Commissioner of the Pakistan Girl Guides Association welcomed them and other guests. She informed them about Guiding in Pakistan. She briefed the guests that in Guiding we start working on our mission of leadership development as soon as a girl joins in. Each working group of 6-8 girls elects their leader. She said this is the first step in learning democracy and leadership. Leaders change regularly so

that everyone gets a chance to lead, she said, adding that activities are selected by the girls themselves.

The entire program of Guiding aims to give skills and develop confidence to take initiative. The girls learn to take action to solve their problems and learn to love their community and country, she added.

She further said that the participant girls are encouraged to think about social issues and take steps, however small to tackle them. Guiding aims to make girls agents of change.

As girls become young women, the need to give them more responsibility in the Association emerges. It was with the idea of preparing future leaders of the Association that the Youth Forum was formed. Here we have young women, capable of shouldering responsibilities and eager to venture into adulthood.

We would like them to assume the leadership of our movement. We hope that these girls will join the Association on various committees in their respective Chapters and learn to lead.

KP CM, EU Ambassador discuss public welfare plans

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka called on the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here in Islamabad on Tuesday and discussed with him matters related to public welfare projects being executed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the partnership of the European Union.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion. The Chief Minister, giving thanks to the European Union on behalf of the people of the province for providing support in public welfare projects, has said that CDLD Project being executed with the support of European Union in the province is of vital importance in improving the socio-economic conditions of the people. He on this occasion, assured that the provincial government would extend its all possible support for implementing the projects assisted by the European Union in the province.

Touching upon the priorities sectors of his government, the Chief Minister said that the provincial government is working under well devised strategy to utilize hydro power potential available in the province. Besides, he said that green energy initiative is also an integral part of the priorities area of his government under which work on the solarization of educational institutes and other government outlets is in progress.

Similarly, he said that funds have been allocated for the solarization of deserving households across the province. He maintained that the provincial government is working on improving the municipal services and basic healthcare facilities; the government would need special cooperation from European Union and other donor agencies for these sectors. Similarly, resettlement of Temporary Displaced Persons of merged districts would also need assistance from our development partners.

He said that rehabilitating infrastructure and providing employment opportunities in the merged districts is also a focused area of the provincial government because the development and prosperity of those districts

Operation ‘Azm-e-Istehkam’: Gandapur calls all party conference

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Ali Amin Gandapur has called to convene an All Parties Conference (APC) to discuss Operation Istehkam Pakistan, address the current situation and foster peace in the region.

Barrister Saif stated that all political parties would be invited to the APC, with the date and time to be decided soon. The conference aims to brief political parties on the current situation and secure their confidence and cooperation. In addition, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-organized tribal peace jirga is scheduled for tomorrow at 3pm to see participation from central and provincial PTI leaders, as well as tribal leaders, to discuss peace and stability in the tribal districts. Following the jirga, a resolution will be passed and presented to the Chief Minister of KP while the resolution will also be tabled in both the Parliament and the KP Assembly, Barrister Saif said.

is indispensable for sustainable piece and tranquility in the region. Unrest situation in the merged districts can be controlled affectively only by promoting employment opportunities and developing the infrastructure destroyed in the war against terrorism, he remarked.

Focus on to develop agriculture sector on modern lines: An important meeting regarding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Economic Transformation Project was held here at Islamabad with Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Secretary Agriculture Javed Marwat and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The Chief Minister on this occasion, was apprised of the progress made so far on the project, it's important features, issues being faced in its implementation and other important matters related to the project.

It was informed that the project would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs. 30 billion in collaboration with international development partners. The project would have three important components including Agri-business Development, Skills Development & Employment Promotion and Program Management and Policy Support. Under its first component "Agri-business Development", multiple initiatives would be taken in addition to establishing 550 Professional Farmers Organizations in the province. Similarly, under the Skills Development and Employment Promotion, more than one lac people

would be provided with livelihood opportunities and other 25000 people would be trained for Agri-business activities.

Apart from this, about 60,000 youth would also be imparted with technical and professional training in line with the contemporary needs and requirements. Taking notice of the unnecessary delay in the implementation of the project, the chief minister has strictly directed the quarters concerned to initiate physical work on the project without any further delay, adding that all the prerequisites in this regard must be completed well in time. He also directed them to fix realistic timelines for initiating practical work as well as ensuring progress on the project.

"An effective mechanism should also be developed for close coordination among the relevant departments and stakeholders so as to make this project a successful and exemplary one", he said and directed the departments concerned to hold regular meetings in order to review the progress made on the project.

He made it clear that developing agriculture sector on modern lines is one of the priority areas and his government is making significant investment for this purpose. The chief minister maintained that the agriculture sector in the province has a lot of potential to providing employment opportunities to the people and incumbent provincial government is working under a comprehensive strategy to utilize this potential in an efficient manner.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur called on by Ambassador of European Union in Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka.

