

**CJP calls JCP meeting**  
ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa has called a meeting of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on July 2 to discuss the appointment of the chief justices (CJs) of the Lahore High Court (LHC) and Sindh High Court (SHC). The agenda of the JCP meeting on July 2 includes the consideration of a permanent Chief Justice for the Lahore High Court.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

**Imran moves IHC**

ISLAMABAD (INP): Incarcerated former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan has filed a petition with the Islamabad High Court regarding the denial of meetings and consultations with his party leaders and lawyers. Khan, currently held in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, has named the Interior Ministry, Defence Ministry, home secretary, Punjab government and jail superintendent as respondents in his petition.

Vol. XXXIXI No. 155 Regd. No. 241 ZIL-HAJJ 22 1445 -- SATURDAY, JUNE 29 2024 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif interacting with PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during National Assembly session.

## Afghanistan must fulfill commitments for peace

### US Congress resolution unsolicited interference: FO Spokesperson

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday said that Resolution 901 adopted by the US House of Representatives is an unsolicited interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs which is neither welcomed nor acceptable.

At her weekly media briefing in Islamabad, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the resolution clearly stems from an inadequate and erroneous understanding of political and electoral process of Pakistan. She said it is also an unsolicited interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs. We believe that bilateral relations between countries should be based on mutual respect and sovereign equality.

The Spokesperson said the timing and context of the resolution is also not conducive to the current positive trajectory of bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United States. Replying a question, she said Pakistan would like to develop its relations with the United States on the

basis of mutual trust and confidence and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

The Spokesperson expressed concerns over the continued suppression of the democratic rights of the Kashmiri people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. She said the oppressive measures are yet another example of the autocratic approach of the Indian authorities and a violation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights, especially of the rights of association and peaceful assembly. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the government has appointed Additional Foreign Secretary (middle East and SIFC) Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh as Pakistan's Ambassador to Washington.

She further said that Asim Iftikhar, currently serving as Pakistan's Envoy in France, has also been appointed as Pakistan's Additional Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New

York. Replying to a question, the Spokesperson said Pakistan will participate in Doha-III meeting on Afghanistan. She said Pakistan will be represented by Special Representative on Afghanistan Ambassador Asif Durrani and Ambassador to Afghanistan Obaidur Rehman Nizamani in the talks.

Answering yet another question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan has always stated that it respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. She said it is also critical that Afghanistan takes effective actions against those terrorists and groups, which are responsible for terror incidents and attacks inside Pakistan. The Spokesperson said Pakistan has also urged Afghanistan to ensure that any terrorist hideouts that destabilize the region should be eliminated. Pakistan expects Afghanistan to fulfill this commitment made to the international community, specifically Pakistan.

## Afghan soil being used for terrorism in Pakistan: Asif

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Friday said that the Afghan territory was being used for committing terrorism, bloodshed, and destruction in Pakistan.

Pakistan possessed concrete evidence that its enemies had sanctuaries in Afghanistan and would take counter measures to defend its citizens, he said while speaking in the National Assembly. The defence minister recounted his visit to Kabul, during which he had conveyed to the Afghan authorities that fostering good relations would be beneficial for both nations.

He urged the opposition not to do politicking on terrorism as it was a matter of national security and honouring the blood of martyrs. Khawaja Asif highlighted the adverse impacts of terrorism on the country's economy, alleging that some opposition members had links with the Taliban. Such people had facilitated the return of 6,000 terrorists of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to the country, he added. The minister stressed the importance of national unity in combating terrorism and protecting Pakistan's sovereignty and security.

## NAB challenges PTI founder's bail

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Friday challenged the post-arrest bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder before the Supreme Court in 190 million pounds scam case.

NAB, in its plea, prayed the top court to set aside the verdict of Islamabad High Court of May 14, granting bail to the PTI founder. It also requested the court to suspend the IHC's judgment till the final decision into the appeal.

NAB took the plea that the IHC had used the powers of the trial court and did not view the facts completely. The IHC could not record the statements of witnesses like that of the trial court.

# The Frontier Post

## NA passes budget ahead of talks on fresh IMF loan

ISLAMABAD (Reuters): The National Assembly on Friday passed the government's tax-heavy finance bill for the coming fiscal year ahead of more talks on a new International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout as it seeks to avert a debt default for an economy growing at the slowest pace in South Asia.

The government presented the tax-loaded budget two weeks ago, drawing sharp criticism from opposition parties, especially the PTI, as well as coalition ally PPP. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb had moved the finance bill in the NA, which was endorsed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Opposition parties, mainly parliamentarians backed by currently incarcerated former premier Imran Khan, have rejected the budget, saying it will be highly inflationary. On Tuesday, the PPP - which had initially boycotted the debate over the budget - decided that it would vote for the finance bill despite certain reservations.

While giving a press briefing after a party meeting, PPP leader Naveed

Qamar said the meeting decided that if the party did not vote for the budget, "it would amount to dismantling the government and paving the way for instability in the country". The government now has numbers and this budget will go through, Qamar asserted.

Besides the PPP, members of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), another ruling coalition partner, has also expressed concern over the government's move to impose taxes on the salaried and middle-class people, stating that the budget would cause more inflation in the country. NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq announced the passage of the bill in a live TV telecast on Friday.

Policymakers have set a challenging tax revenue target of Rs13,000 billion for the fiscal year starting July 1, up about 40 per cent from the current year, in the national budget presented on July 12 that looked to strengthen the case for a new rescue deal with the IMF.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly debated the budget for

approval and rejected all the amendments suggested by the opposition. The PPP, in the meanwhile, withdrew its demand for reduction in the petroleum development levy (PDL). The opposition demanded a vote against the increase in the PDL and its resolution was rejected by 170-84. However, the finance minister himself withdrew increase in the PDL.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and former Speaker Asad Qaiser raised the issue of cut in funding of projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Sunni Ittehad Council member Junaid Akbar Khan said that Prime Minister Shehbaz has said that he had been in jail like the PTI founder.

He addressed the premier and said when his party would come into power, it would pay them back along with interest. Be mindful of what you have done with our women workers, he warned the PM. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also attended the assembly session.

## PM hails swift approval of budget 2024-25 by NA

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday hailed the swift approval of the budget 2024-25 by the National Assembly, praising the tireless efforts of Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and his team for preparing a pro-people budget that prioritizes welfare of common man and promises to steer the country towards economic prosperity.

Talking to the finance minister in the National Assembly, the prime minister expressed his satisfaction over the active participation of all the treasury and opposition members in the budget session. He also appreciated the efforts of the officers from ministries of finance, planning, other relevant ministries and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in preparation of the budget.

The government, he said, tried its best to utilize all possible resources to provide maximum relief to the common man. He said the government provided relief to the salaried class, pensioners and workers. The prime minister highlighted that special attention was given in the budget to various important sectors such as health, education, agriculture and information technology.

He said the elite class and the tax evaders would be brought into the net. "It is not possible that the poor pay the taxes and the elites enjoy tax exemptions," he added. Expressing satisfaction over the economic situation, the prime minister said the country's economy had now been put on the right path and that Pakistan's journey of prosperity had begun now.

He said due to the business friendly policies, the trust of investors had been restored in the government. The government was taking steps to bring reforms in the departments and privatize the loss making state-owned entities on priority, he added.

**Shehbaz stresses collective efforts for national prosperity:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) played a vital role in country's economy and stressed the importance of collective efforts for the national development and prosperity.

Chairing a meeting on the matters related to the FBR, he instructed the hiring of top lawyers to pursue various pending cases of the board in courts and tribunals. The prime minister instructed that Customs Appellate Tribunals, along with Inland Revenue Appellate Tribunals, be established to expedite the resolution of tax-related cases.

He vowed presiding over the weekly review meetings on FBR's ongoing reforms and revenue. The prime minister also directed to formulate a strategy for

giving awards to meritorious officers of the FBR. During the briefing, it was mentioned that the process of establishing Appellate Tribunals in Inland Revenue had begun.

A transparent written examination will be conducted for appointing judges to these tribunals. The meeting was attended by Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani, Spokesperson of the Federal Government on Legal Affairs Barrister Aqeel Malik, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Inshaan Afzal Khan, Chairman FBR, and other senior government officials.

**Premier questions KP govt's failure to establish CTD despite receiving Rs590 b funds:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif questioned the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for its failure to establish the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) despite receiving Rs590 billion during the last 14 years.

The prime minister, responding to a point of order raised by Sunni Ittehad Council member and formed NA Speaker Asad Qaiser, highlighted that under the NFC, an additional one percent share was allocated for the KP province just to augment its efforts against terrorism. He said the last NFC Award was agreed upon in 2010 by the government of Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani when terrorism was at its peak and the KP province suffered the most, followed by Balochistan and other provinces.

The prime minister said that KP people had been the frontline soldiers against terrorism which would always be remembered. He said the additional one percent share for KP in NFC was still intact and no other province including Balochistan got such funds nor objected to it despite immense sacrifices by their law enforcement agencies and people against terrorism.

He told the House that from 2010 till now, the KP province had received Rs590 billion but could not yet establish the CTD for which the funds were mainly allocated. This also needs to be looked into as why the CTD is still incomplete there despite getting such huge funds, he remarked.

Coming to another objection by the opposition member, the prime minister told the House that the federal government had forwarded a panel of three persons, as per tradition, asking the KP government to choose one officer for appointment as Chief Secretary which they have not decided so far. He also offered to revise the panel if the provincial government desired so but rubbished the allegation of any discrimination against the province.

## 9 Karachiites die from heatstroke

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: At least nine citizens in Karachi have lost their lives in a day due to intense heat prevailing in the port city for over a week.

The deceased have been admitted to different hospitals due to heatstroke. According to the data, three heatstroke patients died in the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, commonly known as Jinnah Hospital. Moreover, the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital reported five deaths while one fatality was reported by the Civil Hospital. After recent heatstroke-related deaths, the toll jumped to 26. The deceased patients include six male and three female citizens.

Despite scattered rains in parts of the metropolis, the weather remained hot and humid in the city amid predictions of more rains. According to the Met Office on Friday, the weather in Karachi will be hot and humid during the next 24 hours, while rain with thunder is expected in a few places and the city's suburbs.

The Met Office said that thunderstorms in the city may form after 1pm, while there is more chance of rain today than yesterday. "Due to low air pressure, there will be no sea breeze today." The number of heatstroke patients has witnessed a steep rise in a few days as Karachi remained under the grip of extremely hot and humid weather with the mercury touching 42°C while "feels-like" exceeding 50°C a day earlier in the port city.

Three days ago, at least 150 heatstroke patients were brought to Karachi's Civil Hospital, including 40 citizens affected by intense heat remained admitted to the medical facility since Tuesday morning. Many patients got dehydrated due to sizzling temperatures and were discharged after providing necessary medical assistance. Additional Medical Superintendent Civil Hospital told the media.

## Democrats scramble after Biden's wobbly debate against Trump

WASHINGTON (Reuters): President Joe Biden's allies scrambled on Friday to contain the damage from a feeble debate performance with Republican rival Donald Trump that prompted some of his fellow Democrats to wonder whether they could replace him as their candidate for the November US election.

Biden's verbal stumbles and occasionally meandering responses in the debate heightened voter concerns that the 81-year-old incumbent might be not be fit to serve another four-year term. Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic Party leader in the US House of Representatives, avoided answering directly when asked by reporters if he still had faith in Biden at the top of the ticket.

"I support the ticket. I support the Senate Democratic majority. We're going to do everything possible to

take back the House in November. Thank you, everyone," he said. Democratic Representative Jim McGovern told reporters: "I'd be lying to you if I told you I thought it was a great debate." Asked if it was time for the party to consider another nominee, he responded, "I haven't come to any conclusion yet."

The Biden campaign said it raised \$14 million on Thursday and Friday and posted its single best hour of fundraising immediately after the Thursday night debate. Biden, already the oldest American president in history, faced only token opposition during the party's months-long nominating contest, and he has secured enough support to guarantee his spot as the Democratic nominee for the Nov. 5 election. Former President Trump, 78, likewise overcame his intra-party challengers early in the

year, setting the stage for a long and bitter general election fight.

One Biden donor, who asked for anonymity, called his performance "disqualifying" and predicted that some Democrats would revisit calls for him to step aside. That would give the party time to pick another nominee at its national convention, which starts on Aug. 19. Democratic officials played down that possibility.

"It's not likely to happen," Biden campaign co-chair Mitch Landrieu said on CNN. Other Biden aides and allies, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they did not think the blowback would threaten his chances of winning the nomination. Nancy Pelosi, Jeffries' predecessor, told reporters she did not think Democrats needed another presidential nominee. California Governor Gavin Newsom - who could be a leading

Democratic alternative - dismissed the notion that Biden could be replaced. Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, another possible replacement, urged Democrats to stop worrying. "Joe Biden had a bad debate, right, but Donald Trump was a bad president," Shapiro said. Interviews with undecided voters confirmed that it was a bad night for Biden. They described his showing as feeble, embarrassing and difficult to watch.

The Trump campaign released a video on Friday highlighting Biden's stumbles. "Last night the world saw who he is. He is unfit to serve," spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said. One adviser, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the debate would help them compete in Democratic-leaning states like Virginia and Minnesota. Ed McMullen, a Trump fundraiser, said three donors called him after the

debate to say they were ready to back the campaign. "Anyone who raises money knows there's a time to go to donors, and this is one of those watershed moments," he said.

Questions about Trump's fitness for office have arisen also over his conviction last month in New York for covering up hush money payments to a porn star, his efforts to overturn the 2020 election and his chaotic term in office. But despite a litany of falsehoods and deflections from Trump during the debate, the focus afterwards was squarely on Biden.

The 90-minute debate at CNN headquarters in Atlanta took place far earlier in the campaign than any modern presidential debate, more than four months before the election. That could mitigate the damage for Biden, as the memory of his performance fades and news events generate fresh

headlines. Trump, for instance, is scheduled to be sentenced in New York on July 11, just days before his party convenes to formally nominate him. He still faces three other criminal indictments, though none appears likely to reach trial before November.

At a Waffle House restaurant in Atlanta after the debate, Biden told reporters he did not have concerns about his performance. "It's hard to debate a liar," he said. Biden was headed for a Friday rally in Raleigh, North Carolina, a state that Democrats hope to win back from Republicans this November, before flying to New York for a fundraiser and the opening of a monument dedicated to the 1969 Stonewall riot for LGBT rights. Trump will hold a rally on Friday in Virginia, a state he has lost twice but hopes to put into play in November.





## Wafaqi Mohtasib chairs Asian Ombudsman Association's meeting

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that Ombudsmen Institutions constitute a global fraternity which can play a very effective role in improving the quality of life for the common man through better governance.

He was addressing the 25th Annual meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) of the Asian Ombudsman

Association (AOA) as its current President at Istanbul (Republic of Turkiye). He said that the objectives and purposes of the establishment of the Ombudsman Institution has a direct bearing on the realization of the overall goals, principally the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and good governance in all spheres of life.

Mr. Qureshi emphasized the need for greater sharing of experiences and best



practices to the mutual advantage of all stakeholders. "The commonly shared objectives are worth striving for and we should make a conscious effort for their realization", he observed. He expressed the confidence that such exchanges amongst the Ombuds Institutions would lead to further refining and streamlining the systems and procedures for addressing maladministration, bureaucratic bottlenecks and systemic issues.

He thanked the Board of

Directors for expressing confidence and trust in Pakistan's contribution in promoting the cause of Ombudsmanship to realize the ultimate objectives of good governance and the rule of law besides the inviolability of human rights.

The Board, in its deliberations, took stock of the ongoing activities and decided to further step-up cooperation in core areas, expressing satisfaction over the mutuality of perception evolved in the meeting.

It said that improvement in the quality of life of the common man would ultimately help realize the objectives for which the body was created.

## Father of DGPR, Saleem passes away

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Father of Director General Public Relation Muhammad Saleem Khan has died. His Namaz i Janza was held at Jamia Masjid Gulzar e Madina Bufferzone, which was attended by Ex Health Minister Dr. Sagheer Ahmed Officers and employees of Information Department and Governor House and journalists in large number.

While Secretary Information Mr. Nadeem ur Rahman Memon visited the home of Saleem Khan and offered Fateha with Saleem Khan on the death of his father.

Later he was buried at Dakhi Hassan graveyard. The Soym and Quran Khawani for the departed souls of Muhammad Farooq Khan will be held on Sunday 30 th June between Zuhr and Asr at Jamia Masjid Gulzar e Madina Bufferzone.

## Name Correction /Change Name

I Ramesh have changed my name to Ramesh Kabir. Please Correct All My name in Government Document and Non-Government Document Ramesh Kabir.

## Asad Baloch stresses equal allocation for all districts

### F.P. Report

QUETTA: Leader of Balochistan National Party-Awami and Member Balochistan Assembly Mir Asadullah Baloch has emphasized the need for allocating sizeable funds for initiating flagship projects in less developed areas to accommodate all sectors and ensuring equal distribution of development budget for all districts of the province.

"Equality in the distribution of funds in the Public Sector Development Funds (PSDP) to all constituencies of the province would help remove the sense of deprivation prevails among people living in remote areas of the province," he said while talking to media persons here Friday.

Asadullah Baloch said to bring the disgruntled people in mainstream, there is a dire

need to initiate flagship projects in Balochistan and boost economic activities in the region and ensure employment opportunities to the local people. He asked the provincial government to give priorities to less developed areas in the public sector development program as they would help in bringing prosperity to local areas.

He also urged the federal government to ensure maximum employment opportunities to the youth of Balochistan in the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Reko Diq. He said that the Balochistan government remained elusive to provide employment and over 25,000 graduates were being added to unemployed individuals every year. Asad Baloch said that around 7,000 engineers and over 3,000 doctors were waiting for a decent job and

source of income which would continue to increase anxiety among the youth with each passing day.

He suggested that the provincial government should announced employment allowance of Rs 50,000 for engineers and up to Rs 100,000 for doctors. Baloch stressed that the government should initiate projects for the welfare of formers and provide subsidy on seeds, electricity, agriculture equipments and fertilizers.

He also emphasized that the government should provide scholarships to 10,000 youth of the province and sends them abroad for getting higher education in the world top veracities. He said that it appeared that the claim of the provincial government for providing employment to youth of the province had gone at the back burner in the budget 2024-25.

## MARDAN IRRIGATION DIVISION, MARDAN

### NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(SINGLE STAGE SINGLE ENVELOPE)

Electronic bids on E-Tender System for the following works are hereby invited from approved contractors of Irrigation Department who have renewed registration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority and having valid license of Pakistan Engineering Council for the CFY (2024-25) in the relevant category and code on the below mentioned terms and conditions.

S.#	Name of work	Est: Cost in Rs: (Million)	2% E/Money +Stamp Duty (In Rs)	PEC Relevant category with specialization codes (Mandatory)	Last Date & Time for submission of tender form	Date / Time of opening	Time Limit for completion of the work
<b>Operation &amp; Maintenance works, of Mardan Irrigation Division, Mardan during 2024-25</b>							
1.	<b>Operation &amp; Maintenance works, of Mardan Irrigation Division, Mardan during 2024-25.</b> <b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Civil Works Within Jurisdiction of Mardan Section dg: 2024-25</b>	5.00	104000	C6 & above (CE-04 & CE-10)	18/07/2024 at 12:00 Noon	18/07/2024 at 12:30 PM	As per Bid Solicitation Documents
2	<b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Civil/ Electrical and Mechanical Works of Lift Irrigation Schemes within Jurisdiction of Narai Section dg: 2024-25</b>	2.00	44000	C6 & above (ME-07 & EE-11) (CE-04 & CE-10)			
3	<b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Civil/ Electrical and Mechanical Works of Lift Irrigation Schemes within Jurisdiction of Mardan Section During 2024-25</b>	4.00	84000	C6 & above (ME-07 & EE-11) (CE-04 & CE-10)			
4	<b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Irrigation Works within Jurisdiction of Doshera Section During 2024-25</b>	3.00	64000	C6 & above (CE-04 & CE-10)			
5	<b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Irrigation Works within Jurisdiction of Narai Section During 2024-25</b>	3.00	64000	C6 & above (CE-04 & CE-10)			
6	<b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Flood Protection Works in Mardan Irrigation Division, Mardan during 2024-25</b>	2.00	44000	C6 & above (CE-04 & CE-10)			
7	<b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Surface drainage System within jurisdiction Mardan Irrigation Division Mardan dg: 2024-25</b>	2.00	44000	C6 & above (CE-04 & CE-10)			
8	<b>Sub Work: AM&amp;R to Sub Surface drainage System within jurisdiction Mardan Irrigation Division Mardan dg: 2024-25</b>	2.00	44000	C6 & above (CE-04 & CE-10)			

### Terms & Conditions for E-Bidding:-

- The Bids shall be submitted electronically through E-Bidding on OR before the mentioned fixed date & time.
- The bidder shall submit the sealed bid with requisite documents including 2% Bid Security of the estimated cost in the shape of call deposit (original) before closing date and time.
- The bidders should submit their E-Bids as per KPPRA Notification No. S.R.O. (13)/Vol: 1-24/2021-22/6058-71, dated: 10-05-2022.
- All the conditions / instructions given in the bidding documents shall be applicable on all competitive bidders.
- The bids will be valid for one hundred & twenty days (120) from the bids opening.
- The bid security upto 3rd lowest bidder will not be released till approval of tender by the competent authority.
- Call Deposit of Scheduled Banks shall be acceptable. No Bank cheque OR pay order shall be acceptable.
- All the bidders are requested to download the bidding documents from the KPPRA website / Irrigation Department Website: [www.irrigation.gkp.pk](http://www.irrigation.gkp.pk).
- Pre-bid meeting will be held on **15/07/2024** in the office of the undersigned at **12.00 Noon**.
- All the bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority, established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No.XXI of 2013).
- All the prevailing KPPRA rules / Act and other Govt. notifications will be applicable issued from time to time & will become part of bidding documents.
- The Employer has the authority to reject any bid or all the bids assigning cogent reasons.

