

5 dead in Attock mishap
F.P. Report
ATTOCK: Five people, including three women, a rescuer and a patient, died when a Rescue 1122 ambulance carrying a patient to hospital collided with an oil tanker in Attock early Saturday. Rescue personnel said three persons, including a Rescue 1122 employee, were critically injured in the incident. They said that the accident took place at Hakla interchange.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding winding up of PWD.

KP govt, WB agree to boost cooperation in various sectors

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A consultative meeting of the high ups of provincial government and the World Bank was held here with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair to celebrate on the expansion and enhancement of cooperation and collaboration in various social sectors of the province.

Concerned provincial cabinet members, Chief Secretary and administrative secretaries of the concerned departments attended the meeting whereas the World Bank team was headed by Country Director Najib Benhassine. The meeting discussed threadbare venues of enhanced collaboration in various potential sectors including Health, Education, Agriculture, Live Stock, Irrigation, Green Energy, Road Infrastructure and Tourism etc, and it was agreed in principle to enhance collaboration to boost these sector with the aim to improve social sector service delivery, create maximum employment opportunities and

strengthen the economy of the province. The concerned departments were directed for necessary actions to this end on priority basis.

Talking on this occasion, the Chief Minister welcomed the World Bank's intent to further enhance collaboration with the provincial government and said that the provincial government highly valued the World Bank's ongoing cooperation in various social sectors. He assured that the provincial government would take all the necessary measures on priority basis, and extend all possible support to ensure the timely completion of various initiatives being carried out in the province with the joint collaboration of the World Bank.

Touching upon various public welfare initiatives of his government, the Chief Minister said that his government was working on an initiative to give special package to the expected women in rural areas to address the issue of stunting growth in children adding that the provincial government intends to launch Education Card on the analogy of Health Card for free education facilities to the

deserving population; and similarly, he said, a project has been reflected in the upcoming ADP to provide solar energy to the deserving households of the province, whereas a project to provide soft loans to youth for starting small scale business is also part of the new ADP.

Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur remarked that his government was working under a well planned strategy to strengthen the potential revenue generating sectors of the province including Mines and Minerals, Agriculture, Live Stock, Tourism, Hdyel Power etc on modern lines in order to enhance revenue of the provincial government adding that food security is one of the important priority area of his government, and number initiatives are being taken to bring the wast barren land of south region under cultivation by ensuring effective and prudent use of available water resources. The Chief Minister said that his government would welcome enhanced collaboration of the World Bank in the above mentioned sectors.

Rains across country predicted

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Met Department has forecast hot and humid weather for most parts of the country, with some regions expecting much-needed rainfall. The department reports that monsoon rains have commenced from Sindh, particularly in Karachi, and are now progressing towards other parts of Pakistan.

Rain is anticipated in Kashmir, northeast Punjab, Potohar, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and southeast Sindh. There is also a possibility of rain in northeast and south Balochistan, with light showers expected in some coastal areas of Sindh. The department forecasts that in Islamabad and its surrounding areas, the weather will remain hot and humid during the day, with partly cloudy skies and occasional rain during the night.

Director of Weather Forecasting, Dr Babar, said in an exclusive conversation with a media he said monsoon rains have started from Sindh, especially Karachi. He has also indicated that the monsoon winds are advancing towards the rest of the country and are set to bring heavy rains to various regions within the next 24 hours. Also Read: Weather update:

He stated that more than normal rainfall is expected in July and August, which raises concerns about flooding in rivers and canals, as well as the potential for urban flooding in the northeastern and southeastern parts of the country. He further warned of potential flooding in canals and nullahs.

"There will be heavy rain in Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, KP, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan," Dr Babar told Samaa TV. He emphasized the need for preparedness to mitigate the impacts of heavy rainfall and potential flooding. As monsoon winds advance, the Meteorological Department urges residents in vulnerable areas to stay alert and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety. The anticipated rains are expected to provide relief from the prevailing heat and humidity, offering respite to millions across the nation.

LHC directs PM Office to stop civil, mily agencies

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed the PM Office to instruct all the civil and military agencies including the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to not contact any member of the judiciary.

LHC's Justice Shahid Karim issued a four-page written interim order on Saturday in a case pertaining to the harassment of an anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge in Sargodha. The suo motu notice was taken by former LHC chief justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on the ATC judge's complaint. However, Justice Karim took over the proceedings after Khan's elevation to the Supreme Court.