10 shot dead as section of Kenyan parliament set on fire

F.P. Report

NAIROBI (AFP/Reuters): At least ten people were shot dead in Kenya's capital on Tuesday, a paramedic said, as protests against tax legislation turned into violent clashes with police and a section of the parliament was set up in flames.

AFP journalists saw three people lying motionless on the ground near the compound, where police fired live rounds and left "many wounded", according to Amnesty International Kenya. Police fired at crowds massing outside the parliament building, where lawmakers had been debating a contentious bill featuring tax hike proposals.

Shortly before, Irungu Houghton, the executive director of Amnesty International Kenya, told AFP that "human rights observers are now reporting the increasing use of live bullets by the National Police Service in the capital of Nairobi". "Safe passage for medical officers to treat the many wounded is now urgent," he said.

The mainly Gen-Z-led rallies began last week and had been mostly peaceful, with President William Ruto saying over the weekend he was ready to talk to the protesters. But tensions sharply escalated on Tuesday afternoon, as crowds began to throw stones at police and push back against barricades, making their way towards the parliament complex, which was sealed off by police in full riot gear. Anger over a cost-of-living crisis spiralled into nationwide rallies last week, with demonstrators calling for the finance bill to be scrapped.

Israel, Hezbollah conflict could spark war

WASHINGTON (AFP): US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met his Israeli counterpart Yoav Gallant at the Pentagon on Tuesday, warning that a conflict between Israel and Hezbollah could spark a regional war and urging a diplomatic solution.

More than eight months of war in Gaza has heightened tensions across the region, with Israeli forces and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah exchanging fire on a near-daily basis.

"Another war between Israel and Hezbollah could easily become a regional war, with terrible consequences for the Middle East," Austin said. "Diplomacy is by far the best way to prevent more escalation." Gallant, speaking at the opening of the meeting with Austin, said that "we are working closely together to achieve an agreement but we must also discuss readiness on every possible scenario."

The Israeli army said last week that plans for an offensive in Lebanon were "approved and validated" amid escalating cross-border clashes, but Washington is seeking to lower the temperature and head off another major conflict in the Middle East. Gallant is on a visit to Washington seeking to reaffirm the value of ties with Israel's top ally after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly chastised the United States for what he said was a delay in weapons deliveries. The US government insists that only one shipment of bombs has been held up over concerns about their use in populated areas, and that other arms deliveries are proceeding as usual.

AJK govt presents over Rs 220b budget

F.P. Report

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) government on Tuesday presented a budget of over Rs 220 billion for the financial year 2024-25, with a development outlay of Rs 44 billion.

The budget at was presented by AJK Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan in the session of AJK Legislative Assembly, chaired by Speaker Chaudhary Latif Akbar. While highlighting the key features of the budget, Minister Abdul Majid Khan said the total estimated income stood at Rs 201.17 billion, with significant contributions expected from federal grants and Inland Revenue.

The development expenditure for the fiscal year 2024-25 was projected at Rs 44 billion, he added. The finance minister detailed that total receipts were estimated at Rs 201.17 billion, with Rs. 105 billion anticipated from the Federal Government under the Federal Variable Grant, Rs 75 billion from inland revenue, Rs 15 billion from electricity, and Rs 0.45 billion from the Forest Department.

Additional revenue exceeding Rs 20 billion would come from various sources, including the AJK Transport Authority, Armed Services Board, Law and Order (Administration of Justice), Police (Interior), Prisons, Communication, Roads, Education, Health, Food, Agriculture, Wildlife/Fisheries, Livestock and Dairy Development, Printing Press, Industries, Silk, Minerals, Tourism, and

other sectors, he added. The minister said the total expenditure for the fiscal year 2024-25 was estimated at Rs 220.033 billion.

Sectoral allocations included Rs 0.9 billion for Agriculture and Livestock, Rs 0.15 billion for Civil Defence & SDMA, Rs 0.345 billion for Development Authorities, Rs 4.8 billion for Education, Rs 0.15 billion for Environment, Rs 0.8 billion for Forestry/Watershed, Rs 0.075 billion for Fisheries/Wildlife, Rs 3 billion for Health, Rs 0.52 billion for Industries/Minerals, Rs 0.28 billion for AJK TEVTA, Rs 2.035 billion for Governance/ Miscellaneous, Rs 0.03 billion for Transport, Rs 0.2 billion for Information & Media Development, and Rs. 0.8 billion for Information Technology, he added.