INF(P) 1496/24

Executive Engineer  
Mardan Irrigation  
Division Mardan



## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, BANNU CANAL DIVISION BANNU

Phone & Fax No. 0928-9270056

## GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

### NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING (Single Stage Single Envelope Procedure)

Irrigation Department, (Bannu Canal Division Bannu) Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic bids from the eligible Firms/contractors in accordance with KPPRA procurement prevailing rules 2014 on Single Stage/Single Envelope Procedure for the following work.

S.#	Name of Work/Sub Work	E/Cost Rs. in Million	E/Money + Stamp duty	PEC Relevant Code
01.	<b>ADP NO.2206/210455-Construction of flood protection works, Irrigation Channels and Ponds and Installation of solar Irrigation tube wells in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.</b>			
	Installation of Solar Based Irrigation tube well at Kotka Abdul Qadir Shah in Distt: Bannu (Solarization of T/well with Installation of pumping machinery)	5.416	117500/-	CE-04 CE-09, CE-10 EE-11 ME-05
(i)	Construction/Installation of Solar Based Irrigation tube well at Kotka Wazir Zada Jangi Kala Pirba Khel Tehsil Domel Distt: Bannu (Solarization of T/well with Installation of pumping machinery)	5.416	118000/-	-do-
02	<b>ADP NO.2359/180617-Construction of flood protection works, Irrigation Channels and Installation of solar tube wells in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.</b>			
(i)	Installation of Solar Based Irrigation tube well at Kotka Ali Shah Dakhli Govraka Nar Dilasa Shah in Distt: Bannu. (Solarization of T/well with Installation of jumping machinery)	4.287	89800/-	-do-
03	<b>ADP NO.2157/150439-Installation of Solar Based Irrigation/Augmentation Tube wells and small lift Irrigation Scheme in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.</b>			
(i)	Solarization of existing Irrigation tube well with provision of compound wall at Nar Hakim Khan Distt: Lakki Marwat (Solarization of T/well with Installation of Dumping machinery)	3.213	68500/-	-do-

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR E-BIDDING:-

- Bidding documents including instruction to bidders, terms and conditions and Evaluation Criteria can be downloaded from Irrigation Department website ([www.irrigation.gkp.pk](http://www.irrigation.gkp.pk)) and KPPRA official website, for each package separate Bid documents are to be submitted by the interested bidders.
- The bidder shall submit their bids through leading courier service on or before the deadline along with required documents as per detail mentioned in bid solicitation documents.
- Electronic Bid shall be done on "above / below" system on BOQ / Engineers Estimate.
- All the participating firm will be evaluated as per Criteria duly included in Bid Solicitation documents and the firms who failed in the criteria will be considered non-responsive.
- Venue of Bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer Bannu Canal Division Bannu.
- If the evaluated electronic bid costs of two or more bidders are equal, then the successful bidder will be declared through draw/toss.
- Two percent (02%) Bid Security/Earnest Money + Stamp duty of the estimated cost from the account of firm/bidder/contractor who submits the bid must be accompanied with the tender document/contractor through any scheduled bank in favour of Executive Engineer Bannu Canal Division Bannu. Failure to submit the 02% CDR will lead to rejection of the bid.
- The bidders who quote their bids/rates more than 10% below on Engineer's estimate shall submit additional security as per KPPRA Notification No.S.R.O (14)/Vol: 1-24/2021-22 dated 10/05/2022.

- Bid security of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest electronic bidder for the specific work may be retained by the Department till one week after issuance of LOA.
- All the bidders/firms must be register with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority.
- All the prevailing KPPRA Acts/Rules and other Government Notification will be applicable, issued from time to time.
- Funds release depends upon policy of Provincial Government, hence payment will be made accordingly. Bidder/Contractor agreeing with the financial constraints in respect of payment etc. are at liberty to participate in the instant E-bidding as no claim what so ever will be entertained in this regard.
- Pre-bid meeting will be held on **08/07/2024 at 12.00 PM** in the office of the undersigned.
- The last date & time for submission of the Bid alongwith relevant documents is **15/07/2024 upto 12.00 Noon** which will be opened on the same day at **12:30 PM** in the office of the undersigned in present of Contractors and their authorize representatives who wishes to attend.
- All Government Notification/Rules/Taxes implemented from time to time shall be applicable.
- Any further information regarding the above tender can be obtained from office of the undersigned on any working prior to bid opening date.
- The employer has the authority to reject any bid or all the bids, assigning cogent reasons.

INF(P) 1486/24

Executive Engineer  
Bannu Canal Division Bannu

## OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (Sr) LG&RDD DISTRICT DIR LOWER

### NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

Sealed Tender Based on MRS-2022 (2nd Bi Annual)/Non MRS items for Below mentioned works are hereby invited on the basis of **Single Stage Single Envelope Procedure** from the Government Contractors registered with PEC and with Communication and works Department as per centralized procedure Enlistment policy of the Government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa for current financial year as per following schedule.

WORK NO.	Work Name	Estimated Cost(M)	Bid Security @2%	Last date /time of submission of electronic Tender	Date/Time of opening of Electronic Tender
01.	Repair and maintenance of Transformers in Constituency PK-14 District Dir Lower	10.00	200000	28th July, 2024 12:00 PM	28th July, 2024 02:00 PM
02.	Repair and maintenance of Transformers in Constituency PK-15 District Dir Lower	10.00	200000	-do-	-do-
03.	Repair and maintenance of Transformers in Constituency PK-16 District Dir Lower	10.00	200000	-do-	-do-
04.	Repair and maintenance of Transformers in Constituency PK-17 District Dir Lower	10.00	200000	-do-	-do-
05.	Repair and maintenance of Transformers in Constituency PK-18 District Dir Lower	10.00	200000	-do-	-do-

- The financial bidding will be online through E-bidding system. Tender form and BOQ can be filled online and downloaded from the official website of LG& RDD ([www.lgkp.gov.pk](http://www.lgkp.gov.pk)) after one day of publishing NIT.
- The bidders are required to fill electronic bids online and attach scan copy of bid security in shape of original call deposits in the name of procuring entity along with (Additional security if any) and submit hard copy of the same printed electronic bid to the procuring entity/executing Agency.
- Electronic bids and original call deposits received through fax or by hand will not be acceptable.
- All those contractors/firms are eligible to participate in the tender who are registered with incorporate of electricity, energy and power department KPK of electricity act 1937 under rule 48 and hold class-E license as well as provide one year warranty of the particular as per PESCO SOP.
- Sealed bids sent through registered mail/courier service should reach up to the specified time and date as mention above.
- The eligible bidder should have the relevant codes for the above mentioned works as per Pakistan Engineering Council.
- The contractor or his representative may be present at time of opening of electronic bids opening.
- The call deposits i.e. bid security for the work/contract must be prepared after publishing of NIT, before closing time of the electronic bid apply.
- The Contractor quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security @2% only of Engineer Estimate.
- The Contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bid 8% Additional security of Engineer's estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as Non-Responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineers Estimated Cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed Rate Analysis (If a contractor quote e.g 25% below engineer estimate bid then he has to deposit along with his bid 2% bid security and 25% additional security of engineer estimate). In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and /or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bid is, in view of the procuring entity, not convincing, the head of the procuring entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid security.
- Any Electronic Bidder who provide false, or materially inaccurate or incomplete or do not send information in hard will be disqualified as per KPPRA Act Section 29 (1) read with KPPRA Rule (43). Furthermore the procuring Entity/Executing Agency will recommend and sent cases for debarring/Blacklisting and will initiate/take action in light of approved procedure/Mechanism as per KPPRA Act section 29 (2) read with KPPRA Rule (44).
- Electronic Bids will remain valid for 90 days from the closing date of bids. (As decide by the Procuring Entity/Executing Agency in Light of Standard Bidding Documents).
- The PEC and KPRA registration (Active tax payer) must be valid for current Financial Year.
- The Centralized Enlisted contractors with C&W department for the current financial year who wants to participate in tendering process may approach Directorate General LG&RDD Peshawar within two days before closing time of electronic apply for uploading their names on the official website i.e. ([www.lgkp.gov.pk](http://www.lgkp.gov.pk)).
- All the bidders may be deposited tender form fee Rs. 0.03% on E/Cost by each participating contractor along with earnest money.
- Work Order will be issued to contractors subject to availability of funds.
- CDRs will not be released to contractors till the award of contract.
- All applicable taxes will be recoverable as per directives of the government in vogue.
- As per KPPRA Rule 37 (9) no bidder shall be allowed to withdraw his bid till award of the contract or till bid is valid whichever is earlier.
- All relevant documents i.e current renewal of PEC/NIC must be attached with tender form.
- Any addition made in terms of conditions in the NIT advertised will be implemented as per KPPRA Rules.

ASSISTANT ENGINEER (Sr)  
LG&RDD DISTRICT DIR LOWER

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (Sr)  
LG&RDD DISTRICT DIR LOWER

INF(P) 1532/24





PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordher, presenting information package and sovenirs to Chen, Chairman Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan, China.

# Chinese investors meets SACM Karim Tordher

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries, Commerce & Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher, chaired a meeting regarding Chinese Investments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the construction materials sector, mining sector, herbals and light engineering sector here at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT) in Peshawar.

The Chinese delegation was headed by Mr. Chen, Chairman Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan, which is located 120 kilometers over the Khunjarab Pass from Sust.Officials of the board also present on this occasion.

The Chinese delegation informed that after detailed study of this region, they chose Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as one of the best investment opportunities in this region due to its connectivity with Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs) along with being rich in hydel power and clean energy and boasting on its natural endowments, making it ideal destination for investments in Economic Zones, Tourism, and mining.

It was also highlighted that the herbs present in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are really liked and favored in the Peoples Republic of China. It was also decided that new ventures of collaboration may be sought and there should be more business to business and people to people connections.

Chairman Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan invited the SACM and other government officials from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade, KPEZDMC, SIDB to showcase KP products at the exhibition centre of either Sust or at the Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan so that more KP products and KP business community may be integrated in the Chinese market.

The SACM assured full support in facilitation to be provided by the provincial government and also appreciated KP-BoIT performance and assured of all possible cooperation from this platform.

## CJ lauds role retires PHC staff

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: A farewell ceremony was held in the Peshawar High Court, Peshawar to honor the services of two retiring Drivers of PHC namely Abdul Malik and Sohbat Shah. Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim, the Senior Puisne Judge Justice Ijaz Anwar, and Ikhtiar Khan the Registrar PHC graced the ceremony which was also attended by the Principal Officers and the ministerial establishment of Peshawar.

The Chief Justice in his remarks thanked and extended congratulations to both the officials and stated that Peshawar High Court is grateful for their services, dedication & hard work and bode them farewell with prayers for good health and a happy post-retirement life.

The ceremony concluded with presentation of gifts from Hon'ble the Chief Justice and the Ministerial establishment to both the retiring officials.

**PHC suspends tender for commercial activities on park land**

Peshawar High Court (PHC) has suspended the tender for commercial activities on recreational land at Mardan Sports Complex and issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Secretary Sports, DG Sports, and other respondents, on Friday.

The counsel Mubasher Mansoor advocate argued that the 8 kanal land allocated for a recreational park in the sports complex was being used for commercial purposes, which is illegal and against the law.

The counsel stated that the park was intended for women and children, but the commercial activities would deprive them of a recreational space. The petitioner also highlighted the traffic congestion on Mardan Road due to the commercial plazas and requested the court to restrain the construction of commercial buildings on the park land.

PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Waqar Ahmed suspended the tender for commercial activities as well as issued notices to the respondents, seeking their response in the plea.

**Services Tribunal suspends transfer orders in C&W dept**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Services Tribunal has suspended transfer orders of a senior clerk and issued notices to the respondents, on Friday. The tribunal member, Rashida Bano, heard the appeal filed by Atiqur Rahman through his counsel, Tariq Afghan advocate.

The counsel argued that the petitioner was promoted to senior clerk in 2023 and was posted in Dir Upper, but was transferred to Peshawar after a few months due to political pressure from a related political personality who wanted to appoint their relative to the same post. He claimed that the transfer was illegal and violated the law, as he had not completed the required two-year tenure at the post.

The tribunal, after hearing the initial arguments, suspended the transfer orders and directed Atiqur Rahman to continue working at his post until further orders.

The tribunal also issued notices to the relevant authorities to respond to the appeal.

## Reading habits faded away

PESHAWAR (APP): Technologically-drenched lifestyle has adversely affected reading habits amongst the youngsters as the nonstop usage of social media platforms and online presence had snatched away major chunk of their daily time.

Reading habits, once considered instrumental for critical thinking has slowly faded away even within the educated circles. Though both extensive and intensive reading habits help individuals in many ways to develop their verbal abilities, improve concentration, enhance imagination, boost entertainment, raise tolerance, and reduce stress.

But the omnipresence of technology and the relentless use of social media in today's digital age have significantly eroded reading habits of young people.

The constant engagement with online platforms has consumed much of their daily time, leaving little room for the enriching practice of reading books.

The non-stop dissemination of SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook and X messages have adversely impacted the culture of book reading habits as the boom in internet and mushroom growth of social media had started filling minds of the youth by taking free their time.

"The major reason of decline in books reading habits is the increased invention of internet where almost all books, research papers and magazines are easily available on a single click," said Professor Dr Naeemur Rehman Khattak, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar while talking to APP.

He said the worst aspect of electronic reading materials is not only exposing young minds to vulgar and obscene contents but it also affecting their eyesight while sitting in front of computers and smartphones for longer hours.

"Sitting too much in front of computers and smartphones make negative effects on eyes' cornea of children and make them vulnerable to develop large cornea in later stage, which may affect their eye sights operantly," said Professor Dr Ibrar Khattak, head of eye unit Government Hospital Pabbi.

He said at night the brightness of smartphones should be around 50-100 nits, which is around 10 percent of the smartphone brightness slider and on laptops it is usually close to the lowest setting.

Dr Ibrar said due to day time in rooms, the brightness should be around 40-60 percent on laptops and 30 percent on smartphones to protect eyes' cornea and avoid permanent disability.

Dr Naeemur Rehman Khattak said Pakistan is home to about 111 million internet users where 188.9 million active cellular connections equivalent to 77.8 percent of the 242.8 million population were currently operating.

He said about 71.70 million people are using social media equating to 29.5% of the total population, adding the country's population has increased by 4.7 million between 2023 to 2024 including 49.6 percent population is female and 50.4 percent is male, which is a matter of concern.

The internet penetration rate stood at 45.7 percent of the total population early this year with 24 million people increased between January 2023 to January 2024 in Pakistan where about 54.38 million social media users aged 18 and above equivalent to 38.9 percent of the total population use different social media tools for education, information and infotainment services.

Dr Naeem said about 44.50 million people used Facebook, 71.70 million YouTube, 17.30 million Instagram, 54.38 million TikTok, 11.95 million Facebook Messenger, 30.21 million Snapchat, 4.50 million X users and 12 million LinkedIn in Pakistan, affecting books reading culture.

In the wake of increased social media users in Pakistan, he said the attendance of students both in government and private libraries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have decreased significantly in recent years.

"When I obtained admission in IMS at University of Peshawar in 2004, I used to come to Saeed Book Bank and London Book Agency often for purchasing books and selecting appropriate stationary for myself and class fellows in its soothing environment," said Khurshid Khan, Assistant Manager, Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation.

He said it was extremely heartening that these two treasures of books were closed at Peshawar, adding that most of students of KP visit Islamabad and Lahore for preparation of CSS/PMS exams due to closure of libraries in Peshawar.

Director Archives and Libraries, Dr Raheela Hafeez terming books as windows to the world's knowledge, she said the culture of reading is inevitable for knowledge acquisition and lifelong learning besides enrichment of vocabulary.

The recent survey of Gallup and Gillani Foundation Pakistan has revealed that about 75% of the students in the country are not reading any book which signifies that three out four students has never read a book at all except probably the university or college of school textbooks for passing their examination.

Professor Dr Muhammad Ibrahim, former Director Institute of Education and Research (IER) UoP said students often prefer to go for quick reading and images by avoiding the original text that has negative effects on their studies.

He said that the vicious academic cycle are required to be changed by introducing some incentives for reading books, promotion of teachers and marks for students etc.

## Semester programs in BS Nursing, Allied Health Sciences

# KMU announces new exam policy

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) has announced a significant change to enhance the transparency and efficiency of examinations for its BS Nursing and Allied Health Sciences programs.

Based on recommendations from the Academic Council and Syndicate, KMU will now conduct final exams at designated exam cells under the supervision of Directors from KMU's constituent institutes across five regions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Regional directors from KMU-IHS Swat, KMU-IHS Islamabad, KMU-IHS Kohat, KMU-IHS Hazara, and Main campus Peshawar will coordinate the examination process.

Their responsibilities will include paper setting, Conduct of theory, OSPE/OSCE and Result compilation.

A Core committee with Director Academic & Admission, Registrar

KMU Mr. Inam Ullah Khan Wazir, Controller of Examinations Prof Dr Saleem Gandapur, Director QEC Dr. Asiyah Bukhari, Dr Sheraz, Dr Maria Ishaq Khattak, Mr. Muhammad Islam Addi Directo Academics and Mr. Sahir Atiq Deputy Director Academics has been established to identify clear mechanisms for the smooth implementation of Decentralisation of Exams.

A further Review and Monitoring committee with members from the Institute of health professions education and research Dr Brekhna Jamil, Dr Noushad, Dr Humaira, Dr Adnan Ali Shah Establishment, Mr Usman Iqbal, Deputy Treasurer, Mr Tayyab Deputy Director Affiliation, Mr Shehzad Khan Deputy Director IT, shall work in close collaboration with the Regional cells directors and aim to standardize the examination process and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

## Businessmen point out hurdles in newly introduced TAD plan

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Businessmen dealing in Pak-Afghan trade while pointing out some hurdles in smooth implementation of recently introduce Temporary Admission Document (TAD), have demanded awareness over the plan among government officials and stakeholders.

In a press statement issued on Friday, Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Ziaul Haq Sarhadi said Pakistan government on June 2, 2024 started implementation of a plan that allows Afghan transporters to enter on the Temporary Admission Document (TAD) at border points to facilitate speedy bilateral trade between the two countries.

The facility has not been presently allowed to transporters carrying transit goods and only trucks of export goods can benefit, he explained.

However, Ziaul Haq Sarhadi stated, authorities in Afghanistan have stopped hundreds of transit trade goods and demanding TAD relevant documents. He said the misunderstanding amount operation of TAD has caused restriction of hundreds of trucks in Afghanistan which were on way back to Pakistan.

Similarly, he continued, there are some misunderstanding at embassy level as a result of which transportation of Pak-Afghan bilateral trade goods are facing delays.

Mr Sarhadi demanded of the authorities concerned to work on capacity building of the government functionaries and stake holders for effective implementation of TAD so that maximum benefit could be availed from the facility.

## Prof Noshawan reappointed Chairman BoG, LRH

PESHAWAR (APP): Professor Dr Noshawan Barki has been reappointed Chairman Board of Governors (BoG), Lady Reading Hospital (LRH).

According to LRH admin, Professor Noshawan on Friday chaired an important meeting of BoG and gave approval for various uplift projects.

He directed the meeting participants to take pragmatic steps for provision of free treatment on Sehat Card and uninterrupted supply of medicines to the patients.

At the meeting he also issued directives for induction of doctors, provision of funds and medicines, proper utilization of Sehat Card and expediting work on other sections of the hospital.

Professor Noshawan Barki said providing every kind of medical facility to the people was our prime duty and we have to address the grievances of the patients.

## 104 hooks removed, recoveries made in Matani, Sufaid Dheri

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Following instructions of the provincial government, the PESCO authorities accompanied by the Assistant Commissioner and police force removed 104 hooks and made recoveries in areas showing line-losses here on Friday.

The operation against power pilferers and defaulters was conducted by the PESCO staff wherein Assistant Commissioner Matani, Shahid Ullah and police were also present.

The operation was conducted in Sufaid Dheri and Sub-Division Matani against illegal power connections and outstanding dues. During the action, 104 hooks were removed while 36 slow meters and two transformers were confiscated. A recovery of RS 0.2 million was made from the defaulters.

On the occasion AC Shaid Ullah told media persons that operation against power pilferers and defaulters under the instructions of provincial government will be taken to logical end in three phases.