Justice Karim, during the previous hearing, issued instructions to the prime minister to lay down guidelines for the security agencies. He said that it was the responsibility of higher

authorities to ensure the prevention of such incidents. The written order states that no agency should "approach or contact" a judge whether of superior judiciary or sub-ordinate judiciary or any member of their staff in the future.

The court also said that the same instructions should be issued to all police officers in Punjab to not contact directly any judge of the superior judiciary or the sub-ordinate judiciary regarding the merits of any pending judicial proceedings before these courts.

"In case certain measures have to be taken regarding security etc in respect of Anti-Terrorism Courts across Punjab, these measures will only be put in place with the consultation and concurrence of the learned judge of that court and not otherwise," said the order.

It also said that the IGP, and chief of police of the division or district will be personally held responsible

and will be proceeded against in contempt of the orders in the LHC in case of violation. Justice Karim also said that the judges of ATC across Punjab are directed to download a call recording application and shall be bound to record all such calls which they receive and with regard to which the learned judges have apprehensions that they have been made to influence any judicial proceedings before them.

"A direction is issued to the judges of Anti-Terrorism Courts across Punjab to deal and decide the cases relating to May 9, 2023 expeditiously and on priority," the order said. The court also directed the ATC judge and his staff to cooperate in the investigation. "All investigation proceedings should be video recorded and the record shall be maintained by the police as also remitted to this court through the registrar." The court then adjourned the hearing till July 8.

Multiple FIRs can't be registered for a single incident, rules IHC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Issuing the detailed verdict on Sheikh Rashid Ahmed's petition to dismiss multiple cases filed against him across the country over his "indecent" comments about Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) declared that only one first information report (FIR) could be registered per incident, and only with the relevant police station.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, in a 41-page full verdict issued on Saturday, underscored that it was a well-settled principle of law that a person could not be prosecuted multiple times for the same offence. On June 25, the IHC dismissed the case filed against the Awami Muslim League (AML) chief in February last year for using offensive words against the PPP chief. The FIR was registered by

Karachi's Mochko police station in Keamari on a complaint of a local PPP leader.

The high court expressed regret over the fact that political parties, while in power, often lodge baseless cases against their political opponents, filing multiple cases for the same charge in different parts of the country, according to the verdict. It added that this practice of harassing and torturing political opponents was a blatant violation of established laws of the land.

The detailed verdict further said that apart from the relevant police station, no other FIR could be registered for a single incident. "It is the constitutional courts' responsibility to protect citizens' rights. In Sheikh Rashid's case, the incident occurred at PolyClinic Hospital in Islamabad, hence the court exercised its jurisdiction over it," the verdict read.

The court dismissed the

case filed at Karachi's police station. Judicial assistants and police informed Geo News that it was inappropriate to register FIRs for the Islamabad incident in other provinces. On this basis, cases in Peshawar, Lahore, and Lasbela were also dismissed.

Sheikh Rashid was accused of using "unethical and extremely obscene" language against the former foreign minister in the FIR lodged at the Karachi police station, despite these words being uttered in Islamabad. The police said that the case was invalid as the incident occurred in Islamabad. A senior police officer mentioned that due to the sensitivity of the Bilawal Bhutto matter, an official statement could not be provided, citing the Supreme Court's Sughran Bibi vs State case, "which dictates that multiple FIRs cannot be registered for a single incident".

Operation risky for people, armed forces: JI

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has said that the Operation Azm-e-Istehkam is unacceptable as it is dangerous for both the people and the armed forces.

Addressing press conference at Mansoorah on Saturday, he also emphasized that Afghan soil should not be used for terrorism against Pakistan. Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman advocated for dialogue rather than conflict with Afghanistan, a nation with which Pakistan has shared strong, brotherly relations for decades. He reminded that Pakistan had provided shelter to Afghan refugees for 40 years during the wars in Afghanistan.

Criticizing former General Musharraf for involving Pakistan in the US-led war, which led to a regional security crisis and tension along the western borders, he noted that Pakistan suffered significant losses in terms of lives and economic damage due to joining the US war. He urged the Taliban not to retaliate against the Pakistan if some people in power corridors made false decisions in past.

The JI chief warned against proposals coming for ruling parties for military operations inside Afghanistan, suggesting that such actions would further destabilize the region. He proposed peace talks involving China, Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, and advocated for a larger bloc consisting of Central Asian states, Russia, Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, and Iran for regional peace and prosperity.