Abdul Majid Khan said that the budget also included Rs 3.7 billion for Local Government and Rural Development, Rs 2.465 billion for Physical Planning & Housing, Rs 4.8 billion for Energy and Water Resources, Rs 1.4 billion for Research & Development, Rs 1.15 billion for Land Administration & Management, Rs 0.3 billion for Social Welfare & Women Development, Rs 0.5 billion for Sports, Youth & Culture, Rs 0.7 billion for Tourism, and Rs 14.9 billion for Communication & Works. "This comprehensive budget aims to stimulate growth and development across various sectors in AJK for the fiscal year 2024-25," he added.

SIC reserved seats: SC resumes hearing plea

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has resumed hearing on the petition filed by the Sunni Ittehad Council against the denial of reserved seats for women and minorities in the national and provincial assemblies.

A full-court bench, headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, is conducting the proceedings. Other judges on the bench are Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muameeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan.

On previous hearing on Jan 24 [Monday], CJP Isa referred to the PTI's merger with the SIC a political "suicide". Following the Feb 8 general elections, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf,

which had been stripped of its electoral symbol 'bat', had directed the independent candidates who won election with its backing to join the Sunni Ittehad Council under a merger.

The chief justice asked the lawyer that the court would not hear any excuse painting the Election Commission as an abuser of the PTI. "We are here to listen to what is in accordance with the constitution and law. You are the lawyer of the Sunni Ittehad Council, and not of the PTI. Your arguments in favour of the PTI come in conflict of interest," added Justice Isa.

In March, the ECP ruled that the SIC was not entitled to claim quota for reserved seats "due to having non-curable legal defects and violation of a mandatory provision of submission of party list for reserved seats". Later, the ECP accepted applications of the opposing parties and decided that the seats in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies would not remain vacant

and would be allocated by a proportional representation process on the basis of seats won by political parties.

The development resulted in the PTI-backed SIC losing a total of 77 reserved seats - 23 National Assembly seats (20 women and 3 minorities), 25 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly seats (21 women and 4 minorities), two Sindh Assembly seats (women) and 27 Punjab Assembly seats (24 women and 3 minority).

In May, a three-judge bench of the apex court took up a petition filed by the SIC. The court suspended the ECP decision to allocate SIC's reserved seats to other parties. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, during the proceedings, remarked that the mandate given by the people should be properly represented in parliament. The court sent the matter of reserved seats to the Judges Committee to decide whether the case would be heard by the same bench or a larger bench would be constituted.

BRT plea against NAB: PHC adjourns hearing

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah conducted a hearing on application of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) contractors against National Accountability Bureau inquiry against them, Tuesday.

Deputy Prosecutor General from NAB and lawyers of the construction companies assisted the court. The lawyers for contractors told the court that NAB has not yet submitted its comments in the case, following which the NAB prosecutor said that the NAB will submit its reply in this regard on next hearing. After hearing brief arguments from both sides, the court while seeking reply from the NAB adjourned the hearing for 24th July.

Court issues notice to AG, Health minister, Secretary in Contempt of Court plea: Peshawar High Court issued notices to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health,

Secretary's health and Advocate General in contempt of court plea against removal Dr. Umar Ayub as Chairman of the Board of Governors (BOG) of Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH), on Tuesday.

Barrister Babar Shahzad Imran argued that the controversy began when the government removed Dr. Umar Ayub as Chairman BOG KTH in back date on 11th June 2024, despite PHC restrained respondents on 12th June, 2024. He further added that the removal of Chairman BOG is a clear violation of the court's orders and amounted to contempt of court.

PHC was informed that the government had issued a notification on 11th June, 2024, removing Dr. Umar Ayub from the post, which was a blatant disregard of the court's orders. The petitioner's lawyer argued that the government's action was illegal and unconstitutional, and that the court's orders were binding on the government.

The counsel requested the court to declare the notification issued by the gov-

ernment as null and void and to initiate contempt proceedings against the respondents for disobeying the court's orders. PHC ordered directed the respondents to file their responses to the contempt of court notice and stopped government from appointment of Chairman BOG KTH, while adjourned further hearing.

PHC seeks further assistance in rehabilitation of terrorists in KP: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has adjourned the hearing of a petition filed by Awami National Party (ANP) central president Aimal Wali Khan, seeking constitution of inquiry commission to investigate the rehabilitation of terrorists during previous government and ordered assist the court on maintainability of the writ, on Tuesday.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah asked the petitioner's lawyer to provide arguments on whether the high court has the authority to form a commission on the matter.

Iddat Nikah case: Verdict reserved

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad has reserved its verdict on a petition seeking suspension of the sentence for PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Iddat Nikah case.

The judgment is scheduled to be announced on June 27 at 3pm, while the hearing on central appeals against the sentence has been adjourned until July 2. The decision follows a series of hearings, the most recent of which occurred on June 14, during which Judge Afzal Majoka postponed the hearing to June 21, remarking that he would deliver a decision within ten days if alive. The court proceedings have seen numerous postponements and legal manoeuvres since the initial hearings.