In the first phase, he said all illegal connections and hooks will be removed while in the second phase recoveries will be made from the defaulter and in third phase, a comprehensive power meterization of the consumers will be ensured.

He urged upon the consumers of Matani Sub Division to cooperate with the PESCO teams for ensuring uninterrupted power supply and ending unannounced load shedding in the area.



PESHAWAR: People distribute free drinks to the public during hot weather at Sadar Bazar. — APP Photo

## Weather to remain dry, hot in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Weather will remain dry and hot in most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, an official of the Meteorological Department said here Friday.

The southern and plain areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have also remained under the grip of heat, the official said.

Chance of rain with thunder in the upper areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and chance of rain in Mardan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Kurram, Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Kohistan, Butgram, Swat, Chitral, Mansehra, the official said.

The minimum temperature of Peshawar is 33 centigrade record and during the last 20 hours, 16 mm of rain has been recorded in the upper Balakot region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the official of the Meteorological Department said. Rain in Chitral and Kalam 4mm while one millimeter of rain in Durash.





## In brief

### Philanthropist Rahat shot dead F.P. Report

SWABI: A well-reputed philanthropist and member of District Reconciliation Committee (DRC), Rahat Khan was shot dead by unknown assailants in Swabi, police informed on Friday. Police said Rahat Khan was near his home in Kalu Khan tehsil of Swabi district when armed men shot him dead. The deceased had rendered all his life for the welfare of the people of his area and was a great admirer of peace and reconciliation among the people. As a member of DRC, he addressed countless issues of his people and turned scores of enmities into brotherhood in his area. He attended hundreds of peace jirgas and even so many times placed his turban in the feet of opponent parties to persuade them for reaching a peaceful truce. His great desire was to end enmities and peacefully settle disputes among rival groups. The people of his area were shocked to hear the news about his death and demanded arrest of his killers as soon as possible.

### Cops arrest MPA's nephew

QUETTA (PPI): Quetta police on Friday claimed to have arrested nephew of MPA Mir Liaquat Ali Lehri, the provincial leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, on the charge of torturing traffic police constable in Sariab Road area of the provincial capital. Following the direction of Deputy Inspector General of Police, Quetta, Aetzaz Ahmed Goraya, the Sariab police arrested Danish Marri. It is worth mentioning that the previous day a video went viral on social media showing Mir Danish Lehri beating a traffic constable at Sariab Road area of Quetta. Taking notice of the incident, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Quetta, Aetzaz Ahmed Goraya directed the concerned authorities to apprehend the person involved in torturing traffic police constable. In compliance, large contingent of police station Sariab arrested Danish Lehri after besieging Lehri house in new Ada Satellite Town Quetta. Danish Lehri was shifted to Police Station Sariab and FIR was lodged against him. Further investigation was underway.

### Three killed in Talagang

TALAGANG (INP): Three persons were killed and another two injured in firing by unidentified gunmen in the limits of Lava Police Station area of Talagang on Friday. Those killed included 65-year-old Noor Khan, 25-year-old Mohsin Wali and 28-year-old Rafaqat Ali. Sources said that the deceased were said to be close relatives. The reason was said to be the enmity over a previous murder, the sources said. The bodies of the deceased were shifted to hospital for post-mortem.

### Criminals gang smashed

BUREWALA (APP): Model Town police Burewala on Friday announced to have smashed a gang of criminals with the arrest of five of its members including the ring leader and recovery of looted valuables worth Rs 4.4 million besides weapons. The police team led by SHO Mazhar Faeed Gondal employed modern technology facilities under supervision of DSP Zafar Iqbal Dogar and tracked down the gang of criminals through mobile phone tracking technology and other evidence during the course of investigations, police spokesman said.



FAISALABAD: Farmers using modern agriculture machine for seedling of rice crop in their field.

## Funds religious among scholars distributed

F.P. Report

KARAK: As many as 92 crores distributed among the 325 Jama Masjid scholars of Karak District. 100,000 rupees were distributed. Due to fund problems, the three quarters of late honors were released to the scholars at the same time, on which the scholars expressed their satisfaction and expressed their special gratitude to the Assistant Commissioner Headquarters.

While talking to the scholars who received honors on this occasion, the Assistant Commissioner said that now the system has been made online, so the above-mentioned honors will be received online through the bank account. Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Kark/Deputy Administrator Awqaf Amanullah sent the list to the bank authorities for the online process so that the scholars can receive their honorarium on time by taking necessary action as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, SHO Tariq not only disappeared 183 thousand rupees by naming him in an illegal gambling case, but also insulted us by going to the police station and threatening to name us in more serious cases for raising our voice about the cruelty done to him, DPO Karak.

DIG and the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are ready to

compensate us for the injustice and clean up through divorce, if we do not get justice, we will also approach the court. On June, ASI Aamir Sohail came to my house and told me that SHO Tariq had called him, so he sat in the car with him, and when he reached near Qureshi Nagar, SHO Tariq along with a police force were there along with three persons Nik Nawazam, Nisam Ullah and Shakir Ullah.

Yes, they took 10,200 rupees from me during the Jamia search and 193,000 and 189,500 rupees were taken from Nik Nawaz and 189,500 rupees from Nisamullah, but they took us all to the police station in a car and named us in an illegal case of gambling. They are ready to clean up through oath and divorce. He further said that the father-in-law of SHO Tariq came to my house and asked me to send the Muslims who pitched tents on my land to the police station or to give the money to the SHO, but I refused and therefore involved us in illegal cases. Chief Minister KP, IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and DIG Kohat appeal to the authorities for justice and if we do not get justice, we will also approach the court.

**PPP condemns CM behaviour:** Pakistan People's Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women's Wing Information Secretary and MPA Maher

Sultana Advocate in her press release once again attacked the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin and said that a person like Ali Amin is in such an important position.

Sitting is the misfortune of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the condition of the province is very bad, money is not available for the salaries of the employees, inflation is on the rise, the government writ has expired in the institutions, Ali Amin is sitting with the federal government in Islamabad.

Instead of fighting the case, he sits silently, his tongue stops working and on his return to Peshawar, he begins to lash out, which is of no use, on the contrary, the province is suffering. He further said that Ali Amin instead of showing performance, he cannot hide his incompetence by criticizing the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Public awareness has come and they will ask him questions about his performance.

Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa followed in the footsteps of his previous governments and led the province towards destruction, we demand Ali Amin to stop killing and think of the people and the province and their welfare. Take steps together with the federal government and the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## 18 hours load shedding continue in Larkana

F.P. Report

LARKANA : In Larkana city due to constant power outages, innocent children were born with diarrhoea, ulcers and other diseases. Due to the unannounced continuous loading by WAPDA day and night in the heat, the people lost their sleep and the business was disrupted.

The elected representatives also forgot the residents of Larkana. Innocent children suffered from diarrhoea, dysentery, diarrhea and other diseases due to continuous unannounced loading day and night in Mahali, Hussaini Mahali, Arabani Mahali, Meran Shah Mahali, Bhines Colony, OPF Colony, Nazar Mahali and other areas of the city. While there is no electricity day and night, people suffering from blood pressure and diabetes are suffering from anger and rage.

Due to the loading, there is no water for ablution including drinking water in the mosque, so the prayers are being missed. In this regard, the well-known parties of Larkana, Dr. Amir

Ali Abbasi, Bilal Ali Katpar, Javed Ali Bhutto, Mahmood Ahmed Abaro and others said that the 18-18 hours of unannounced loading in Larkana city during the hot season made the life of the people controversial. Yes, due to the power cut day and night, innocent children are suffering from the heat. Due to the power cut by WAPDA SEPCO during the summer season, many diseases including diarrhoea, diarrhoea, and diarrhea have been born in the innocent children. Big problems have been faced.

The citizens of Larkana have repeatedly protested against such brutalities of WAPDA, but there is no remedy. Even the residents of Larkana have stopped raising their voice to stop the unannounced loading of WAPDA SEPCO. Citizens said that the people of Godara Larkana city should not be left at the mercy of WAPDA SEPCO and to save them from the atrocities of WAPDA, raise their voice in the National Assembly and Provincial Assembly and declare Larkana city as a loading

free city according to the dream of martyr Ms. Benazir Bhutto.

**DIG visits PTC center:** Police Training Center (PTC) Shahdarpur under the chairmanship of Selection Committee, Deputy Inspector General Police Range Larkana Nasir Aftab Pathan, Deputy Inspector General of Police Larkana Range, visited the examination program for candidates recruited as police constables, where The constable recruitment districts include the three districts of Mirpurkhas range Umakot, Tharparkar and Mirpurkhas.

On this occasion, Chairman Selection Committee DIGP Larkana Headed by Secretary of Physical Test, the members and representatives included SSP Mirpurkhas, SSP Umakot, SP CTD Hyderabad, Principal PTC Shahdarpur, representatives of Pakistan Army, CPLs, STS members and officers and youths of Larkana Range Office who also participated in the selection of candidates. Various types of tests were conducted.

## Importance of social media highlighted

F.P. Report

WANA: The Islamic Students' Organization (ISO) of South Waziristan Circle organized a seminar on leadership at the District Press Club, Wana, on [Date]. The event brought together various speakers and attendees to discuss the importance of social media, local government in democracy, and the qualities of effective leadership.

Salahuddin Wazir, former head of the ISO, highlighted the positive impacts of social media, including access to information, promotion of education and health, and raising awareness about human rights. Malik Sahib Khan, Village Chairman, emphasized the need for strong local government in democracy, stressing the importance of local representatives in resolving community

issues. Other speakers, including Taj Muhammad Wazir and Asmat Wazir, underscored the role of leadership in societal development and the importance of extracurricular activities for students.

The seminar concluded with a resolution to organize similar events to address regional issues and promote awareness and education among students and locals.

## All promises with people to be fulfilled: KP Minister

F.P. Report

BANNU: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering Pakhtun Yar Khan has said that all the promises made to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be fulfilled and the current five-year period will be a historic period for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in terms of development and local leadership in the entire province. With mutual consultation, all development works will be purely based on merit, without any kind of nepotism and personal likes and dislikes, and will never disappoint the people.

They will ensure the supply of clean water and solve their problems, they expressed these views while talking to the media representatives on this occasion. PTI Leader Haji Malik Muhammad Allah Khan Dawar, Malik Tariq Usman Khan, Mumtaz Khan. Malik Niaz Ali Khan Mirakhel was also present. He said that the federal government is obstructing the development works of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but we will not allow their evil intentions to succeed. We are not the rulers of the people, we are servants.

He will solve the problems of the people and will never hurt the trust of the people. Leader Imran Khan resolved the deprivations of the people by appointing Ali Amin Gandapur, who was brave and did not bend and did not sell, as the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. I will remove the deprivations of the people by laying the net of development work for them.

## RPO Malakand visits Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR. Regional Police Officer Malakand region Muhammad Ali Khan visited the Lower Dir district and reviewed the law and order situation here the other day. The RPO visited the Timergara police lines and held a meeting with the police officers. The District Police Officer Lower Dir Mazhar Iqbal, SP Investigation Rashid Khan, DSP Headquarters, circle DSPs and other police officers attended the meeting.

The DPO briefed him on the overall law and order situation of the district. The RPO issued necessary orders to the officers, and met the injured policemen during the search and strike operation in Maidan Circle and inquired about their well-being. On this occasion, Regional Police Officer Malakand Range expressed satisfaction over the overall law and order situation.

He said that police were determined to ensure the safety of people's lives and property with the same spirit and courage. He lauded the sacrifices rendered by police officials to protect the mother land in the past and reiterated the force would continue to safeguard the soil.

# Action against encroachments directed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Muhammad Ayaz Khan Sherpao, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Dr. Tariqullah, Secretary to Commissioner Sara Tawab, ADC General Saeedullah Jan, ADC Relief Iqbal Hussain and ADC Swabi Gohar Ali besides Regional Municipal Officer Zeeshan Khan and other concerned officials attended.

Commissioner Mardan Division was informed about the performance of administrative officers in both the districts. Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Ayaz appreciated the performance of administrative officers of both districts regarding inspection of development projects, revenue cases, handling of public com-

plaints, collection of various provincial taxes, campaign against polythene bags and action against encroachments. Commissioner Mardan praised the anti-encroachment drive in Taktibhai and Rustam and directed to keep a close watch on the encroachment mafia so that they do not encroach again.

He also directed to dispose of revenue cases older than one year in two to three weeks and asked the Deputy Commissioners to monitor the performance of the Revenue Courts in this regard. The ongoing campaign against electricity theft and kunda culture was also reviewed in the meeting and it was decided to intensify efforts in this regard.

## Bugti orders for immediate functioning of industrial zone

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has ordered to make functioning of industrial zone and multi-purpose commercial complex constructed under Chaman Master Plan on immediate basis.

Chairing a meeting here Friday, he said that more steps should be taken for making the industrial zone and the commercial complex Chaman operational to boost economic activities in the area and ensure employment opportunities for the masses of the border city.

Provincial ministers including Mir Zahoar Ahmed Buledi, Saleem Ahmed Khosa, Haji Ali Madad Jattak, Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel

Qadir Khan, Secretary Communications and Works, Secretary Industries, Commissioner Quetta Division and other officials also participated in the meeting.

Sarfraz Bugti said the provision of basic facilities including electricity in the industrial area should be ensured as soon as possible to accelerate economic activities in Chaman.

He directed that expression of interest should be sought for allotment of available plots in Industrial Zone Chaman and stressed for availability of all its facilities to attract the investors for the investment.

"The provincial assets and other resources would be utilized for the progress and prosperity of the people under proper planning," he

added. The chief minister said that the existing laws would be amended for the functioning of projects under Public Private Partnership.

He added that practical steps should be taken to activate the Special Economic Zones in Balochistan. "The provincial government is providing all possible assistance to industrialists for promotion of business in the province which will provide spacious employment opportunities for youth in various sectors," he said. Sarfraz Bugti said that there was a need to establish new cities through proper planning to channelize its present as well as future growth in a scientific and planned manner and ensure civic facilities.

## Death sentence awarded in murder case

FAISALABAD (APP): Additional Sessions Judge Sajeeda Akhtar has awarded death sentence to an accused involved in a murder case of Raza Abad police station.

According to the prosecution, accused Arsalan Jutt alias Zeeshan Shani resident of Chak 219/R-B along with his 2 accomplices Razaq alias Billa resident of Ghazi Abad and Riaz Mahmood Khan resident of Shadab Colony had shot dead Nauman Aslam on 03-01-2023 as the latter reportedly prohibited the accused from drug trafficking.

The police after registering a murder case submitted its challan in the competent court of law. After observing evidences and witnesses, the Additional Sessions Judge Faisalabad Sajeeda Akhtar awarded capital punishment to accused Arsalan Shani

under section 302-B of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and directed him to pay Rs.1 million as fine and compensation.

The convict was also directed to pay compensation amount of Rs.500,000 to the legal heirs of the deceased under section 544-A of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and he would have to undergo an additional imprisonment of six months if he failed to pay compensation amount. However, the learned judge acquitted the remaining two accused of the case including Razaq and Riaz Mahmood Khan by giving them benefit of doubt.

**WASA launches awareness drive:** Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) has launched an awareness campaign to recover its dues at the union council level here Friday.

In this regard, an aware-

ness session was held in Nawabanwala by a citizen liaison cell in collaboration with Shaoor Foundation. People including women from UC 103, UC 2 and UC 442 participated in the session.

Addressing the occasion, Incharge Citizen Liaison Cell Shahida Rahman said that most people did not pay their water and sewerage bills in different areas especially Nawabanwala despite the fact that WASA was providing best water and sewerage facilities. This attitude creates hurdles for the authority in the provision of services, she said, adding that people should pay their bills timely as responsible citizens to enable WASA to continue the services without interruption. She said that the aim of holding an awareness session in the scorching heat was to encourage the people to pay bills.

## Construction work on road inaugurated

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Former Federal Interior Minister and PTI senior leader Shehryar Afridi MNA along with Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Shafi Jan formally made inauguration from the local people of the construction work on 4.2 Km long Anbar Banda-Kaghzai Road and 1 Km long Doctor Banda Road in Kohat on Thursday evening. The said roads will be constructed at a total cost of around Rs.6 crore.

On this occasion, they said that the people did not give us their votes for positions but to get the party leader Imran Khan out of the Jail who was impris-



oned in fake case and set the country on the path to progress and prosperity. Soon Imran Khan will be released through the courts instead of NRO or Deal unlike the past rulers and he will soon be among us, they added.

They further said that all the promises made to the people will be honoured and the current 5-year period will be a his-

toric one for Kohat in terms of progress. All the developmental works will be done purely on merit without any kind of nepotism and personal likes and dislikes with the mutual consultation of the local leadership in the entire district. They vowed that the people confidence will never be harmed and their rights will be protected at all costume.

## Drug peddler arrested

F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Dera police, during the operation on Friday, arrested the drug peddler and recovered hashish and ice from his possession in the jurisdiction of Shaheed Nawab Khan police station.

According to the police spokesman, on the direction of District Police Officer Nasir Mahmood, a police team led by Sheikh Muhammad Bilal SHO Shaheed Nawab Khan police station conducted the operation, arrested the drug ped-

dlar Hazrat Ali, son of Allah Nawaz, a resident of Rehmani Khel, and recovered 1010 grams of hashish and 72 grams of ice from his possession. Police have registered a case against the arrested drug peddler and started a further probe.





## Haiti residents cautiously hopeful as first Kenyan police deploy



PORT-AU-PRINCE (Reuters): Residents in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince expressed cautious hope after a first contingent of Kenyan police officers arrived in the Caribbean country, as part of a long-delayed mission to help police fight armed gangs.

A few hundred Kenyan police officers landed in Haiti this week to lead a United Nations-ratified mission set to number over 2,500 - though it remains unclear when the remaining forces could arrive. Port-au-Prince resident Jean-Louis Pierre told Reuters he was hopeful the Kenyan deployment could help but only if they stay long enough to ensure that security is sustainable.

"Now that the forces have arrived, the country can improve, but they need to stay. A few months or a year is not enough because the country will fall into the same problem," Pierre said. The mission's initial 12-month mandate is set to expire in October. Previous missions in Haiti have left behind slain civilians, a deadly cholera outbreak and a sexual abuse scandal, for which reparations were never made.

The force was requested by Haiti's previous government in 2022, but gangs have since united under a common alliance and taken over swathes of the capital, bringing indiscriminate killings, ransom kidnappings, mass sexual violence and paralyzing the movement of people and goods.

Though some activities have gradually restarted over the last month, the UN estimates five million people are struggling to put food on the table and over half a million are internally displaced. New Prime Minister Garry Conille told reporters he would re-take the country "house by house."

But even as Kenyan police arrived, an unverified video shared on social media appeared to show gang leader Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier, who has acted as a spokesman for the gang alliance, rallying his men. "Here's Kenya. Shoot!" Cherizier chanted. "We don't care whether you are white or black," he said. "If you are not Haitian and you are on the ground, we consider that you are an invader." In the video, Cherizier led a couple dozen rifle-hoisting followers whose faces were obscured by hoods or balaclavas.

Conille has urged the armed groups to lay down their weapons and aid groups have expressed concern for civilians who could get caught in the crossfire. The UN estimates up to half of gang recruits are children. "Most young men are armed right now. They eat and drink because of those weapons," student Venart Simeone told Reuters. "I would not want to be in their place and I ask God not to put me in it. What the country needs is work, so young people are able to live well."

## Mexico's president-elect picks close ally for minister

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Mexican President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum named close ally and former Mexico City finance chief Luz Elena Gonzalez as incoming energy minister, tasking her with revitalizing a struggling state oil company and increasing the use of renewables.

Sheinbaum, a former mayor of the Mexican capital, won a landslide election this month, giving the left-wing Morena party its second straight presidential triumph. Analysts were broadly positive about the pick though some did express concerns about her lack of energy experience.

Gonzalez, who was in charge of finance and administration for the capital during Sheinbaum's tenure as mayor, will also serve as chair of the board of directors for state-owned Pemex as well as part of the board of national electricity utility CFE. "I reiterate my promise to serve the Mexican people through an energy policy that guarantees national sovereignty and at the same time advances the energy transition," Gonzalez said on social media platform X after the announcement. Her nomination

comes as Pemex is crippled by huge debt, the world's highest for an oil company, and stagnating production. On the power front, Mexico's capacity is struggling to keep up with demand and the country was recently plagued by occasional blackouts amid record high temperatures and drought.

"It's very important that someone with so much financial experience was appointed given the debt problems of the state energy companies," said Julia Gonzalez, an energy lawyer. Elena Gonzalez, an economist, is also regarded as close to Sheinbaum, and less of an ally of outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, suggesting some elements of energy policy may differ under the new government. "The appointment of Luz Elena Gonzalez as Energy Minister highlights the importance that Sheinbaum will give to that portfolio with a focus on sustainability and finances," said political analyst Antonio Ocaranza. For Miriam Grunstein, an energy analyst, Gonzalez will bring fresh eyes to the role but her lack of experience could be an issue.