He stressed the need for political stability over military interventions, citing the failures of past operations over the decades. He also highlighted the importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism and criticized the lack of implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP). He lamented that the government had deprived the masses of basic facilities, leading them to become vulnerable to foreign influences that fuel terrorism in Pakistan.

Naeem ur Rehman rejected the recent budget and noted that the Jamaat-e-Islami had already launched a protest movement against it. He criticized the ruling elite, including the civil and armed bureaucracy, judiciary, and parliament members, for benefiting from the budget while imposing taxes on the common people. He called for the inclusion of feudal lords in the tax net and proposed land reforms, accusing the government of undermining agriculture and small farmers.

PM reviews progress of PWD closure

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday chaired a meeting regarding winding up of Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD) and its alternative arrangements.

The meeting was briefed regarding the plan to dissolve PWD, implementation of the ongoing projects, alternative to the PWD and outsourcing of the construction and repair work to the private companies.

The meeting was informed that the ongoing projects under PWD would be completed by the relevant federal and provincial departments whereas no further project would be assigned to PWD. The construction and repair work would be outsourced to the private companies of international standard.

The prime minister, on the occasion directed that the interests of PWD employees be protected during the dissolution process and that a comprehensive and practical plan be formed to ensure their welfare. He also directed to complete the process of the closure of PWD as soon as possible saying that he himself would monitor the process.

He also ordered the formation of an asset management company to manage PWD's assets and digitize its records. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Ahsan Iqbal, and Ahmad Khan Cheema, as well as the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan, and other relevant officials.

PM to kick off Central Asia tour from July 2: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will leave for a three-day tour of two

Central Asian countries from next week. The prime minister will be accompanied by senior federal ministers.

According to media reports, the prime minister will land in Tajikistan on July 2 as part of the first leg of his tour. Shehbaz Sharif is visiting Tajikistan at the invitation of Tajik President Imam Ali Rahmanov, the reports added.

During the visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will also meet Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Sirajuddin Mehruddin. He will also hold a meeting with Tajik President Imam Ali Rahmanov in Dushanbe. In the meetings, the situation in Afghanistan, mutual engagements and promotion of trade and investment will be discussed. Global and regional issues of mutual interest will be discussed in meetings with Tajik leaders.

Both Pakistan and Tajikistan have serious concerns over the situation in Afghanistan, the reports said, adding the presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan and the use of Afghan territory for terrorism is a headache for both the countries. In second leg, PM Shehbaz Sharif later will go to Kazakhstan for a two-day visit.

The prime minister will visit Kazakhstan on July 3 and 4 to participate in the summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana. Many world leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin will participate in the meeting. On the sidelines of the SCO summit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to meet several world leaders. During his visit to Kazakhstan, Shehbaz Sharif will also meet Kazakh President Kassym Jomart Tokayev and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu.

India beat South Africa to become T20 WC champions

BARBADOS (AFP): India were crowned the T20 World Cup champions on Saturday after maintaining their flawless winning streak after beating South Africa in the final at Kensington Oval on Saturday.

They set a 177-run target for South Africa which managed to secure 169 runs. The Proteas lost wickets early with Reeza Hendricks in the second over and Aiden Markram in the third over. Tristan Stubbs was knocked out by Axar Patel in the ninth over. Quinton de Kock was out in the 13th over after scoring 39 runs. Hardik Pandya got Heinrich Klaasen in the 17th over while Jasprit Bumrah got Marco Jansen in the 18th over. India captain Rohit Sharma had won the toss and opted to bat and if the aim was to put South Africa under pressure it certainly worked with Kohli, who has struggled for form in the tournament, delivering a measured and controlled knock. Kohli delivered when India needed him the most, making 76.

Kohli and Axar Patel put on a partnership of 74 which was the foundation of a total of 176-7 that will prove challenging for South Africa before Shivam Dube helped step the tempo up at the end with 27 off 16 balls.

Kohli, who had come into the final averaging just 10.71, made the perfect start by hitting three fours off the opening over from Marco Jansen, with the 15 runs coming from the first six balls a record high for a T20 World Cup final. Skipper Rohit, looking to maintain that momentum, then struck boundaries off the first two balls from left-arm spin-



ner Keshav Maharaj but then misjudged a sweep shot, finding Heinrich Klaasen at mid-wicket who made a fine, low, diving catch.