On June 13, Judge Majoka noted that the case had faced expressions of no confidence twice before. This followed a June 7 hearing where appeals for early hearing and suspension of sentence were also postponed.

The case centers around allegations that Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi married during her Iddat period, a waiting period a Muslim woman must observe after the death of her husband or a divorce before she can remarry. This led to Bushra Bibi's ex-husband Khawar Manika filing a marriage case against the couple in the court of Islamabad Civil Judge Qudrat on November 25, 2023.

During the recent hearings, Bushra Bibi's lawyer, Salman Safdar, argued that Bushra Bibi has been facing ongoing health issues and that the case had been dragged out unnecessarily. He emphasized that despite being called to court multiple times, no one appeared, leading to delays. On June 3, the Islamabad High Court accepted a request to transfer the Iddat Nikah case against Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi to another court, highlighting the case's contentious nature.

The legal community and public await the court's verdict on June 27, which will determine whether the sentences of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi will be suspended pending further appeals. The case has drawn significant attention, given its implications for the high-profile political figures involved and its potential impact on their legal standing.

Phone tapping currently taking place illegal: IHC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court observed during the hearing of the Audio Leaks case on Tuesday that there is no law regarding phone tapping in the country and what is currently taking place is illegal.

The observation came as Justice Babar Sattar of the IHC resumed hearing on petitions challenging the alleged audio leaks involving former prime minister Imran Khan's spouse Bushra Bibi, and Najam Saqib, the son of retired chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar.

During the proceedings, Additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Duggal informed the court that the Interior Ministry had issued a certain SOP [standard operating procedure] mandating the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) to directly collect data from service providers. He added that other law enforcement agencies could take data from the ISI and IB if required.

Justice Sattar noticed that the SOP in question had been issued by a section officer and there was no mention of the relevant authority. He questioned how the Interior Ministry came to have this authority and under which law this SOP was issued. He further questioned under what law the government decided it could access the data.

The judge then questioned the lawyer about phone tapping, adding that the legal standing of the document provided was yet to be examined. In his response, the state lawyer, while referring to the missing persons' case, stated that the Sindh High Court had issued orders for providing data to secret agencies. At this, the judge inquired whether the Sindh High Court's direction was limited to that case or was permanent.

When the judge asked the additional attorney general if he read the policy made [in this regard] in 2013 and whether data was collected as per the mechanism of this policy, the additional attorney general replied in the affirmative.

During the hearing, the judge inquired that on what basis the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) was passing the direction. The lawyer representing the PTA said that there was a case before the Sindh High Court, in connection of which all the parties, including PTA, were summoned and a mechanism was formed. That decision [of the Sindh

High Court] did not get challenged and the 2013 policy was formulated [this way].

The court inquired of the lawyer if the PTA had not allowed anyone to tap phone calls. At this, the lawyer said that the PTA had not given permission to anyone for phone tapping. "PTA is not doing any surveillance. PTA is the regulator."

Appearing before the court, the lawyer for the Islamabad Police, Tahir Kazmi, stated that according to their understanding, there was no ban on taking this evidence. Justice Sattar asked if the police could go to someone's house without a warrant. The lawyer replied that the neither the police did surveillance nor any recordings, adding that the police take the evidence after an incident.

When the judge asked if the police obtained a warrant in the past 11 years, the lawyer replied that according to their understanding, it was not necessary to get a warrant to take the evidence after an incident takes place. The judge inquired, "If there is a private video recorded at home, how can it be admitted as evidence?" The lawyer responded, "We do not conduct surveillance. We gather evidence after an incident for collection."

Justice Sattar remarked, "Has Islamabad Police not understood until now why a warrant is necessary? Did you not need it in 11 years? Who told the IG not to take warrants? Was Parliament unintelligent to pass this law? In 11 years, not once did anyone take a warrant to collect data." The judge remarked, "If you have made a law, everyone should know. People should know how their privacy is being invaded. Courts here do not know what you are doing. This is not about national security. You cannot say whether a law exists or not."

At this point, the additional attorney general asked the judge to hold hearing in the chambers and they would inform him about it." At this, the judge remarked, "Am I asking you or terrorists? I'm only asking about the law. Are you saying judges' chambers or the Prime Minister's House are tapping hostile agencies?" The additional attorney general replied, "No, that's not the case."

Justice Sattar said that this was not a matter of national security. "I reject your request for a chamber hearing. We will not start joking about chamber hearings here." During the hearing, a request was made by the federal government to lift restrictions on giving data to telecom operators.



KARACHI: Paramedical staff giving medical treatment to affected people of heatwave at a hospital.