"The risk with someone who hasn't had visibility in the sector is that they might not... have the required experience to head up an institution as important as the Energy Ministry," she said. Sheinbaum also named other members of her future cabinet ahead of taking office in October, including Jesus Esteve to be her transportation minister. He previously headed Mexico City's public works department. Other cabinet ministers announced included Raquel Buenrostro to serve as the head of the federal comptroller's office, physician David Kershenovich as health minister, and Edna Vega Rangel as agrarian development minister. Buenrostro currently serves as economy minister in the cabinet of outgoing president Lopez Obrador.

Mexico's peso dipped 0.54% and the country's main stock exchange was down 0.5% immediately after the announcements. Last week, Sheinbaum named the first six picks for her cabinet, including former Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard as economy minister and diplomat Juan Ramon de la Fuente as foreign minister.

## West African defense chiefs propose a \$2.6b security plan

ABUJA (AP): Defense chiefs of West Africa proposed an ambitious plan to deploy a 5,000-strong "standby force" to fight the region's worsening security crises, a measure that analysts say might not work due to challenges of funding and division within the regional bloc.

The plan, which will cost \$2.6 billion annually, was proposed to heads of state at a meeting of defense officials in Nigeria's capital of Abuja. The plan was also aimed at preventing further coups following a string of military takeovers that have destabilized the region, Nigeria's Defense Minister Mohammed Badaru said.

Meeting is the first time the bloc is mapping out publicly the financing of its long-talked-about standby force. However, analysts identified challenges it might face, including the shortage of funds from member states required to contribute money and securing the support of

coup-hit countries most affected by the security crises.

"More than ever, we are at a pivotal moment in the history of our community to address insecurity," said Omar Aliou Touray, president of the regional bloc of ECOWAS Commission, as he urged member-states to support the force. Their proposals are expected to be considered at the upcoming summit of the regional heads of state. The resurgence of coups in West and Central Africa - with four of its nations being run by military governments - has divided the 15-nation ECOWAS and destabilized the region, especially the coup-hit countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, which are worst-hit by the deadly violence now spreading to coastal nations.

ECOWAS has unsuccessfully tried to return democracies in these countries. Their best shot with now-lifted economic sanctions resulted in the three coup-hit countries with-

drawing their membership and opening more windows for Russian mercenaries in the region. Touray, the ECOWAS commission president, said the bloc invited officials from the coup-hit countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger to attend meeting and join in forming such a force. It was not immediately clear if the countries would agree to this.

"I don't think ECOWAS has the capacity to launch military interventions without foreign assistance," said Ulf Laessing, head of the Sahel program at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Such a standby force can only work if ECOWAS gets the commitment of all its member states and if the bloc maps out a strategy to deal with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, said Kars de Bruijne, a senior research fellow at the Clingendael Institute think tank. "Delivering (on such plans) has been the issue with ECOWAS for a long time," he said.

## 3 killed in Russia as passenger train derails

MOSCOW (AP): A passenger train derailment in northern Russia killed three people and injured dozens, officials said. The 14-carriage train derailed in Russia's northern republic of Komi, state rail company Russian Railways said in a statement, with nine carriages coming off the tracks. About 40 people were injured, 10 of them requiring hospitalization, state news agencies reported.

The body of the third victim, a 16-year-old girl, was found, according to the Investigative Committee, Russia's main agency for investigating possible criminal cases. The cause of the derailment of the train, which was carrying 232 passengers, was likely that heavy rains had washed out a portion of the tracks, the railway company said. It was not clear whether crew negligence was a factor. The train was headed to the southern city of Novorossiysk from Vorkuta, a coal mining town in the north of Komi, Russian Railways said.

Russian Railways has promised to pay 2 million rubles (just under \$22,900) to the families of each of those killed in the derailment on top of the 2.025 million-ruble (about \$23,100) insurance payout they will get. The injured who were hospitalized will get 1 million rubles (about \$11,400) each, and those who sought outpatient medical assistance will receive 500,000 rubles (about \$5,700), the company said.

## Von der Leyen gets nod for second EU term

BRUSSELS: Ursula von der Leyen has been nominated for a second term as head of the European Commission while Estonia's prime minister, Kaja Kallas, has been tapped as foreign policy chief after European Union leaders reached a late-night deal on the institution's top jobs.

Under the agreement, reached despite resistance from Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa was named to head the European Council. "Mission accomplished! The European Council has delivered," the body's current chair, Charles Michel, told reporters early on Friday morning, following the summit in Brussels.

All three nominees are part of the centrist alliance that dominates the EU parliament and while Costa will automatically succeed Michel this year, von der Leyen and Kallas will need to win the legislature's backing in order to be confirmed in their positions. The vote, which is expected to be tight after a far-right surge in this month's elections, will take place in July. Von der Leyen expressed her "gratitude" to EU leaders for backing her for a second term and told reporters she would soon outline her political priorities with a view to winning the confidence of parliament.

Declaring himself "committed to promoting unity" among member states, Costa addressed the press by videolink, saying: "Europe and the world are facing challenging moments, yes, but the European Union has demonstrated its resilience in the past." Kallas, meanwhile, said she had been handed "an enormous responsibility" at a time of acute geopolitical tensions. "There's war in Europe, but there's also growing instability globally, that also are the main challenges for the European foreign policy," she said. The three won broad backing from the EU leaders, although Italy's Meloni abstained from the vote on von der Leyen and voted against Costa and Kallas, according to diplomats. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, also on the hard right, voted against von der Leyen and did not vote for Kallas, they added. Meloni said on social media platform X that she decided not to support the leadership slate "out of respect for the citizens and the indications that came from those citizens during the elections." — Aljazeera

## US charges 193 people in \$2.7b healthcare fraud crackdown

WASHINGTON (AP): Nearly 200 people have been charged in a sweeping nationwide crackdown on healthcare fraud schemes with false claims topping \$2.7bn, the United States Department of Justice has said. Attorney General Merrick Garland announced charges against doctors, nurse practitioners and others across the US accused of a variety of scams, including a \$900m scheme in Arizona targeting dying patients.

It does not matter if you are a trafficker in a drug cartel or a corporate executive or medical professional employed by a healthcare company. If you profit from the unlawful distribution of controlled substances, you will be held accountable," Garland said in a statement. In the Arizona case, prosecutors have accused two owners of wound care companies of accepting more than \$330m in kickbacks as part of a scheme to fraudulently bill Medicare for amniotic wound grafts, which are dressings to help heal wounds. Nurse practitioners were pressured to apply the wound grafts to elderly patients who did not need them, including people in hospice care, the Justice Department said. Some patients died the day they received the grafts or within days, court papers say.

In less than two years, more than \$900m in bogus claims were submitted to Medicare for grafts that were used on fewer than 500 patients, prosecutors said. The owners of the wound care companies, Alexandra Gehrke and Jeffrey King, were arrested this month at the Phoenix airport as they were boarding a flight to London, according to court papers urging a judge to keep them behind bars while they await trial. A lawyer for Gehrke declined to comment, and a lawyer for King did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press.

Authorities allege Gehrke and King, who got married this year, knew charges were coming and had been preparing to flee. At their home, authorities found a book titled, How To Disappear: Erase Your Digital Footprint, Leave False Trails, and Vanish Without a Trace, according to court papers. In one of their bags packed for their flight, there was a book titled Criminal Law Handbook: Know Your Rights, Survive The System, the papers say. Gehrke and King lived lavishly off the scheme, prosecutors allege, citing in court papers luxury cars, a nearly \$6m home and more than \$520,000 in gold bars, coins and jewellery. Officials seized more than \$52m from Gehrke's personal and business bank accounts after her arrest, prosecutors say. In total, 193 people were charged in a series of separate cases brought over about two weeks in the nationwide healthcare fraud sweep. Authorities seized more than \$230m in cash, luxury cars and other assets. The Justice Department carries out these sweeping healthcare fraud efforts periodically with the goal of helping to deter other potential wrongdoers. In another Arizona case, one woman is accused of billing the state's Medicaid agency for substance abuse treatment services that did not serve any real purpose or were never provided, prosecutors say.

Another case alleges a scheme in Florida to distribute misbranded HIV drugs. Prosecutors say drugs were bought on the black market and resold to unsuspecting pharmacies, which then provided the medications to patients. In some cases, patients were given bottles that contained different drugs than the label showed. One patient ended up unconscious for 24 hours after taking what he was led to believe was his HIV medication but was actually an antipsychotic drug, prosecutors say.

## Young democracy of Mongolia begins voting for parliament

ULANBAATAR (AP): Voters in the youthful democracy of Mongolia are electing a new parliament on Friday in the landlocked Asian democracy that is squeezed between China and Russia, two much larger authoritarian states.

At stake are 126 seats in an expanded parliament, 50 more than in the previous election in 2020. That contest was won by the Mongolian People's Party in a landslide. The ruling party still appears to hold the upper hand, but other parties may be able to capitalize on voter discontent to eat into its majority. About two dozen voters lined up on a staircase heading down to a polling station in the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, some muttering complaints because it opened 10 minutes late. Some of the older voters, including community leaders, dressed up in formal silk robes cinched with

large leather belts for the occasion.

Inside, voters sat to fill out their ballot and then put it into an electronic vote counting machine. An indelible mark was put on one of their fingers to prevent them from trying to vote again. Many in the district, a "ger" area where people originally settled in nomadic tents, are supporters of the ruling Mongolian People's Party. But some younger voters expressed disappointment with the People's Party, and said they chose younger candidates that they hoped would bring change.

Enkhmandakh Boldbaatar, who is 38, said he voted for neither the People's Party nor the main opposition party, the Democratic Party, saying they also had not performed well. There are 19 parties vying for seat in the parliament. "I've been living here for 38 years, yet the area is the same," he said "Only

this road and some buildings were constructed. Things would have been different if they worked for the people."

There are 2,198 polling stations spread out across the sparsely populated country, which is large geographically but has a population of only 3.4 million people. The voting stations close at 10 p.m. with preliminary results expected early Saturday morning. Mongolia became a democracy in 1990, ending more than six decades of one-party communist rule under the same People's Party that is in power today. The ruling party has transformed into a center-left party in the democratic era.

Naranchimeg Lamjav, a 69-year-old People's Party member wearing a traditional blue robe, cited a party election slogan of building on the first three decades under democracy. "I support the current government led by Prime

Minister Oyun-Erdene (Luvsannamsrai), because they are establishing justice and starting the new era of 30 years," she said after voting. The main opposition has been the Democratic Party, a center-right party, though the HUN Party has emerged in this election as a potential third force.

Many voters have come to view the parliament as "thieves" bent on enriching themselves and their business friends though the public treasury. Corruption scandals have eroded confidence in the government and political parties. Besides corruption, major issues for voters include unemployment and inflation in an economy rocked first by the COVID-19 pandemic and then the fallout from the war in Ukraine. The country's livestock herders were also hit by a "dzud" this year, a combination of severe weather and drought, that killed 7.1 million animals.

## Le Pen questions president's role as army chief ahead of election

NICE, France (AP): With just three days to go until France's landmark legislative elections, the country's far-right leader raised the uncomfortable question of who would be in charge of the military if her party takes over the government after the two-round balloting - prompting an angry reaction from President Emmanuel Macron.

The early elections are plunging France into uncharted territory, and political scientists are scrambling to interpret how exactly Macron and a prime minister who is hostile to most of his policies would share power if Marine Le Pen's National Rally wins the majority in the National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament. "What arrogance!" Macron commented, speaking at the end of an EU summit in Brussels early Friday morning.

Far-right politicians speak "as if they were already there" at the government, he said. "But the French haven't chosen yet." "Who are they to explain what the Constitution should be? Who are they?" he added, with anger in the voice.

"I think we must respect the French who will have to express themselves. That's what I wanted," Macron said. Le Pen has repeatedly said that Jordan Bardella, her protégé and her party's star leader, would head France's next government if their increasingly popular party wins. She suggested in an interview that Bardella, at just 28 and with no governing experience, would also take over at least some decisions on France's defense and its armed forces. Macron has three years to serve out his final term as president. Serving as a commander-in-chief of the armed forces "is an honorary title for the president since it's the prime minister who actually pulls the strings," Le Pen said in an interview with Le Télégramme newspaper.

During a debate broadcast on national TV, Bardella appeared reluctant to answer repeated questions asking him to explain Le Pen's statement. "Constitution, all the

Constitution and nothing but the Constitution," Bardella said. "The president is the head of the armed forces, but it is the prime minister who determines, for example, the budget of these armed forces." When pressed for more details about the exact responsibilities of the French president on military issues, Bardella sought to change the topic, reiterating instead his position on the Russian war in Ukraine.

The French Constitution states that "the President of the Republic is the head of the armed forces" and also "chairs the councils and higher committees of national defense." However, the Constitution also states that "the prime minister is responsible for national defense." Constitutional experts say the exact role of prime minister in foreign policy and defense appears to be subject to interpretation. That's a question with potentially global fallout: France has nuclear weapons and its troops and military personnel have been deployed in many conflict zones around the world.

The last time France had a prime minister and a president from different parties, they broadly agreed on strategic matters of defense and foreign policy. But this time the power-sharing concept known in France as "cohabitation" could be very different, given the animosity between far-right and the far-left politicians. Both blocs appear to deeply resent the business-friendly, centrist president. On the issue of the country's military command, political historian Jean Garrigues said that "the president is the head of the armed forces, (but) it's the prime minister who has the armed forces at his disposal."

In practice, he said this means that "if the president decided to send troops on the ground to Ukraine ... the prime minister would be able to block this decision." In March, Macron warned Western powers against showing any signs of weakness to Russia and said Ukraine's allies shouldn't rule out sending Western troops into Ukraine to help the country against Russia's aggression.

## SA president hits out at coalition partner in fierce row

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): South Africa's main coalition partners are at loggerheads just weeks after agreeing to share power, as President Cyril Ramaphosa accuses Democratic Alliance (DA) leader John Steenhuisen of trying to create a "parallel government" in breach of the constitution.

He is said to have made the explosive allegation in a letter to Mr Steenhuisen on 25 June, which has been seen by local media. Markets have slumped with the news of the deepening rift, at a time when Mr Ramaphosa's African National Congress (ANC)

and the DA are supposed to be divvying up cabinet posts and settling into office.

When the ANC failed to win an outright majority in last month's election, the main opposition DA agreed to form a government of national unity that would keep President Ramaphosa in power - in exchange for DA politicians getting cabinet positions. The ANC subsequently also signed a coalition deal with eight smaller parties, with Mr Ramaphosa under pressure to accommodate at least some of them in his cabinet as well. Mr Ramaphosa penned his furious letter

after giving the DA a final offer of six cabinet posts, according to local media reports.

The DA then demanded two further posts, reports the News24 website, which angered the ANC's top brass. Mr Ramaphosa's letter accused the DA leader of "moving the goalposts" during the negotiation process. He also rebuked the DA's powerful federal chairperson, Helen Zille, for demands that he described as "offensive, condescending and inconsistent with the constitution". Local media also report that Mr Ramaphosa had reneged on his promise

to give the DA the Trade and Industry Ministry, a key post to boost South Africa's struggling economy. In response to this snub, says News 24, the DA's leaders told Mr Ramaphosa the "deal is off" unless he sticks to the earlier agreement that the two parties made.

The current row is causing consternation as South Africa enters alien political territory. The ANC has lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since it took power at the end of the racist system of apartheid in 1994. It got 40% of the vote, while the DA got 22%.



The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

\*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

# Principles retain their relevance

At a time of grave and complex global challenges, the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence provides the world with a good opportunity to reflect on that shared aspiration and explore ways to better put these principles into practice.

It is no coincidence that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were born in Asia, because they embody the Asian tradition of cherishing peace and harmonious relations.

Seven decades ago, then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai put forward these principles in full for the first time — mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The series of commemorative events being held on Friday shows the tremendous significance China attaches to these principles, which are a succinct expression of the propositions and goals of the United Nations Charter and a means to facilitate their implementation. The Five Principles embody the values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom for all humankind that are common pursuits today. More important, they are applicable to relations between all countries, regardless of size, political and social system, or development level.

After being put to the test for 70 years, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have demonstrated strong vitality. Today, the Five Principles are endorsed by a host of international organizations and integrated in international instruments, and are widely supported and observed by the international community, particularly countries of the Global South, which were the first to embrace them amid the wave of postwar decolonization.

Upholding the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence is particularly important in the face of some countries' attempts to sabotage international solidarity, backpedal on economic globalization and break global industry and supply chains to fish for their own narrow gains. The rising trend of protectionism, unilateralism and hegemony that is prevalent today is a vestige of colonialism and goes against the trend of the times, giving rise to crises in various parts of the world.

The Five Principles eschew the law of the jungle that is manifest in the pursuit of hegemony and the practice of unilateralism and protectionism. Instead, they serve as a path for the peaceful resolution of disputes and historical issues between countries, create a good environment for mutually beneficial cooperation and common development, and promote the establishment of a more just and reasonable international order.

China has always been an active advocate and firm practitioner of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and it is a staunch advocate for countries to join hands to build a world of lasting peace, universal security, common prosperity, openness, inclusiveness, cleanliness and beauty.

To that end, Beijing has fleshed out the principles by successively proposing the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative as the means to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

To this end, it continues to strive to develop friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and it is doing its part to help address the challenges that have the world on the rack.

Committed to upholding fairness, justice and equity, China promotes the building of a new type of international relations based on mutual respect. In doing so, it is setting an example of how countries can promote common development and maintain world peace.

Enhancing friendship and cooperation among peoples and promoting world peace and development are noble endeavors and common aspirations that embody the values of justice, democracy and rule of law. Those values demand concrete actions to uphold, not just the lip service of some who are vociferous champions of their cause. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are the fundamental rights, obligations and responsibilities entailed to fulfill those endeavors and all countries should uphold them.

## Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



# Russia's Trinity Sunday of spilled blood

Dr. Diana Galeeva

In Russian history, there are many tragic days that are symbolically connected with religion. The famous Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in St. Petersburg, more commonly known as the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, was erected on the site where members of Narodnaya Volya assassinated Emperor Alexander II in March 1881. The church is built in his honor and the suffix "on Spilled Blood" refers to his assassination.

Last week's Holy Trinity Sunday in Russia could be renamed "Trinity Sunday with Spilled Blood," as two terror attacks occurred in the country. The first news came from Sevastopol, where the Ukrainian army fired five American Army Tactical Missile System long-range missiles with cluster warheads. Four missiles were shot down, with one exploding in the air. As a result of the attack, according to the latest data, 151 people were injured and four were killed, including two children.

The Russian military stated that the US bears the responsibility for the civilian deaths, as it made and supplied the weapons. The Pentagon officially refused to comment.

Alexander Sladkov, a military correspondent, shared his version of events, suggesting that the strike on Sevastopol was carried out to divert Russian air defenses from the Kharkiv area and to "disrupt the beach season in Crimea."

In addition, international developments also arguably provoked security concerns as, during the visit of Vladimir Putin to Pyongyang last week, Russia and North Korea signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" agreement, including a mutual defense clause.

Edward Howell of Chatham House explained: "Questions remain ... as to when this clause would ever be invoked, given the slim chance of Russia and North Korea being attacked

by external parties. The fact that both sides are yet to define the idea of an 'attack,' as mentioned in the mutual defense clause, is also for concern, broadening the possible scope for retaliatory measures on the part of North Korea and Russia."

In other words, this treaty — as the Center for Strategic and International Studies already termed it, "A threat like no other — the Russia-North Korea alliance" — clearly created an urgent concern at the international level, especially among those directly involved in the Ukraine war.

As for developments in the war, Putin's recent

ence at the culmination of his visit to Vietnam, Putin clarified Russia's nuclear doctrine after NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg revealed there had been talks about placing the alliance's nuclear weapons in a state of combat readiness. "We are now thinking about what could be changed in the nuclear doctrine," creating more security concerns for Western countries, which are developing "ultra-low-power explosive nuclear devices," as stated by Putin.

On the same day as the Sevastopol incident, two terrorist attacks occurred in southern Russia. In Derbent, unknown persons attacked the Orthodox

At the same time, unknown persons opened fire in Makhachkala. A traffic police post and a nearby synagogue came under fire and there was a shootout near the Cathedral of the Assumption. During the attack, 19 people barricaded themselves in the church for protection. They were later evacuated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Shooting was also reported in the village of Sergokala, 65 km south of Makhachkala. There, unknown persons fired at a police car, injuring one of the officers. Russia's National Antiterrorism Committee considers these to be terrorist acts. No group has claimed responsibility so far. However, some experts believe that a link between the attackers and the Daesh armed group cannot be ruled out. Russian sources stated that the identities of the attackers have not yet been officially disclosed, but media reports claim five of the militants were part of the terrorist group.

The BBC's Steve Rosenberg cited the pro-Kremlin news site Komsomolskaya Pravda's reporting on events in Dagestan, which accused the "collective West" of aiming "to open a second front" against Russia. In Rosenberg's opinion, this resembled the official Russian reaction to the Crocus City Hall attack in March, with a consistent theme of the Russian authorities seeming to disregard the potential for Islamist involvement in favor of portraying "Kyiv and the collective West as public enemy No.1."

In this case, whether or not the attack can be traced back to the Ukraine war is in question. Nonetheless, in the current geopolitical context, most attacks will be associated, even if indirectly, with the principal opponent, Ukraine, and the war there.

However, what is crystal clear is that the Holy Trinity Sunday of 2024 will forever be linked to the spilled blood in modern Russian history.

**The Russian military stated that the US bears the responsibility for the civilian deaths, as it made and supplied the weapons. The Pentagon officially refused to comment. Alexander Sladkov, a military correspondent, shared his version of events, suggesting that the strike on Sevastopol was carried out to divert Russian air defenses from the Kharkiv area and to "disrupt the beach season in Crimea." In addition, international developments also arguably provoked security concerns as, during the visit of Vladimir Putin to Pyongyang last week, Russia and North Korea signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" agreement, including a mutual defense clause.**

Asian tour fits into Russia's strategic choices, with a particular emphasis on military means as a response to recent economic and diplomatic pressure from its counterparts.

On June 13, the G7 nations agreed to provide \$50 billion to Ukraine from profits on seized Russian assets.

This was followed by the Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland, to which 100 countries were invited but not Russia.

During a press confer-

Church of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Kele-Numaz synagogue. Priest Nikolai Kotelnikov was killed in the church in Derbent. The 66-year-old had worked at the church for more than 40 years.

As a result of the attack, a severe fire started in the synagogue. Derbent is known as a city of three religions and is home to more than 50 ethnicities, including an ancient Jewish community in the mainly Muslim region.

# Building agricultural resilience to extreme weathers

Wei Xinyu

Despite being the world's second-largest economy, China is still a developing country and thus vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, with its agricultural sector being especially vulnerable to extreme weather events.

In recent years, the rate of rising temperatures has been faster in China than the global average, with climate conditions becoming more complex due to the rising frequency of extreme weather events such as unusually high precipitation rates, increasing typhoons, extreme heat and cold waves.

In particular, there has been an increase in regional and periodic floods and droughts across the country, seriously affecting agricultural production. This has made it even more important to take measures to minimize the effects of extreme weather events on agriculture.

The central government attaches great importance to adaptation to climate change and has taken a series of measures to safeguard the agricultural sector.

The government issued the "National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2035" in 2022, specifying initiatives to optimize the utilization of agricultural resources, intensify the measures to boost the resilience of the agricultural ecosystems to climate change and establish a climate change-adapted food security system.

To mitigate the effects of climate change on agriculture and better respond to natural disasters, China has established a preliminary natural disaster monitoring and early warning system to assess the impact of natural disasters, and formulate disaster prevention and relief plans. By strengthening the monitoring and early warning systems, as well as the mechanism to prevent and control pests and diseases, China aims to control the regional losses within 5 percent.

China realizes the importance of science and technology in adapting to climate change, especially in the field of agriculture. It also realizes the need to strengthen research and development in science and technology, particularly in projects aimed at collecting and studying germplasm adapted to extreme weather events; developing high-yield, drought-resistant and high-quality crop varieties; and devising new planting technology models. Not to mention that it has been promoting the cultivation of drought-resistant crops and use of water-saving technologies to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events.

In terms of international multilateral cooperation, China has implemented several international projects on smart agriculture in cooperation with international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

These projects have established demonstration areas based on the climatic characteristics of different regions, including the main grain-producing areas in Northeast and North China, and the alpine grasslands in Qinghai province.

China has also popularized climate-smart agriculture technologies, such as precision spraying technology, and integrated prevention and control of pests and diseases in accordance with local conditions in the project areas.

Such practices have optimized local agricultural production, and made crops climate-change-resilient, achieving a "three-win" effect of ensuring food security, adapting to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change has been affecting the development of China's agricultural sector. As the frequency of extreme weather events continues to increase, threatening China's food security, the ability of the agricultural sector to cope with climate change should be further strengthened.

First, the utilization of agricultural resources should be improved, by optimizing the spatial distribution of the agricultural sector according to local conditions, adjusting crop distribution and cropping systems according to climate change trends, and making food production more efficient.

Second, there is a need to strengthen the agricultural disaster mitigation and response system. To that end, the authorities should assess the impact of climate change and extreme weather events on agriculture; improve the disaster monitoring, early warning and response mechanisms; issue disaster-response guidelines and plans in advance; and increase the crop storage capacity in disaster-prone areas.

Third, China should provide more scientific and technological support for the agricultural sector to adapt to climate change, promote innovation and industrialization in the seed industry, breed new high-yielding crop varieties, and strengthen the training of personnel involved in disaster prevention, climate mitigation and climate adaptation in the agricultural sector.

And fourth, food security should be better safeguarded amid the serious impacts of climate change on agriculture, while infrastructure in the agricultural sector should be strengthened and the quality of arable land improved. Further, it is absolutely essential to continuously develop all permanent basic cropland area into high-standard cropland, promote climate-smart agriculture practices and boost agricultural production capacity.

— China Daily

## New rules put 'Taiwan separatists' on final notice

Harald Brüning

The central authorities have put Taiwan's hardcore separatists, those seeking foreign support in particular, on final notice, urging them to accept the 1992 Consensus or face the music.

The Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the ministries of public security, State security and justice jointly issued a set of guidelines in Beijing on Friday, according to which criminal penalties will be handed down to "diehard" supporters of "Taiwan independence" for engaging in or inciting separatist activities.

The guidelines, which use the term "diehard" for clarification, have provisions for trial in absentia, come against the backdrop of escalating tensions across the Taiwan Strait, triggered by intensified separatist activities on Taiwan island, especially since the

island's new administrative chief Lai Ching-te assumed office on May 20. Incidentally, Lai, too, is a diehard separatist given that he calls himself a "pragmatic worker for Taiwan independence".

The set of guidelines also acts as a warning to external forces trying to interfere in the Taiwan question to keep their hands off China's internal affairs.

While all the 183 countries that have diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, that is, about 95 percent of the United Nations member states, formally recognize the one-China principle, it is the world's worst kept secret that some of them, including some major Western powers, favor Taiwan's de facto separation from the Chinese mainland, although none of them would be brazen enough to

openly advocate for the island's de jure independence, because of China's economic and political might and its growing role on the international stage.

Western nations' rejection or backing of separatism in foreign countries is not a matter of principle but depends merely on geopolitical considerations. For instance, while most Western governments supported Kosovo's secession from Serbia, they have kept their hands off the Catalan separatism row in Spain. For obvious reasons, the Spanish government continues to regard Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008 as a violation of international law.

Similarly, while some Western countries have cast doubts on Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's autonomous status

within the People's Republic of China, they have remained virtually mum on the Indian government's revocation of the special autonomy status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019. According to the guidelines jointly issued on Friday, "criminal acts include advocating for Taiwan's entry into international organizations limited to sovereign states or engaging in official exchanges and military contacts abroad to create 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan' in the international community". Supported by a number of foreign countries, the Taiwan authorities have for years tried in vain to join the World Health Assembly, the governing body of the World Health Organization.

A spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the

State Council said on Friday that "it is a common practice for countries around the world to use criminal justice measures to punish criminals who conduct secession and safeguard the core interests of the state".

Indeed, there are a number of countries that have implemented laws criminalizing separatism and/or secessionist activities, such as NATO member Turkey and ASEAN member Indonesia. In my opinion, the guidelines are a warning to intransigent separatists in Taiwan, particularly those backed by foreign governments, parties and think tanks, that their actions entail potentially dire consequences.

I grew up just a few kilometers from the border that divided my home country Germany which, thanks to the powers that be, has been reunited since 1990. Though the situation of the

Chinese mainland and Taiwan is different from that of the two Germanys before 1990, I do sincerely hope to be able to witness the peaceful reunification of China in my lifetime.

In order to achieve this goal, two main conditions must be met: Taiwan's "diehard" separatists must come to their senses and accept the historic reality that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, while foreign powers must keep their promise they made when they established diplomatic relations with Beijing that there is only one China and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China — and they must accept the fact that cross-Strait relations are a domestic matter of the Chinese nation.

I believe anything else can be discussed within the framework of the 1992 Consensus by the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, necessarily without foreign meddling.



# AI risks from an Arab world perspective

Mohammed A. Al-Qarni

**IMAGINE a future where machines work alongside us and make decisions that shape our societies, economies and even our daily lives. This is the promise and peril of artificial intelligence as it stands at the brink of transforming our world.**

AI is offering unprecedented advancements across various sectors. However, this rapid development also brings significant risks. As the Arab world steps into this new era, it is crucial to understand these risks and their direct implications for our region's unique context.

Unlike traditional software, which operates within predefined parameters set by developers, making its behavior more predictable and easier to control, AI systems, especially advanced ones, have the potential to make autonomous decisions that can significantly impact human lives, societies and ethical standards.

Therefore, we need to talk about AI values in a way that we do not typically discuss software values.

AI systems, particularly those involving machine learning and neural networks, can evolve and learn from data, leading to behaviors that are not explicitly programmed. Data is a significant factor in the peril of AI systems, particularly regarding value misalignment.

However, it is not the only factor. The overall alignment of AI systems with human values also depends on designing and implementing algorithms, training processes and other technical and ethical considerations.

Most AI systems are developed outside the Arab world, primarily in regions with different cultural, social and ethical values. This can lead to a significant misalignment between the values embedded in these systems and those of the Arab world.

The social and cultural fabric of the Arab world is deeply rooted in community values, ethics and traditions. Introducing advanced AI systems raises questions about their alignment with these values.

Systems developed in the West or in East Asia may not fully understand or respect the cultural norms and values of the Arab world. This can result in AI behaviors or culturally insensitive or inappropriate decisions.

Moreover, AI applications require a deep understanding of local contexts to function effectively and ethically. Without this, systems might make decisions that overlook important regional nuances.

The ethical frameworks guiding AI development in other regions might differ significantly from those in the Arab world. This can lead to AI systems that

make decisions based on ethical principles not fully aligned with local values.

To address the potential misalignment, the Arab world needs to invest in local AI research and development to create systems aligned with regional values and contexts. This includes training local talent and establishing research institutions focused on culturally aware AI.

**The ethical frameworks guiding AI development in other regions might differ significantly from those in the Arab world. This can lead to AI systems that make decisions based on ethical principles not fully aligned with local values. To address the potential misalignment, the Arab world needs to invest in local AI research and development to create systems aligned with regional values and contexts. This includes training local talent and establishing research institutions focused on culturally aware AI. We are not advocating for decoupled AI development. On the contrary, working with international AI developers is paramount to ensure that the systems they create are adaptable to different cultural contexts. This collaboration can help integrate local values and norms into global AI systems. Such collaboration would require developing ethical guidelines for AI development and deployment that reflect the values and priorities of the Arab world. Such guidelines can serve as a benchmark for evaluating and adopting AI technologies from other regions.**

We are not advocating for decoupled AI development. On the contrary, working with international AI developers is paramount to ensure that the systems they create are adaptable to different cultural contexts.

This collaboration can help integrate local values and norms into global AI systems. Such collaboration would require developing ethical guidelines for AI development and deployment that reflect the values and priorities of

the Arab world. Such guidelines can serve as a benchmark for evaluating and adopting AI technologies from other regions.

As the science fiction writer William Gibson said: "The future is already here — it's just not very evenly distributed."

AI is the future, so we cannot fight it. Many experts and analysts describe its impact on the economy as akin to electrification

enable new levels of efficiency and productivity, driving substantial economic growth.

The promise of AI goes beyond traditional industries to enable the development of new technologies and industries, such as autonomous vehicles, personalized medicine and intelligent infrastructure.

The Arab world is undergoing a significant economic transformation, diversifying away from oil. Given AI's potential, it can play a crucial role in this transition, but also faces the prospect of workforce displacement and economic disparity.

As AI is integrated into industries, managing its adoption to enhance productivity while creating new job opportunities and upskilling the workforce must be strategically managed.

Automation should be balanced with efforts to reskill workers and integrate them into new roles created by AI advancements.

The promised economic benefits of AI must be distributed equitably across different segments of society, preventing widening economic disparities.

These requirements can only be met by developing educational programs that prepare the workforce for the AI-driven future. This includes integrating AI literacy into school curriculums and offering specialized training programs in AI and related fields.

Policies and programs should be developed to support those most affected by AI-induced changes in the labor market. This might include supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises in adopting AI technologies and ensuring that rural and underserved areas can access AI resources and training.

The Arab world's human capital must be enabled to innovate in the AI space and not remain a passive recipient of globally developed systems, encouraging the development of innovation hubs and ecosystems that support AI research, development and entrepreneurship. This can help drive economic growth and create new job opportunities in the AI sector.

In short, as the Arab world embraces AI's transformative potential, it is crucial to consider the associated risks from a regional perspective.

By developing robust regulatory frameworks, fostering cultural sensitivity and ensuring equitable economic benefits, the region can harness AI's potential while safeguarding against its potential harms.

Engaging with global thought leaders and adopting best practices will further enhance the region's ability to navigate the complex landscape of AI risks and opportunities.

# Remembering Syria's Tadmur Prison Massacre, 44 years on

Razan Saffour

**I met my maternal uncle, Burhan, for the first time in 2018. At the time, I was living in Istanbul, and he had taken refuge with his family in another Turkish city. After we helped him obtain the permissions he needed to make the journey to Istanbul as a refugee, my parents also travelled there to meet him.**

My mother had not seen her brother since 1980 – since before she left Syria for good, got married, and raised me and my siblings away from her family, in a foreign country. So when she finally embraced him for the first time in 38 years, having spent half of those years not knowing whether he was dead or alive, it was a sight to behold. As they held on to each other to try and make up for the many lost decades, it felt as if we were all frozen in time. For a fleeting second, I could see my mother as the hopeful young girl she was once, before Syria's brutal regime uprooted her and devastated her family, killing many of her relatives and scattering the survivors across the globe.

My uncle was arrested and sent to Syria's infamous Tadmur prison in 1980, just a few weeks after the most horrendous massacre in its history, in which hundreds of political prisoners were executed in a single day.

He remained in that death factory in the Eastern Syrian desert town of Palmyra, under the most inhumane conditions and suffering the worst torture imaginable, for 17 long years. Burhan was eventually released in 1997 – ditched on the side of the road without any explanation – not yet completely free. The regime prevented him from travelling outside of Syria and reuniting with his relatives for another 15 years. After the revolution erupted, he eventually managed to move his family to Turkey. He, however, never truly healed from the trauma he experienced in Tadmur.

"Death surrounded us in Tadmur," he told me in one of our first-ever conversations.

Brotherhood and sought to avenge it by targeting the group's imprisoned members and perceived sympathisers.

On that morning, under the orders of Rifaat al-Assad, the brother of Hafez, some 100 troops from the Defence Brigades descended into Tadmur from helicopters. They separated perceived Muslim Brotherhood supporters from other political prisoners, and went on to massacre them with machine guns and hand grenades, leaving none of them alive.

The other political prisoners were forced to listen to the carnage in horror.

It is estimated that some 1,000 prisoners were killed within an hour, and their bodies were dumped in a mass grave outside the prison. Syrian human rights groups are still working to create a complete list of victims.

This was an atrocity committed in utmost secrecy. The news only reached the outside world eight months later, when several Syrian soldiers who participated in the massacre were caught in Jordan during an attempt to assassinate the Jordanian prime minister, and confessed to their crimes.

Jordan went on to publicise their confessions, and record them in an official communication to the chairman of the Commission on Human Rights at the United Nations, in March 1981.

Today, as we remember this massacre on its 44th anniversary, we are remembering not only those who were slaughtered on June 27, 1980, but also those, like my uncle, who suffered the wrath of the Assad regime in Tadmur and other Syrian prisons in the following years.

The Syrian Human Rights Committee (SHRC) estimates 17,000 to 25,000 prisoners to have been killed in Tadmur between 1980 and 2001 – the year it was finally decommissioned.

Of course, the abuse and torture of political prisoners

accountability for those responsible.

Yet my father, Walid, tried to do just that. A former detainee himself, who was tortured in Assad prisons and left with a broken back and visible scars across his body, he dedicated his life to exposing the reality of Syria's prisons and holding the Assad family to account for what they did to the Syrian people.

In the late 1990s, after Rifaat al-Assad had a falling out with his brother and moved to Europe, my father tried repeatedly to take him to court for his role in the Tadmur massacre and other atrocities. He spent years giving testimonies on Rifaat's many crimes against humanity, to courts in Spain and France. However, courts in both countries refused to take action, citing a lack of jurisdiction.

In 2003, SHRC was called to court to testify against Rifaat, in a case he himself initiated in a Paris court against activist Nizar Nayyoutf. Nayyoutf, who had served nine years in Tadmur, accused Rifaat al-Assad of being responsible for the Tadmur massacre live on Al Jazeera Arabic, prompting the former vice president of Syria to take him to court for defamation.

The court eventually ruled in Nayyoutf's favour, but al-Assad was not made to pay any meaningful price for the crimes he committed, or his blatant attempt to use the French judiciary to try and silence his critics.

To this day, neither Rifaat nor any other prominent member of the Assad regime faced any accountability for the pain and trauma they inflicted, and continue to inflict, on detainees in Syria's prisons.

In March 2024, the Office of the Attorney General in Switzerland charged Rifaat al-Assad with "ordering homicides, acts of torture, cruel treatments and illegal detentions" perpetrated in the course of the Hama massacre in 1982, as well as the Tadmur prison massacre of 1980.

**Today marks the 44th anniversary of the Tadmur prison massacre, the immediate aftermath of which my uncle witnessed. Every year, we mark this day to remind the world of the endless brutality and shameless impunity of the Assad regime and renew our calls for justice and accountability. Nearly half a century has passed since that fateful day, but no one has faced any accountability for the June 27 massacre, or the killings and torture that took place in Tadmur for many decades, before and after. How did the massacre come to be? The Tadmur prison massacre of June 27, 1980, was committed in reprisal for an assassination attempt against Hafez al-Assad, then president of Syria and father of the current President Bashar al-Assad. The regime blamed the attempt on the Muslim Brotherhood and sought to avenge it by targeting the group's imprisoned members and perceived sympathisers.**

# When their backs are to the wall, the French turn right

**It is said that in the event of an international security crisis, the Americans go to DEFCON 1, the Brits convene a meeting of the COBRA emergency committee and the French raise their national alert level from "surrender" to "collaborate."**

That is perhaps unfair: in the darkest days of the 1940s, with most of Western Europe under the Nazi jackboot, the brave men and women of the French Resistance shouldered the burden of defiance almost alone.

What is true, however, is that when their backs are to the wall, the instinctive French reaction is to execute a sharp political turn to the right.

In November 1799, with the revolutionary First Republic financially bankrupt and widespread discontent on the streets, the Corsican general Napoleon Bonaparte led a coup and had himself appointed first consul — and, eventually, emperor.

Napoleon is, of course, best known for his military genius, conquering most of Europe until he met his Waterloo, but domestically he was very much a man of authoritarian bent. He concentrated power in his own hands, introduced censorship, closed all opposition publications and brutally repressed dissent in a regime that the American historian David A. Bell has described as "soft despotism."

A century and a half later, the French were at it again. While the Resistance enjoys and deserves our enduring respect, it was in 1940 that the "collaborator" jibe was first deployed. The collaborator-in-chief was Marshal Philippe Petain, a mentor of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco with political views two goose-steps to the right of Attila the Hun.

Conveniently for Hitler, who lacked the resources to subdue all of France, Petain

set up a government in the town of Vichy and offered to do it for him. The Vichy regime was authoritarian and repressive and reversed the liberal policies that had made Paris the avant-garde capital of European arts and culture. Moreover, if there were any Jews, communists or other "undesirables" to be rounded up and carted off in cattle

**That is perhaps unfair: in the darkest days of the 1940s, with most of Western Europe under the Nazi jackboot, the brave men and women of the French Resistance shouldered the burden of defiance almost alone. What is true, however, is that when their backs are to the wall, the instinctive French reaction is to execute a sharp political turn to the right. In November 1799, with the revolutionary First Republic financially bankrupt and widespread discontent on the streets, the Corsican general Napoleon Bonaparte led a coup and had himself appointed first consul — and, eventually, emperor.**

trucks to the death camps of Eastern Europe, Petain was the man for the task: with his enthusiastic help, the Nazis murdered at least 72,500 French Jews.

You would think by now that the French would have learned a lesson, but evidently not. They vote on Sunday in the first round of National Assembly elections and, if the polls are accurate, then a majority of its 577 members will belong to National Rally, the far-right party led in the assembly by Marine Le Pen.

To be fair to Le Pen (and we are fair to everyone here), she has done much to sanitize the legacy of her father Jean-Marie, who founded the party as the National Front in 1978. A rare combination of antisemite and Islamophobe, he was repeatedly convicted of assault when he was a law

student. He was president of a student association whose members specialized in street brawls with anyone they suspected of being a communist, and he even managed to have himself thrown out of that. The old boy is also a serial loser: he served with the French Foreign Legion in Indochina

chief, National Rally's candidate to be prime minister is the fresh-faced and squeaky-clean party president Jordan Bardella — who, at 28, is barely out of short trousers and does not exactly bstride the world stage like a colossus. You would pay to be a fly on the wall at his first encounter with a genuine major player such as Donald Trump or

and that Winston Churchill was an "abysmal leader." It is only a matter of time before similar sentiments emerge from the darker recesses of National Rally.

Already, those most likely to be affected by an epidemic of xenophobia in France's governance have begun voting with their feet. A remarkable book out this year, "La France, Tu l'Aimes Mais Tu La Quittes," has just been published in English as "France, Loving It But Leaving It." In it, a succession of disillusioned and disenchanted Muslims tell the authors why they no longer feel safe, welcome or at home in the country of their birth and have decided to move elsewhere.

And these are not the usual suspects, the deprived denizens of the banlieues, the largely lawless suburbs of Paris where the police go only with a bulletproof vest and weapons drawn. The Muslims fleeing France are young, educated, professional people who have simply had enough of intolerance.

A typical example is Aminata Sylla, 25, who is studying at the Sorbonne for a master's degree in international relations but cannot wait to quit the country. "It's been a build-up of all the negative experiences I've had," she told the authors. "When it's not that I'm Black, it's that I'm Muslim, then it's that I wear a headscarf. I feel like I can't breathe sometimes."

The book's authors believe matters will only deteriorate with the electoral rise of the far right. "In the next few months, we will see a growing disinhibition of Islamophobic words and behavior," said one of them, Olivier Esteves. "We wrote about women who are spat on for wearing the hijab — that kind of thing is only going to get worse."

We can only hope he is wrong — but don't hold your breath.

— Arab News

(defeat) and Suez (humiliation) and five times he has tried and failed to become French president. He turned 96 last week, so he is probably past all that now, although he could try a bid for the White House — his relative youth might be a bonus. The daughter is an altogether smarter operator, who knows a liability when she sees one. She deposed her old man as party leader in 2011, threw him out entirely in 2015 and changed the party name to National Rally in 2018.

Gone, too, is the vile, racist rhetoric demonizing migrants, minorities, Jews, Muslims and even France's European partners. In its place are emollient words about tolerance and cooperation.

And in place of anyone called Le Pen as overall

Vladimir Putin. It may be that Marine Le Pen's conversion to the voice of sweet reason is genuine, with electoral gain the motive, but there remains a problem that she shares with her fellow populist in the UK, Nigel Farage: with so many of their parties' candidates running for office, some of them will not have got the memo. You can never tell when some far-right dipstick will accidentally and instinctively execute a straight-arm Nazi salute without being fully aware of what he is doing.

One of the candidates for Farage's Reform UK party at next month's British parliamentary election has declared that the UK should have stayed neutral in the war against Hitler, that women were spongers and not entitled to healthcare,





# 100-index of Stock Exchange loses 83 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday shed 83.29 points, a slight negative change of 0.11 percent, closing at 78,444.96 points against 78,528.25 points on the last working day.

A total of 347,671,672 shares were traded during the day as compared to 283,542,503 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 11.899 billion against Rs 11.067 billion on the last trading day.

Around 435 companies transacted their shares in

the stock market, 189 of them recorded gains and 170 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 76 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were PTCL with 70,992,434 shares at Rs 12.01 per share, K-Electric Limited with 18,700,951 shares at Rs 4.63 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 13,191,366 shares at Rs 1.26 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 227.25 per share price, closing at Rs 7,154.17, whereas the run-

ner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with a Rs 114.87 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,482.14.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 56.95 per share closing at Rs 7,593.05, followed by Thai Limited with a Rs 11.60 decline to close at Rs 483.34.

**Gold rates up by Rs 700 per tola to Rs 241,700**

The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 700 and was sold at Rs 241,700 on Friday against its sale at Rs 241,000 on

last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 600 to Rs 207,219 from Rs 206,619 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 189,950 from Rs 189,400, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,850 and Rs 2,443.41 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$22 to \$2,326 from \$2,304, the association added.

## 27 connections disconnected

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 27 connections; Rs 1.84 million fine imposed.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 4 connections on illegal use of gas.

In Multan the team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas.

The regional team of Shiekhupura disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas.

In Mardan the team disconnected 10 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 1.20 million against gas theft cases.

The regional team of Gujranwala disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas. The team imposed a fine of Rs 0.61 million against gas theft cases.

In Faisalabad the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.03 million against gas theft cases.

In Bahawalpur the team disconnected 4 connections on illegal use of gas.



MULTAN: A street vendor showering water on seasonal fruit Lychee.

# Banks to remains open on 29th and 30th

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: To facilitate the taxpayers in payment of Government duties and taxes through Alternate Delivery Channels (ADC's) and Over-the-Counter facilities, it has been decided that all banks shall observe the following banking hours on 28th, 29th & 30th June, 2024.

On Friday, June 28, 2024 all commercial banks will remain open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. whereas on Saturday, June 29, 2024 all those branches of Banks that remain open on Saturdays will observe banking hours from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. On Sunday, June 30, 2024 all those branches of Banks that remain open on Saturdays will observe banking hours from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. During these three days, NIFT shall collect instruments related

to Government receipts and payments only, from bank's counters at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday whereas at 10:00 p.m. on Sunday. These instruments will be cleared through Special Clearing on the next day of collection and NIFT will provide clearing fate by 01:00 p.m. on 29th, 30th June 2024 and whereas 10:00 a.m. on 1st July 2024.

For the purpose of closing exercise of FY 2023-24 on July 1st 2024, SBP and PRISM will be operating in the value date 30th June 2024. Banks are advised to accordingly define 29th & 30th June, 2024 as working days in their systems to enable settlement of special clearing with aforesaid schedule.

To eliminate the issue of spillover of tax receipts, banks shall ensure that no instrument concerning government receipts, lodged

during the aforementioned office hours, remain unattended at branch counters and must be lodged in the aforesaid special clearing in the value date of 30th June, 2024.

Moreover, banks are advised to keep their concerned branches open on 28th, 29th and 30th June, 2024 till such time that is necessary to facilitate the special clearings for Government transactions by the NIFT.

**Bank holiday**

The State Bank of Pakistan will remain closed for public dealing on July 1, 2024 (Monday), which shall be observed as Bank Holiday. All banks / DFIs / MFBs shall, therefore, remain closed for public dealing on the aforementioned date.

However, employees of the banks / DFIs / MFBs will attend the office as usual.

## UNDP, JS Bank and IBA Karachi join hands — to finance Climate-resilient SMEs in Pakistan



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with IBA's Center for Entrepreneurial Development (IBA-CED) and JS Bank conducted the finale of the SDGs Innovative Financing Challenge Cup to promote sustainable and climate-resilient businesses in Pakistan. In line with the United Nations Day of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (UN MSMEs Day), the initiative also underscored UNDP, JS Bank, and IBA's commitment to supporting MMEs in Pakistan.

The event welcomed a diverse audience of over 350 attendees, including students from IBA and other universities, vocational training institutes, startups, along with representatives from IBA-CED, JS Bank, UNDP Pakistan

and Business Incubation Centers (BICs).

This first-of-its-kind initiative, the SDGs Innovative Financing Challenge Cup aims to pioneer a unique blended financing approach combining a public-private partnership to identify and support climate-resilient projects tackling social and environmental challenges aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs Innovative Financing Challenge Cup attracted over 200 applications across the country. Through a rigorous selection process, 30 SMEs and projects were shortlisted, and participated in capacity-building workshops. This workshop equipped participants with valuable skills in areas including product design, financial planning, and marketability and SDGs related blended financing.

The competition intensified as the 30 projects were further narrowed down to the top 10 finalists. The event finale culminated in the announcement of the winning projects, chosen by a panel of evaluators from UNDP Pakistan, JS Bank, and IBA. The top four SME's & Projects received a unique blend of financial support - a combination of grants from UNDP Pakistan (10 million PKR each) followed by financing from JS Bank to propel their impactful solutions forward. The winning SMEs were adjudged in the following order: first place, Vitality Vehicles (Vlektra), which manufactures electric motorcycles to reduce emissions, second place, Concept Loop, which diverts plastic waste into building materials, third place, Knowledge Platform, which creates educational games to promote environmental literacy, and fourth place Davaam Life, which promotes refillable products to reduce waste.

Ammara Durrani, Assistant Resident Representative, Development Policy Unit, UNDP Pakistan, said, "This initiative marks a significant milestone, as it is the first time that such blended financing is being offered. Our aim is not just to offer blended finances to these chosen projects but also help them build their

capacities and foster meaningful linkages within the private sector for future cooperation".

Dr. Lalurukh Ejaz, Director IBA-CED welcomed the guests and participants and briefed about the project. She stated that, "The collaboration between UNDP, JS Bank, and IBA-CED to organize an SDGs Innovative Finance Challenge Cup, aimed at encouraging entrepreneurs with SDG-aligned projects to pitch their innovative solutions".

Syed Jafar Raza, Group Head Investment, International & Transactional Banking, JS Bank expressed that, "This collaboration between JS Bank, UNDP, and IBA is a powerful example of how public-private partnerships can drive positive change. By combining our expertise as a financial service provider and UNDP's knowledge in sustainable development, we aim to empower and nurture creative solutions with a positive social impact and contribute to sustainable Pakistan".

The SDGs Innovative Financing Challenge Cup marks a significant achievement, fostering a robust ecosystem for climate resilience, inclusive insurance, and groundbreaking social enterprises in Pakistan, therefore paving the way for a more sustainable future for all.

## Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships, Wan Hai-316, Maersk Cairo, Express Athens, Alora, Southern Anoa, Gaschem Fuji and Clipper Barolo scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, Chemicals and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminals and Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Afra Rossie and Samaisma scheduled to load/offload Furnace oil and LNG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours.

Ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two container ships, Maersk Cairo and Express Athens left the port on today morning while five more ships, Wan Hai-316, G-Bright, Gaschem Fuji, Southern Anoa and Bateleur are expected to sail on Friday.

Cargo volume of 128,955 tonnes, comprising 91,436 tonnes imports cargo and 37,519 tonnes export cargo carried in 5,117 Containers was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Six ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Afra Rossie, V-Due, Samaisma and Ullswater & another ship 'MSC Positano' scheduled to load/offload Furnace oil, Corn, LNG, LPG and Container are expected to take berths at respectively FOTCO, MWI, EETL, SSGC and QICT on Friday, while three more ships, CMA CGM Attila, Maersk Durban and Zhong Gu Bo Hai with container are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Saturday.

## Pakistan Safety Awareness Month: Yango Pakistan introduces enhanced features

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: In celebration of "Pakistan Safety Awareness Month," Yango Pakistan, the global tech company, is unveiling a suite of advanced safety features aimed at ensuring a secure experience for both drivers and passengers. These enhancements will further establish Yango's steadfast commitment to delivering safety as a top priority in the ride-hailing industry.

As part of its safety campaign, Yango Pakistan now mandates drivers to upload a verified profile photo during registration. This allows passengers to confirm the driver's identity by comparing the photo in the app with the driver who arrives. Additionally, drivers are required to submit photos of their driver's license and vehicle, which undergo rigorous verification before they can start accepting ride requests.

The newly launched Safety Center within the

passenger app includes essential safety tools such as an SOS button for emergencies, a Share Route feature for real-time trip sharing, and an Emergency Situation button for additional support. Passengers have the option to add trusted contacts who can monitor their rides in real time, ensuring continuous location updates throughout the journey. In the event of an emergency, passengers can use the SOS button to directly contact local authorities through the app for immediate assistance.

Furthermore, passengers can share comprehensive trip details including the route, driver's name, and vehicle plate number with their trusted contacts, adding an extra layer of security to their journey. They can also view driver ratings based on feedback from other passengers, enabling them to make informed decisions for a safer ride experience.

Drivers, upon accepting

a booking, can view the passenger's rating from previous trips and are encouraged to provide feedback through a rating form after each ride, promoting a respectful and secure environment for all users. Yango Pakistan has also established a dedicated Support Incident Team available 24/7 to address any disputes or urgent issues between drivers and passengers, ensuring swift resolution and support.

These comprehensive safety features reinforce Yango Pakistan's commitment to protecting the welfare of both drivers and passengers alike. By setting new standards in safety within the ride-hailing sector, Yango Pakistan aims to provide a dependable and secure experience for all users.

These initiatives highlight the company's dedication to safety and promote the adoption of best practices across the ride-hailing community.

## Tokyo stocks close higher on weaker yen

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks closed higher on Friday after the yen slid to its weakest value against the dollar since 1986.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.61 percent, or 241.54 points, to 39,583.08, while the broader Topix index rose 0.57 percent, or 15.93 points, to 2,809.63.

"As the yen weakened further against the dollar, Japanese equities extended

their gains," Iwai Cosmo Securities said. A weaker Japanese currency helps exporters as it inflates their repatriated profits.

One dollar bought 161.12 yen at around 0100 GMT, before it was down to 160.93 yen in the afternoon in Tokyo. The greenback traded at 160.79 yen in New York on Thursday.

Japan's finance ministry spent 9.79 trillion yen (\$61 billion) to prop up the yen

between April 26 and May 29. But analysts now say it is possible traders will keep pushing the envelope to see at what point the government will act, with some saying the currency could hit 170.

The Japanese currency has cratered from around 115 per dollar before Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

This plunge is due in part to the Bank of Japan's

policy of maintaining ultra-low interest rates to support the economy, while other central banks have hiked theirs. In Tokyo trading, SoftBank Group jumped 2.51 percent to 10,3980 yen while Toyota climbed 0.83 percent 3,290 yen.

Semiconductors were higher with Advantest surging 3.00 percent to 6,425 yen and Tokyo Electron advancing 0.29 percent to 34,900 yen.

## 4 Central Asian countries' ambassadors meet business community at LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Ambassadors of four Central Asian countries - Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan - have a detailed meeting with business community to discuss ways and means to further improve the mutual trade relations during their visit to Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), here on Friday.

"It is a historic moment when Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Ulanbek Totuiaev, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin have visited Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry together," said LCCI President Kashif Anwar

who warmly welcomed the envoys and presented the address of welcome.

The Ambassadors and LCCI President Kashif Anwar also inaugurated Business Kiosk established by four countries at LCCI which will give a new boost to trade. LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan Rao Khalid M. Khan and Rizwan Fareed also spoke on the occasion while Executive Committee Members were also present.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar emphasized to explore trade potential between Pakistan and Central Asian Countries and also addressing the bottlenecks which are causing constraints to trade promotion.

Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov said that Pakistan and Central Asian Republics need to know each other more because "we have huge potential". He said that Turkmenistan is the richest country in the world in term of natural resources with seven million population.

He said, "Our foreign policy is natural and we believe in promoting peace. With Pakistan, the trade can be done in various areas like Pakistan export rice, sugar, vehicles, motorbikes, auto parts which have a huge demand in Turkmenistan and can import LPG, petroleum products and it

can be done both government level and private sector. With this kind of approach, we can find solution of challenges and for economic development."

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry is emphasizing on exploiting the tremendous potential of trade in ASEAN, Africa Continent and especially in Central Asian Countries. "We believe that Pakistan and Central Asian Countries have significant potential for trade and economic cooperation, driven by their strategic geographical positions and complementary economic strengths. The most promising area is energy, as Central Asian Countries are rich in oil, natural gas, and hydropower resources, while Pakistan faces the issue of high cost of energy," the LCCI President added.

Kashif Anwar said that agriculture and textile sectors offer mutual benefits, as Central Asian Countries can supply raw materials to Pakistan's textile industry, while Pakistan's agricultural and value added textile products can find new markets in Central Asia. Other key sectors such as information technology, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, sports goods and tourism etc., present great opportunities for making collaboration, promoting

economic ties and improving regional stability.

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov agreed with the proposals of Atadjan Movlamov and said that the Ambassadors coming together is symbolic to show that "we are all in same position for connectivity, trade, mutual relations and to reach Pakistan".

He said that Azerbaijan offers huge investment opportunities including the Karabakh region. He said that economic zones of Azerbaijan are offering incentives for investors. "We can also discuss business of tourism potential as Azerbaijan is the most wanted tourism destination for Pakistan in recent years," he added.

He said that he brought few publications to be displayed at Kiosk which include information of goods, trade items to be consulted for trade in Azerbaijan. It also has a legal hand book of how to do business in Azerbaijan.

He said that Azerbaijan and Pakistan have reached good enough frequency of direct flights where two direct flights from Karachi and Lahore a week are already operational and "we are receiving demands to increase flights". He urged PIA to come on this route.

He said that the governments of both the countries

are working on PTA and Transit Trade Agreement. Pakistani rice is already exempted from import duty in Azerbaijan. He emphasized on the need of increasing and diversifying connectivity and said that "we can achieve a lot from connectivity".

Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Ulanbek Totuiaev said that last year, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan trade volume was US \$ 20 million and in the first three months of this year, "we have already achieved US \$ 7 million trade milestone and at the end of the year, we are expecting bilateral trade to reach US \$ 50 million". He said that there also direct flights from Islamabad and Lahore to Bishkek. He said that Kyrgyzstan also hosts 10,000 Pakistani students. "In May, unfortunate experiences were caused by misunderstanding and because of fake news disseminated through the media and social media in both the countries," the Ambassador regretted.

He said that Kyrgyzstan is a member of EuroAsian Economic Forum. He said that in May, 100 Pakistan businessmen came to Kyrgyzstan on business visit and 20 pharmaceutical companies are already exporting their products to Kyrgyzstan. He said, "We are organizing Kyrgyzstan Pakistan exhibition in

September in Bishkek," and he invited businessmen to join.

Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin emphasized the need of regional collaboration and said that it can only be achieved through regional connectivity. He said that by developing connectivity, Kazakhstan has delivered goods to Dubai via Pakistan.

He said that Central Asian Countries can use Pakistani sea ports and Karakoram Highway to deliver goods to Africa, Middle East and other countries. He said that Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit is being held in Kazakhstan this year. He said, "Last month we met Chief Minister Punjab and agreed on cooperation between Punjab and Kazakhstan and will sign a twin city agreement between Lahore and Shymkent."

He said, "We have already established banking channels for transaction and this year, Pakistan's Kinno is already being exported to Kazakhstan and we are working to import Mango from Multan region. We have already agreements signed with NLC and TCS for the delivery of goods." He emphasized on the need of cooperation between CAR countries in Pakistan same like EU.

President LCCI Kashif Anwar said that the global trade of Central Asian

Countries is around 227 billion dollars with overall exports more than 115 billion dollars and total imports around 112 billion dollars. It is quite concerning that Pakistan's share in total trade of Central Asian Countries is just 260 million dollars with exports nearly 225 million dollars and imports roughly 35 million dollars.

He said that Pakistani business community is well aware of this fact that there are enormous market opportunities available in Central Asia for Pakistani products and services. "We are required to identify some sectors of economy for cooperation through some dedicated efforts done by our own embassies in Central Asian Countries. That can contribute to a great extent in capturing sizeable share in Central Asian markets," he added.

The LCCI President added, "We need to think out-of-the-box and engage the representatives of private sectors from our countries who make some concerted efforts coupled with some assistance provided by the respective embassies of Central Asian Countries."

Kashif Anwar said that in today's complex world where things are so interdependent that one has to perform certain functions in addition to its primary role. Private sector representatives either independently

or through trade bodies like chamber of commerce etc., do interact with each other via exchange of business delegations, at international fairs & exhibitions, on business conferences and many more such platforms. But the specific role of embassies cannot be ignored at all in this connection. With the help of influence and unique importance of embassies, things can be turned towards a certain direction for ensuring mutual benefits, he added. "If we start making efforts on two-point agenda i.e. improving banking channels and increasing the frequency of direct flights then we can bring substantial change in the present trade and economic relation among us", he added.

The LCCI President said inauguration of the Business Kiosk is a significant milestone in their mutual journey towards enhanced economic collaboration. "We deeply appreciate the valuable printed materials you have brought, which will undoubtedly enrich this Kiosk. Hopefully, this initiative will play a crucial role in appraising our members about the abundant business opportunities available in the Central Asian Republics. We look forward to exploiting the numerous possibilities that lie ahead and are committed to working together to achieve our shared goals," he added.

### Correction of father's name in SSC certificate

My father's name is incorrectly written as Zareef Khan in my SSC certificate. His correct name, as per his National Identity Card (NIC), is "Muhammad Zarif Khan." I kindly request that this correction be made in my SSC certificate to avoid any complications in the future. Ayesha, Roll No. 167546, New Shahzad, Model School, Regi, Peshawar (1441).





## In brief

## Tanveer move in final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's talented blind archer, Tanveer Ahmed, has qualified for the final of Para Archery World Ranking Event & European Cup 2024. He convincingly defeated Bulgaria's Yanive Ivan by 7-1 in the semifinals, securing his spot in the final scheduled for Saturday. Tanveer expressed his delight at reaching the final, saying "I am thrilled to have made it this far and am eager to win as many laurels for my country as possible, making the nation proud." Confident of his preparations, he added, "I am all-out prepared for the mega final and hopeful of emerging victorious." Tanveer's remarkable achievement has brought pride to Pakistan, and his determination to excel in the final is inspiring.

## Argentina to rest Messi

MIAMI (Yahoo Sports): Lionel Messi is not expected to play for Argentina during their final Copa América group stage match against Peru on Saturday in Miami, according to ESPN's Lizzy Becherano. The Argentina star suffered a right thigh injury during their 1-0 win over Chile on Tuesday night. Messi was seen getting treatment on the sideline in the first half and also disclosed after the game he was dealing with right hamstring discomfort. Messi, who turned 37 on Monday, has played all 180 minutes during Argentina's two wins, putting them atop Group A and already through to the knockout portion of the tournament. He did not take part in Argentina's training session on Thursday and head coach Lionel Scaloni already said after the Chile match that changes were in order for his lineup against Peru. Should Argentina, as expected, hold on to the top spot in the group, they will move on to face the second-place team in Group B, which could be any of Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, or Jamaica depending on how their results go on Sunday.

## Emma to face Ekaterina

LONDON (BBC): Emma Raducanu has been drawn against Russian 22nd seed Ekaterina Alexandrova in the first round of Wimbledon, while Andy Murray - if he is fit - will face Czech Tomas Machac. Murray, 37, had an operation on a back cyst at the weekend and says he will wait until the last minute to decide whether he can compete on Tuesday. Seven-time men's champion Novak Djokovic, who is also in a race to be fit, has been drawn against Czech debutant Vit Kopriva. Djokovic, 37, had minor knee surgery after pulling out of his French Open quarter-final earlier this month. Second seed Djokovic has been put in the opposite side of the draw to defending champion Carlos Alcaraz, meaning they cannot meet unless they create a rematch of last year's final. British number one Katie Boulter, who is seeded 32nd, starts against German veteran Tatjana Maria, who reached the semi-finals in 2022. Jack Draper is also seeded for the first time and plays Swedish qualifier Elias Ymer. Draper, seeded 29th, could play Cameron Norrie - who he replaced as British men's number one earlier this month - in the second round.

Asian Jr Squash Championships  
Pak players Sohail, Huzaifa, Abdullah, Hamza in finals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani players Sohail Adnan, Huzaifa Shahid, Abdullah Nawaz and Hamza Khan have moved in the finals of the Asian Junior Individual Squash Championship here on Friday. In Boys U-13 semifinals, Sohail Adnan (Pak) beat Mohammad Iffat Zulkifli (MAS) by 11-8, 11-6, 11-2 whereas Huzaifa Shahid (Pak) beat Julius Tan (MAS) by 11-2, 11-8, 11-5.

In Boys U-15 semifinals, Muhammad Raziq Puttra (MAS) beat Abdullah Zaman (Pak) by 11-7, 11-8, 11-6 whereas Shiven Agarwal (IND) beat Nouman Khan (Pak) by 5-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-0.

In Boys U-17 semi-

nals, Abdullah Nawaz (Pak) beat Altamis Aqhar (MAS) by 11-4, 14-12, 11-6 whereas, Nikhelswar (MAS) beat Azaan Ali (Pak) by 11-6, 11-6, 11-8.

In Boys U-19 semifinals, Hamza Khan (Pak) beat Muhammad Ammad (Pak) by 11-6, 11-5, 11-0 whereas Harith Danial (MAS) beat Jooyoung NA (KOR) 11-9, 6-11, 11-6, 12-10.

In Girls U-13 semifinals, Aadya Budhia (IND) beat Chiu Hau (HKG) by 11-4, 11-7, 4-11, 12-10 whereas, Goushika (IND) beat Maisarah Mohd (MAS) by 11-6, 6-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-6.

In Girls U-15 semifinals, Harleen Tan (MAS) beat Yek Rui Jean (MAS)

by 11-6, 11-5, 11-6, whereas, Lo Pui Yin Chloe (HKG) beat Ooi Wen Min (MAS) by 11-7, 6-11, 11-5, 11-7.

In Girls U-17 semifinals, Enna Wong (HKG) beat Doyce Lee (HKG) by 11-9, 11-7, 11-5 whereas, Tang Helen (HKG) beat Whitney Isabelle (MAS) by 11-6, 8-11, 11-6, 15-13.

In Girls U-19 semifinals, Thanussa Uthrian (MAS) beat Leung Ka (HKG) by 11-6, 11-4, 5-11, 11-6 whereas, Akari Midorikawa (JPN) beat Goh Zhe (MAS) by 7-11, 11-7, 11-6, 3-11, 11-8.

The finals of Boys of both Men & Women Events would be played on Saturday.

## Stokes backs Buttler to remain white-ball captain



LONDON (BBC): Ben Stokes has backed Jos Buttler to remain as England white-ball captain, despite the heavy defeat by India in the T20 World Cup semi-final.

The defending champions were hammered by 68 runs in Guyana, a third defeat in four matches against other Test-playing nations at the tournament in the Caribbean and United States.

The surrender of the T20 title won in 2022 comes after a miserable defence of the 50-over World Cup in India last year, when England won only three of their nine matches.

"Jos is the man to lead that white-ball team forward," Stokes told BBC Sport.

"He is a great leader. He's got the respect of all the team members in the dressing room."

Stokes was man of the match when England lifted the 50-over World Cup in 2019 and was instrumental in the T20 final success two years ago in Australia.

The England Test captain came out of one-day international retirement to play in the 50-over World Cup defence last autumn, but skipped the latest T20 World Cup as part of his rehabilitation from knee surgery.

And despite England's men now not being the holders of at least one global white-ball title for the first time in five years, Stokes believes the team are progressing under captain Buttler and coach Matthew Mott.

"They have done a great job in getting to another major semi-final," said Stokes.

"Being part of sport is about growing and progressing your side. It's not shabby to say you got

through to a World Cup semi-final."

After rain forced the abandonment of their World Cup opener against Scotland, England were on the brink of elimination following a heavy defeat by Australia.

But big wins over Oman and Namibia, along with Australia's tight defeat of Scotland, put Buttler's side through to the Super 8s.

Successes over West Indies and USA, either side of defeat by South Africa, sent England to the last four, where they were outclassed by India, bowled out for only 103 in pursuit of 172 on a low, turning pitch.

It means England's defeat of West Indies is their only victory over another team that plays Test cricket, with their other three wins coming against teams outside of international cricket's elite. "It's an interesting format, the T20 World Cup, one I'm not a huge fan of because teams can go through or not go through potentially because of a weather situation," added Stokes.

"When England were put under pressure, especially at the back end of the group stages, they showed what a good team they were.

"India are a very good team, especially in the conditions that pitch offered. It gave India a huge advantage."

Stokes, who was invited to speak to the England football team before the ongoing European Championship, compared the criticism of the cricketers to the pressure Gareth Southgate's team are under before Sunday's last-16 tie against Slovakia.

"Unfortunately, it's the

way the English mentality is - they have got through and they are getting a load of grief," said the 33-year-old.

"I know what it's like. I guess that comes from expectation and everyone wanting their team to do well."

Stokes was speaking at Hawthorn Primary School in Newcastle, where he delivered a coaching session and took questions from pupils.

The Durham man is backing calls from the England and Wales Cricket Board and four other national sporting governing bodies for the government elected at the general election to guarantee every child at least two hours of physical education in schools each week.

Stokes is preparing for the first Test against West Indies on 10 July, which will be the last for England's all-time leading wicket-taker James Anderson.

At nearly 42, Anderson is retiring from international cricket after Stokes, Test coach Brendon McCullum and managing director Rob Key told him England will be looking to younger pace bowlers.

Stokes was not drawn on his reasons for that decision, but said: "I'd rather talk about the memories of Jimmy, what he is to the game and what he is to English cricket."

"He's a complete and utter role model for all fast bowlers. The commitment he has shown to his craft is just phenomenal. He's an incredible professional, an incredible athlete and one of our greatest ever to play the game."

After a long-term left-knee problem restricted the amount he has been able to bowl, Stokes had surgery in November.

On England's tour of India earlier this year, Stokes bowled in the fifth Test, his first competitive spell for eight months, and took a wicket with his first delivery.

He has since played two County Championship matches for Durham, bowling 63.1 overs and taking 15 wickets as he hopes to play a full role as an all-rounder for England in the home summer and beyond.



Amritsar: India and South Africa flying high? A kite-maker in Amritsar has a special range of kites all set for finals day of the 2024 T20 World Cup.

## Kane in crisis

LONDON (BBC): Underperforming England sides at a major tournament can spark a nationwide echo chamber of opinions - through grumbles and moans, backward passes and a lack of Kalvin Phillips, it can be hard to see the light.

England may have so far failed to excite at Euro 2024 but the Three Lions did qualify for the last 16 by topping Group C and face an arguably favourable route in the knockouts, starting with Slovakia, ranked 45th in the world, on Sunday.

So is the home view of England too pessimistic? Are we expecting too much from Gareth Southgate's side? Are the media too critical?

World Cup and two-time European Championship winner Cesc Fábregas, for example, says the Spanish press are even tougher on their national team.

"The English media is not that tough with the players," he added. "It is the opposite. In Spain, we are much more critical."

It begs the question - what does the rest of Europe think of England?

"It quickly becomes toxic"

We are all in the Spanish media very disappointed. We built this England up because we like the people in it, because we like Southgate, because of the potential, because of the success with the clubs - we built them up as one of the candidates.

The reaction has been trying to find explanations. We go through the same kind of things the English press goes through, but conclusions are a little bit different. For instance, there is talk of the use of 'names' instead of players that can do a role in the big Southgate idea - the reliance on names and some playing out of position.

Jude Bellingham doesn't do the role he does for England with Real Madrid, that's done by Toni Kroos. Bellingham is the guy that arrives into the box and is close to the forwards, he is not doing that with England.

Phil Foden and Bellingham are too similar, two number 10s, and they use more or less the same space and influence. And there is no wide players. We don't understand why Anthony Gordon came on so late?

Also, the fear, the pressure that is put on the England side by everyone - media, fans, everyone. It blows our mind how it quickly becomes toxic.

## Tactics Board: A plan to shackle Suryakumar, and Maharaj in the powerplay?

MUMBAI (ESNCricinfo): In the four day matches played at Kensington Oval so far in this tournament, the team winning the toss has twice elected to bat first. While Namibia lost against Scotland, India beat Afghanistan comfortably by 47 runs. England elected to bowl in the other two matches, losing to Australia and defeating USA.

Overall in this tournament, India have batted first in five of their seven matches, and on four of those occasions their opponents sent them in, including Thursday's semi-final in Guyana where England were bowled out for 103 in pursuit of 172.

South Africa, meanwhile, have won the toss three times and elected to bowl twice. Overall, they have batted first on four occasions, and chased as many times, winning all their games so far.

Bowling is a strong suit for both teams, and both India and South Africa may prefer bowling second in the final, when the pressure will be higher. Since this is a day game, there will be no dew to advantage the chasing team.

## Pace-off against SKY

Suryakumar Yadav scores a high proportion of his runs in the zone stretching from backward point to backward square leg. He loves using any pace and bounce on offer to direct the ball behind the wicket, and South Africa's fast bowlers know this. The zones behind the wicket have brought Suryakumar 66 runs off 24 balls against Kagiso Rabada in all T20s, 32 off 12 against Nortje, and 25 off just five balls against Jansen. Suryakumar has a phenomenal overall strike rate of 298 against the South African trio when he plays them in those zones.

There is, though, a way for fast bowlers to try and prevent him from accessing these areas: take the pace off. Especially in the IPL over the last few years, there has been a noticeable rise in bowlers deploying the slower ball against Suryakumar. He scores quickly against the slower ball too, going at a strike rate of 180.40 against the 148 slower balls he has faced in T20s since the start of 2023, but the revealing number is the average: it drops from 42.30 against on-pace deliveries to 20.53 against slower balls. And from once every 23 balls against on-pace deliveries, his dismissal rate climbs to once every 11.4 balls against slower balls.

## Bowl Maharaj in the powerplay

After losing the semi-final in Guyana, Jos Buttler conceded that he could have bowled Moeen Ali in the first six overs to create pressure on Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Jansen and Rabada have usually started with the new ball for South Africa in this World Cup, but India's openers enjoy facing pace first up and like to go hard against the fast men. While Rabada has dismissed Kohli and Rohit four times each in T20s, and the sample size is too small for Jansen, South Africa could look at going defensive by introducing Keshav Maharaj's left-arm spin in the powerplay. Since January 2023, Maharaj has gone for 143 runs in 114 powerplay deliveries, with an economy of 7.52, and picked up six wickets in this phase. Traditionally,

both Rohit and Kohli have tended to score slowly against left-arm spin.

## The key battles - Klaasen vs Jadeja, Kuldeep vs Miller

Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller are the best players of spin in the South Africa line-up. But can they withstand the collective pressure that the Indian spin trio of Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja could build from both ends? Both batters have strong numbers against Axar, but have faced issues against the other two.

Klaasen's modus operandi relies on standing deep in the crease and using his bat swing to launch big hits, while also being able to manoeuvre the ball into gaps and run hard. By his own admission, it is when he is in two minds whether to attack or play safe that he self-destructs. And he has found himself in such a scenario against Jadeja. In their T20 meetings so far, Klaasen has managed just 16 runs off 15 balls against Jadeja.

Miller, too, has been circumspect against Kuldeep. Since January 2022, Miller has scored at a run a ball off 24 balls from India's best spinner in the format, while being dismissed twice. There is no doubt India will try and exploit these match-ups; how will Klaasen and Miller respond?

## Samson for Dube?

In a curious move in the semi-final against England, India pushed Shivam Dube down the order, having mostly used him at No. 5 over the course of the tournament. Dube was included in India's squad as a spin-disruptor, and although he has scored 47 off 38 balls against spin in this tournament, he has been dismissed twice by that style of bowling, and has been circumspect against pace, picking up just 59 off 62 balls. While it seems highly unlikely India will drop him for the final, they could replace him with Sanju Samson, who has occupied the bench since playing the warm-up match against Bangladesh.

## Shamsi or Baartman?

Tabraiz Shamsi has 11 wickets at this World Cup, with one four-wicket haul and two three-fors, including 3 for 6 in the semi-final against Afghanistan. Shamsi has decent head-to-head against most of India's batters in the last two years, too, and won the Player-of-the-Match award in the second match of the home T20 series last December in Gqeberha, where he picked up 1 for 18 in four overs. However, do South Africa need a second spinner at a venue where fast bowlers have taken 32 wickets as against 20 by spinners?

The alternative could be Ottneil Baartman. The right-arm fast man nearly let England back into South Africa's last Super Eight match with a 21-run 17th over, erring while repeatedly looking for yorkers rather than bang away on a hard length. But the yorker is a big weapon for Baartman at the death, and he has executed it well in South African domestic cricket. He has also been among the most economical bowlers in the country, capable of operating in all three phases. It is a good headache for Rob Walters, South Africa's head coach-cum-selector and captain Aiden Markram: rely on Shamsi's experience and guile or inject the pace of Baartman?

## LeBron James' son Bronny drafted by dad's LA Lakers

LOS ANGELES (BBC): Bronny James was picked in the second round of the NBA draft by the Los Angeles Lakers where he could play alongside his legendary father LeBron.

The 19-year-old was the 55th choice of the draft in New York on Thursday after weeks of speculation about which team he would end up on.

Four-time NBA champion LeBron, 39, is probably entering the final year of his career and could become a free agent this summer by declining his \$51.4m (£40.6m) player option when the window opens at the end of June.

However, that prospect seems remote given the the four-time NBA champion said after the All-

Star game in 2022 that his "last year will be played with my son".

No father-son pairing has ever played together in the NBA before.

"In the history of the NBA, there's never been a father and a son that have shared an NBA basketball court and that feels like something that could be magical," said Lakers general manager Rob Pelinka.

"We know, and have to respect of course, that LeBron has a decision on his opt-out... but if it worked out that he was on our team next season, NBA history could be made. And NBA history should be made in a Lakers uniform."

On Instagram, Bronny wrote "Beyond Blessed",

while his father posted a series of pictures of the pair and the caption "Legacy".

Bronny has completed his first year of college basketball with the University of Southern California Trojans, where he averaged 4.8 points and 2.1 assists per game.

Unlike his father, who stands at 6ft 9in and is the NBA's leading all-time scorer, teenager Bronny is 6ft 1in and is more of a defensive player.

Being the son of a four-time Most Valuable Player brings extra attention along with it. Bronny has 7.7 million Instagram followers and pundits have followed his journey for years.

Despite that, his path has not been entirely

smooth. Bronny had a cardiac arrest in training last July, after which he was only cleared to return to basketball last November, having been found to have a congenital heart defect.

Bronny is not expected to play a major role for the Lakers in his rookie season, but the possibility of him appearing alongside his father is likely to garner plenty of attention.

Lakers player Anthony Davis spoke to ESPN about Bronny before Thursday's second round of the draft, saying: "He's very good defensively. He can read the floor very well. I think he's a really good playmaker."

"I think he's going to be fine, man. Obviously it's a lot of pressure on

him with his dad being who he is."

As historic as the potential first-time father-son duo in the NBA is, Bronny James will aim to carve out a legacy far beyond that as he embarks on his blossoming NBA career.

Playing alongside one of the league's greatest players and its all-time leading scorer is a challenge in itself. When that player is your father, the spotlight and expectations intensify even further.

Bronny's college career was unfortunately marred by health complications, limiting his stat line massively.

Nevertheless, Bronny brings a strong defensive presence, particularly on the perimeter, excelling in

point-of-attack defence with remarkable agility and tenacity.

Those skills were all evident at the 2024 draft combine where he climbed the rankings in Chicago, bolstered by standout performances in the three-point shooting contest and agility drills. Bronny most likely won't be a major offensive component in his first year as a Laker; he might even play some G-League minutes too.

He will have to work on his ability to score inside the paint, unlocking a wider shot selection as well as finesse his shooting from behind the arc.

A guard his size needs to be able to hit threes a lot better than what he

managed at USC (26.7%). Especially if he's getting limited rotation minutes.

Being the 55th pick in the second round of a draft class that didn't have much in the way of standout talent will take some pressure off his shoulders.

But having watched LeBron James over the years, you know that nothing but being on the top of the mountain will suffice and you'd imagine Bronny's mindset will be no different at all.

It's another Hollywood narrative for the LA Lakers who appointed former NBA star JJ Redick as head coach just last week.

Let's see if it will pay off as they search for that 18th championship.







### Australia donates \$2.6m

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced on Friday that Australia has donated \$2.6 million to Afghanistan. OCHA said in a post on X that the aid will be given to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) for 2024. The institution added that Australia is a multi-year as well as a regular donor that has contributed over AUD 74 million to the AHF since the Fund's inception.

## The Frontier Post

# AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Hajj 22 1445 — Saturday, June 29, 2024

### Afghan families returned

KABUL (BNA): Over the past 24 hours, 1155 migrants forcibly returned to Afghanistan from neighbor country through borders. According to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations Office, 116 families comprising 642 individuals were forcibly returned. Following registration with the Ministry, they were referred to the offices of UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for assistance.

## New govt in Iran to be benefited for both countries: Zabihullah



KABUL (TOLONews): Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, announced that any government that comes to power in Iran will improve its relations with the Islamic Emirate. He added that the Islamic Emirate wishes Iran well in the upcoming elections and said the relations between Kabul and Tehran are essential. In his remarks, Mujahid said: "The current stance of both countries in the field of economy and diplomacy is something that the Islamic Emirate is striving to strengthen, and it is also observed that Iran holds the same stance."

The spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate expressed optimism about

the formation of the new government in Iran, stating: "We can say that the new government that will be formed will follow a path that has already been outlined and will benefit both countries."

On Friday, the 14th presidential election in Iran began.

Mohammad Taqi Shahcheraghi, head of the Iranian election staff, said that 61,452,321 people inside and outside the country are eligible to vote.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, also cast his vote in the first minutes of the 14th presidential election.

The religious leader of Iran called on the people of the country not to hesitate to participate in the elec-

tions and stressed that "the presence of the people is necessary and obligatory to prove the legitimacy and honesty of the Islamic Republic."

At the same time, former Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said that boycotting the ballot box is not a solution to the problems.

After casting his vote, he added: "I hope all the people, with a wide presence at the ballot boxes, create a better future for themselves and their children. I am sure that today our people will make us proud."

A number of analysts believe that with the formation of the new government in Iran, their policy towards the Islamic Emirate will not change.

"There will be no significant change in Iran's foreign policy regarding the region and especially Afghanistan. Whoever comes to power, whether reformist or conservative, will continue the same foreign policy under the supervision of the top leadership, which is Khamenei," said Barna Salehi, a political analyst.

This election had 6 candidates but two of them withdrew from the competition to help the conservatives reach a consensus.

## Uzbekistan keen to invest in Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) says Uzbekistan investors are interested in investing in coal mining in Afghanistan.

The ministry officials said that these investors intend to export coal from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan.

They added that the talks with Uzbekistan are ongoing and progress has been made in this field in the early stages. However, they have stated that they have not yet reached the point of agreement.

Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) officials also stated that there are capacities in the area of economic activities and development of joint investment with Uzbekistan and all Central Asian countries.

According to them, practical use of these capacities should be started.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum added that the Islamic Emirate has stopped the illegal mining of coal, and mining is carried out legally all over the country based on the permit of large companies.

## Remaining work gets underway

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Water and Energy says work to complete the Arghandi substation is underway, thanks to financial help from a private company.

Speaking at an event, in the presence of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the deputy prime minister of economic affairs, Abdul Latif Mansour, the acting minister of water and energy, said once complete the substation, along with other projects, will pave the way for the importation of 1,000 megawatts of electricity from Turkmenistan.

Mansour said this boost of power will help alleviate some of the power problems in the country.

He also said that several other major projects are almost complete and that these will be officially launched in the near future.

Dr. Farooq Azam, an adviser to the ministry, said an increase in electricity in the country was a fundamental need for development and that the completion of the substation will be a great achievement. Noorullah, the vice president of the private company that has invested in the substation project, expressed his commitment to complete the project in coordination with the ministry. He called on other investors to invest in Afghanistan.

The project will take two years to complete and will eventually benefit over 400,000 families in Kabul, Ghazni, Paktia, Khost and Nangarhar.

The project includes the construction of a 500 (kV) transmission line from Surkhan to Dasht-e-Alwan; and the upgrading of Arghandi 500 kV substation.

## Afghan consortium invests \$ 400 million

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of Afghan businessmen are establishing a production consortium with a \$400 million investment to enhance growth and achieve self-sufficiency in oil refining.

Members of this consortium said in a press conference in Mazar-e-Sharif, the provincial capital of Balkh, that the companies involved in this process have the capacity to refine 4,300 tons of oil per day.

The consortium members have previously invested in oil refining in the northern region.

Abdul Rashid Salar, a technical advisor to the consortium, said that the creation of this consortium will provide job opportunities for more than 3,000 people and facilitate the production of high-quality diesel, gasoline, motor oil, hydraulic oil, and asphalt.

Abdul Rashid Salar said: "This refinery, with a \$400 million investment, of which \$87 million has already been invested and the remaining \$323 million will be newly invested, will be established in four phases over a period of one to five years."

Officials from oil refining companies in the north said at this press conference



that they have the capacity to refine 4,300 tons of oil per day but are facing a shortage of raw materials. They have asked the interim government to provide more resources to these companies.

"Without the comprehensive support and backing of the Islamic Emirate, it is impossible to advance this large-scale work alone. The doors of the consortium are sincerely and honestly open to all companies and individuals who work for the country's self-sufficiency and economic prosper-

ity," said Sayed Karim Hashimi, a businessman.

"Currently, Afghanistan's extraction is approximately 1,100 tons, and our factories have the capacity to produce 4,300 tons. We request the government extract more oil wells to meet the companies' needs," said Momin Ziaei, another businessman.

Noorullahi Abu Edris, the deputy governor of Balkh, said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to supporting any commercial activities within the country.

The deputy governor of Balkh added: "You see that our oil and gas companies and factories are being built to standards within the country, and the quality of our oil products should not be lower than those abroad so that we should have exports instead of imports."

Despite Afghanistan's vast oil reserves, the country imports nearly 90% of its required oil from other countries. Global developments have always affected the increase or decrease in oil prices.

## Int'l community slowly accepting IEA's authority in Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): The world is coming to realize that the Islamic Emirate is legitimately in charge in Afghanistan, something that Russia acknowledged long ago, Russian Special Presidential Representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov said. "Of course, [the world] is becoming aware of this fact. And Russia was ahead of the curve here. Better late than never," Kabulov said when asked by TASS news agency if the international community is aware of the fact

that it has to do business with the IEA as a government.

The Afghan crisis will be the focus of the upcoming UN meeting in the Qatari capital Doha, scheduled for June 28.

Commenting on Russia's expectations ahead of the meeting, Kabulov said: "In our opinion, this meeting will be useful if it contributes to reviving close and constructive cooperation between the international community and the Afghan authorities, primarily for resolving the social and economic problems the country and its people are facing."

The Russian diplomat

also said he would "most definitely" talk to the IEA delegation on the sidelines of the coming meeting in Qatar.



## Calls rise for improved health services amid limited access

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of Afghan citizens complained about the lack of health facilities, insufficient medical centers, and the absence of specialist doctors in some provinces of the country.

They urged the interim government to pay serious attention to health care across the country.

"Our health centers should be expanded, and health services, especially in villages and remote areas, should be increased so that people do not have to come to the center for treatment," said Sayed Wais, a resident of Khost.

"We have to go to the health center in the district to treat our children," said

Islamuddin, a resident of Kunar.

Meanwhile, the WHO reported that it has managed to provide medical services to 737,000 people in 130 health centers in hard-to-reach areas of 15 provinces of the country.

Jamshed Tanoli, acting WHO Representative to Afghanistan, said: "The collaborative efforts of WHO and its partners, supported by QFFD, have significantly improved health service delivery in Afghanistan's underserved areas."

"The interim government of Afghanistan still does not have an organized system for providing health services. The assistance of

the World Health Organization is undoubtedly useful, and I hope this assistance continues," said Sayed Abdullah Ahmadi, a doctor.

The WHO report also said that the organization's main focus is on increasing access to essential and life-saving medicines and strengthening the capacity of health professionals to provide quality care in vulnerable communities.

"The role of the World Health Organization is extremely important, especially in the financial support of third-world countries," said Munir Ahmad Kamal, a doctor.

The Ministry of Public Health also announced that

after the Islamic Emirate returned to power, attention has been given to underserved areas and 350 health centers have been established in various parts of the country.

Sharafat Zaman Amarkhel, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health, said: "In the past two years, 350 centers have been built. Most districts under the previous government had no health services, and 50% of the people did not have access to health services."

The Ministry of Public Health had previously announced that it aims to establish 288 health centers in various parts of the country this year.

## Cases of malaria, cholera and dengue fever on rise



JALALABAD CITY (Ariana News): Nangarhar Infectious Diseases Hospital officials say the number of cases of malaria, cholera and dengue fever has increased in the province due to the warmer weather conditions.

No details on the actual numbers were given but hospital officials said they have treated about 20,000

patients in total over the past three months.

A registered "12,609 patients underwent laboratory examinations; 608 patients had ultrasound tests and 737 had X-rays," said Abdul Shukoor Azimi, head of Nangarhar Infectious Diseases Hospital.

Meanwhile, the patients who were treated at this hospital expressed their sat-

isfaction with the treatment by doctors and the treatment process.

"I was very sick, I came to this hospital and was treated very well. I am very happy with this hospital and its staff," said a Nangarhar resident. The officials also stated that the death rate at this hospital is low and health services are provided free of charge.

## Central Bank enhances ATM services amid citizen fee concerns

KABUL (TOLONews): The Central Bank of Afghanistan announced that currently about 280 ATMs are active across the country.

Hasibullah Noori, spokesperson for the bank, told TOLONews that in Kabul, only about 190 ATMs are active and citizens are benefiting from their services.

He said: "The Central Bank of Afghanistan is committed to providing facilities for our compatriots, and currently, there are about 280 active ATMs across the country, out of which 190 are operational in Kabul."

Some Kabul residents who use these services, despite finding the machines useful for easy withdrawal of money from bank accounts, complain about the withdrawal fees. "The good thing about ATMs is that you can quickly withdraw money with a card," said Abdul Waris, a resident of Kabul.

"Anyone who wants to withdraw their 10,000 salary has to pay a 45 Afghani fee. It would be better if banks could charge this fee once a month or year," said Mujib Rahman, another resident of Kabul.

Some citizens also demand the installation of more ATMs across the country to facilitate easier withdrawal of money from their bank accounts. "ATMs provide a type of convenience, and we hope the number of these machines increases to provide better services to the people," said Ahmad Elias, a resident of Kabul. "ATMs should be operational across Afghanistan because they are essential for the people," said Fawad, another Kabul resident. The spokesperson for the Central Bank also said that the Fpay ID card, designed by the Central Bank, is now compatible with all ATMs.

## Herat governor meets UNICEF head



KABUL (BNA): Sheikh Mawlana Noor Ahmad Islamjar, Governor of Herat, engaged in discussions with the head of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to address pivotal issues related to child welfare and development initiatives within the region.

Governor Islamjar, expressed gratitude to UNICEF for their invaluable services, specifically in providing clean drinking

water in the Kohsan district, and underscored the importance of sustaining such cooperative efforts.

On the other hand, the head of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stated that immediate attention to schools damaged by the earthquake in the districts is one of their office's top priorities, and noted that thirty-five schools are currently under reconstruction.

Meanwhile, Herat Governor emphasized the urgency of addressing damaged schools and stated that delivering effective services to the people is a top priority for the local administration.

Sheikh Mawlana Noor Ahmad Islamjar, Governor of Herat reiterated added that the local administration will provide all necessary facilities to support better services for organizations.





ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar.

## Experts discuss next generation air warfare strategies

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Next-Generation Air Warfare: Transforming South Asian Air Forces" on 27 June 2024. The event focused on the evolving landscape of air warfare, amid emerging technologies. Ms Nidaa Shahid, Senior Researcher, CASS, delivered the introductory remarks.

Air Commodore Khalid Banuri (Retd), a senior strategy analyst, delivered a compelling keynote address wherein he discussed the evolution of air warfare through emerging technologies such as AI and called for active partnership between the defence sector, government entities and the private sector to leverage emerging technologies and to ensure the modernisation of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF).

Dr Ghulam Mujaddid, Assistant Professor, National Defence University, provided insights from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, illustrating the effectiveness of advanced weapon systems in air warfare. Noting that Russian nuclear forces are on high alert, he highlighted the delicate balance between conventional and nuclear escalation. He also emphasised the strategic use of cyber warfare in modern military operations to bolster the resilience of smaller air forces against larger adversaries.



Dr Adil Sultan, Dean FASS, Air University, illustrated the critical importance of continuous adaptation, stating that next-generation air dominance will feature advanced aircraft, drones, AI and integrated systems. He further called on the military-industrial complex to invest in dual-use technology to reduce costs. He also alluded to the role of think tanks in carrying out focused studies with the aim to provide policy relevant input to the policymakers.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS, Lahore, said that the PAF stands at a critical juncture in evolving geopolitical and military scenarios. He highlighted the pivotal

role of emerging technologies such as AI, big data analytics, autonomous systems, cyber warfare, unmanned aerial vehicles, and hypersonic weapons in national defence. Noting that the IAF is incorporating these advancements, he stressed the need for the PAF to remain proactive and innovative.

He also praised Chief of Air Staff Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu's flagship project, NASTP, for its vital role in integrating these technologies and maintaining the PAF's strategic edge. The speakers stressed the necessity of equipping the PAF with the necessary tools to navigate tomorrow's battlefields and safeguard the nation's security interests.

## Tarar assures to form body on journalists protection

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday assured the protesting reporters covering parliamentary proceedings of forming a committee on the protection of journalists and develop a mechanism in that regard in consultation with the provinces.

The reporters staged a walk-out from the National Assembly's Press Gallery to raise their concerns about the security of journalists facing violence across the country and reservations on working environment in the Parliament House. The minister flanked by Press Information Officer Mubashir Hassan came to the Press Gallery to hold negotiations with the protesting journalists.

Speaking on the occasion, Tarar said, "We have a very strong relationship with journalists. When the gates of Parliament House were closed for us, we used to sit with you and convey our voice to the people." He said efforts were being made to solve the problems of journalists on priority. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was working to address the issues of journalist community.

The minister paid tribute to the Parliamentary Reporters' Association (PRA) for upholding freedom of press. "I have taken strict notice of the coordination problems arising in relation to the budget books, which will be solved immediately," Tarar confirmed that the matter would be resolved immediately by contacting the National Assembly Secretariat.

"The doors of the Ministry of Information are open for the journalists round the clock. I stand with the journalists on the front line," he added. He said meetings would be held with the provincial governments to investigate the cases of murder of journalists. "A mechanism will be made in this regard in consultation with the provincial information ministers. A committee will be formed regarding the protection of the rights of journalists," the minister affirmed.

## Student die, 34 injured in Swat mishap

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A student of fourth class was killed and 34 others mostly girl students were injured when the bus of a private school skidded of the road and overturned in Asala area of Khwazakhela tehsil in Swat district on Friday.

Rescue 1122 Swat said soon after receiving information about the road mishap, its teams started a rescue operation and shifted the injured to Khwazakhela Hospital from where four critically injured students were shifted to Saidu Sharif Hospital.

According to the school administration over 50 students were onboard the bus when it met with the accident. Following the incident, an emergency was declared at Khwazakhela Hospital.

The Khwazakhela Hospital administration has released a list of the injured students which showed that most of the girl students were among the injured. It said that 34 injured students were received of whom one died of his injuries. According to the parents present at the hospital, outdated buses were being used for transportation of the students which sometimes caused such ill-fated incidents.

The Israeli military body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs, known by its acronym COGAT, said Thursday that the evacuation was carried out in coordination with officials from the United States, Egypt and the international community. The children and their companions left Gaza via the Kerem Shalom cargo crossing, and the patients were to travel to

## Iran holds presidential vote with limited choices

DUBAI (Reuters): Iranians will vote for a new president on Friday following Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash, choosing from a tightly controlled group of four candidates loyal to the supreme leader, at a time of growing public frustration.

While the election is unlikely to bring a major shift in the Islamic Republic's policies, the outcome could influence the succession to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's 85-year-old supreme leader, in power for three-and-a-half decades. Khamenei has called for a "maximum" turnout to offset a legitimacy crisis fueled by public discontent over economic hardship and curbs on political and social freedoms.

Voter turnout has plunged over the past four years, with a mostly young population chafing at political and social restrictions. Polls open at 8:00 am local time (0430 GMT) and close at 6:00 p.m. (1430 p.m. GMT), but are usually extended until as late as midnight. As ballots are counted manually, the final result is expected to be announced only in two days although initial figures may come out sooner.

If no candidate wins at least 50 percent plus one vote from all ballots cast including blank votes, a run-off round between the top two candidates is held on the first Friday after the election result is declared. Three of the candidates are hard-liners and one a low-profile comparative moderate, backed by the reformist faction that has largely been sidelined in Iran in recent years.

Critics of Iran's clerical rule say the low and declining turnout of recent elections shows the system's legitimacy has eroded. Just 48 percent of voters participated in the 2021 election that brought Raisi to power, and turnout hit a record low of 41 percent in a parliamentary election three months ago. The election now coincides with escalating regional tensions due to war between Israel and Iranian allies Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as increased Western pressure on Iran over its fast-advancing nuclear program.

The next president is not expected to produce any major policy shift on Iran's nuclear program or support for militia groups across the Middle East, since Khamenei calls all the shots on top state matters. However, the president runs the government day-to-day and can influence the tone of Iran's foreign and domestic



policy. A hard-line watchdog body made up of six clerics and six jurists aligned with Khamenei vets candidates. It approved just six candidates from an initial pool of 80. Two hard-line candidates subsequently dropped out.

Prominent among the remaining hard-liners are Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, parliament speaker and former commander of the powerful Revolutionary Guards, and Saeed Jalili, a former nuclear negotiator who served for four years in Khamenei's office. The sole comparative moderate, Massoud Pezeshkian, is faithful to the country's theocratic rule but advocates detente with the West, economic reform, social liberalization and political pluralism.

His chances hinge on reviving the enthusiasm of reform-minded voters who have largely stayed away from the polls for the last four years after previous pragmatist presidents achieved little change. He could also benefit from his rivals' failure to consolidate the hard-line vote. All four candidates have vowed to revive the flagging economy, beset by mismanagement, state corruption and sanctions reimposed since 2018 after the US ditched Tehran's 2015 nuclear pact with six world powers. The hashtag #ElectionCircus has been widely posted on social media platform X by Iranians in the past few weeks, with some activists at home and abroad calling for an election boycott, arguing that a high turnout would legitimize the Islamic Republic.

## Naqvi addresses UN summit, stresses cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi addressed a special session of the United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit (UNCOPS) – 2024 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Friday.

In his remarks, Mohsin Naqvi emphasised the importance of international cooperation in safeguarding communities and ensuring national security. He highlighted the various threats faced by the world, including force, foreign interventions, suppression of freedom struggles, resurgence of hate ideologies, poverty, inequality, global tensions, military alliances, and the nuclear arms race.

The minister stressed the need for preventive diplomacy to address the root causes of conflicts, praising the UN Charter's principles of self-determination, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in preventing conflicts for over seven decades. Mohsin Naqvi highlighted Pakistan's significant contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, includ-

ing the contribution of 230,000 troops to 47 missions in often challenging theatres. He added that Pakistan has advanced novel concepts, such as multidimensional peacekeeping.

He acknowledged the increasing challenges faced by peacekeeping missions, including threats from terrorist groups, tribal rivalries, and safety threats. To address these challenges, Mohsin Naqvi outlined six essential elements for a future peacekeeping strategy.

He stated that peacekeeping missions should be an integral part of a comprehensive political strategy that addresses the root causes of conflicts and violence. He stated that The UN peacekeeping mandate should be realistic and achievable, taking into account the specific circumstances of each mission.

He added that Each mission should be equipped with the necessary financial, human, and material resources and modern capabilities to enforce its man-

date. He underscored that UN peacekeepers should receive appropriate training to achieve the desired results and counter expected threats.

He emphasised that improvements can be made in command-and-control structures, especially to ensure a timely response to attacks against civilians and peacekeepers. Moreover, he said that there should be greater accountability for attacks against UN peacekeepers instituted by host countries and the United Nations. The minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to forging peacekeeping partnerships, especially with the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He announced Pakistan's plans to host Peacekeeping Preparatory and Ministerial level meetings in Islamabad in 2025 and 2027, enhancing its partnership with UN Peacekeeping. The interior minister said that strength lies in collective efforts for peace, security, and justice. "Together, we can establish a peaceful world" he concluded.

## Marwat demands Shibli Faraz's resignation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Disgruntled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat demanded PTI senator Shibli Faraz to resign from party positions after Omar Ayub quit as party's Secretary General.

Reacting to Omar Ayub's resignation Afzal Marwat took to X (Formerly Twitter) saying that "I welcome the wise decision of

Umar Ayub Khan to step down as Secretary General. A few other people holding important positions in the party should also follow suit."

He lashed out at the PTI current leadership saying that "The party failed to accomplish a single task. (Imran) Khan is in jail and recovery of mandate is still far away.

Our women and leaders are locked up in jails and we have failed to mobilize the masses for a great movement."

"I demand the resignation of Shibli Faraz from both the party office and the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, only then will the party be free from the clutches of the Qabza mafia" he added.

## Huge mounds of rotting trash pile up around Gaza camps

GENEVA (Reuters/AFP): Mounds of trash rotting in the heat are piling up close to where displaced people are sheltering in Gaza, a UN official said on Friday, raising fears about the further spread of disease.

Hundreds of thousands of Gazans who had fled to southern Gaza earlier in the more than 8-month conflict have been uprooted again since Israel expanded its military operations against Hamas to the southern city of Rafah in early May. Louise Wateridge, an aid worker with United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA), said that a pile of waste weighing an estimated 100,000 tons was building up near people's tents in central Gaza. "It's among the population and it's building up without anywhere to go. It just keeps getting worse. And with the temperatures rising, it's really adding misery to the

living conditions here," she told journalists via video link from Gaza.

Israel has refused repeated requests to allow UNRWA to empty the main landfill sites, she said, meaning temporary ones are emerging, she added. Even if permission is granted, Wateridge said UNRWA's humanitarian missions such as trash collection have all but halted due to Israeli refusals to allow fuel imports. Israel's COGAT, a branch of the military tasked with coordinating aid deliveries into Palestinian territories, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel, which launched its Gaza military operation after deadly Hamas attacks on southern Israel on Oct. 7, says it has expanded efforts to facilitate aid flows into Gaza and blames aid agencies for distribution problems inside the enclave. It con-

Meanwhile, Israeli authorities say 68 people — 19 sick or wounded

children plus their companions — have been allowed out of the Gaza Strip and into Egypt in the first medical evacuation since early May, when the territory's sole frontier crossing was shut down after Israel captured it. The nearly nine-month Israel-Hamas war has devastated Gaza's health sector and forced most of its hospitals to shut down. Health officials say thousands of people need medical treatment abroad, including hundreds of urgent cases.

The Israeli military body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs, known by its acronym COGAT, said Thursday that the evacuation was carried out in coordination with officials from the United States, Egypt and the international community. The children and their companions left Gaza via the Kerem Shalom cargo crossing, and the patients were to travel to

Egypt and farther abroad for medical treatment. Family members bade a tearful goodbye to the kids at Nasser Hospital in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis. Many of the families appeared anxious — most relatives had to stay behind, and even those allowed to accompany the patients did not know their final destination. Nour Abu Zahri wept as he kissed his young daughter goodbye. The girl has severe burns on her head from an Israeli airstrike. He said he didn't get clearance to leave Gaza with her, although her mother did.

"It's been almost 10 months, and there is no solution for the hospitals here," he said. Kamela Abukweik burst into tears after her son got on the bus heading to the crossing with her mother. Neither she nor her hus-

band were cleared to leave. "He has tumors spread all over his body and we don't know what the reason is. And he constantly has a fever," she said. "I still don't know where he is going."

The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, the only one available for people to travel in or out, shut down after Israeli forces captured it during their operation in the city early last month. Egypt has refused to reopen its side of the crossing until the Gaza side is returned to Palestinian control. Six of the children were transferred to Nasser Hospital from Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City earlier this week. Five have cancer and one suffers from metabolic syndrome. That evacuation was organized by the World Health Organization, which could not immediately be reached for comment.