Maharaj then claimed a second victim in his first over when Rishabh Pant also attempted a sweep but mis-timed his shot badly, top edging a full delivery straight up in the air and into the gloves of wicket-keeper Quinton de Kock. Kohli was looking confident but was in need of someone to build a partnership, after Suryakumar Yadav lasted just four balls before he holed out to Klaasen at deep square-leg off Kagiso Rabada.



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CM terms recognition from UK as his hard-work, commitment to health sector

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah appreciated the recognition given to Cyberknife, a Radiation Oncology service at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) Karachi by the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR), United Kingdom. He sees this award as a testament to the hard work and commitment of his government to the health sector as well as to the people of the province, the chief minister said in a message on Saturday.

The Cyberknife- Radiation Oncology services at JPMC Karachi have been honoured by "The Royal College of Radiologists" in the United Kingdom. This recognition is a matter of great pride for the province of Sindh and Pakistan, as it signifies the acknowledgement of free cancer treatment facility provided through a public-private partnership between the Government of Sindh and the Patients Aid Foundation at JPMC

Karachi by The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) UK.

The RCR was established in 1897 with the invention of X-ray radiation and the establishment of the Roentgen Society. It has the largest number of fellows worldwide, serving as Radiologists and Radiation Oncologists.

The Honorary Fellowship by the RCR is the most prestigious award given to a non-Fellow of the College. Only 78 individuals worldwide have been honoured with this award. On Friday, 28th June 2024, it was awarded to Prof. Dr Tariq Mahmood at Central Hall Westminster, London. The citation highlighted his work in the field of radiology and radiation oncology in Pakistan.

Dr. Tariq Mahmood, Professor Emeritus, Radiation Oncology, JPMC, is the first Pakistani and first Muslim Professor in the world to receive this most prestigious award. He is also a

recipient of Tamgha-e-Imtiaz for public service, the Honorary rank of Surgeon Commander from the Chief of Naval Staff and holds an honorary Fellowship from the Royal College of Edinburgh for his services in the field of Medicine.

Prof. Mahmood extended his gratitude to the Honourable Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah and Minister of Health Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho for the donation of a new top-of-the-line Cyberknife S7 unit and to the donors of Patients Aid Foundation for another Tomotherapy X9 unit."

Since 2012, JPMC has been the only centre in the world to offer free treatment of cancer with Cyberknife and Tomotherapy, regardless of nationality, religion, or ethnicity. Up to now, patients from 15 countries and 167 cities in Pakistan have benefited from this free service. Globally, these expensive treatments cost millions of rupees.



FAISALABAD: University of Agriculture Faisalabad conducted the first entrance test for the postgraduate admissions in which about 4000 students appeared. —APP Photo

Sindh bans pillion riding on Muharram 9, 10

KARACHI (INP): To maintain peace as well as law and order during the holy month of Muharram, the Sindh government Saturday imposed a ban on pillion riding across the province, stated a notification released by the provincial home department.

According to the notification, the ban on pillion riding will be effective ahead of Ashura on Muharram 9 and 10, as the new Islamic year is set to commence in the first week of July.

However, the ban shall not be applicable on women, children below the age of 12 years, senior citizens, differently abled persons, journalists, personnel of law enforcement agencies and private security agencies in uniform, and employees of essential services.

The government, as per the home department, has also imposed a ban on carrying and displaying weapons as well as holding processions and Majalis without a permit in the province under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) till Ashura.

From Muharram 1 to 10, authorities in Sindh have been notified to take action regarding following: Use of Loudspeakers in contravention of "The Sindh Sound System (Regulation) Act 2015"; Speeches, wall chalking, posters, banners, leaflets, audios, videos etc spewing hatred and violence; Presence of any unwarranted person on roof-top during Muharram events; Processions / Rallies / Majalis / Jalsa / Tazia without permit; Assembly of five persons or more except Muharram Processions / Rallies / Majalis / Jalsa / Tazia; Pillion riding; Carrying of Arms/Ammunition except personnel of LEAs and private security agencies on duty; Use of Helicams / drones; "Further, all permissions issued by Home Department, Sindh to carry weapon in relaxation of ban u/s 144 CrPC shall remain suspended during the above said period," it further read.

As per the directives, Station House Officers (SHO) of concerned police stations have been authorised to register the complaints under Section 188 PPC in writing for the violation of Section 144 CrPC against the violators of the notification.

Meanwhile in Punjab, at least 502 places have been declared sensitive, and the province's interior ministry has announced that processions or gatherings from Moharram 1 to 10 will only be allowed at designated places where all events will be monitored.

Woman held, abducted girls recovered

LAHORE (APP): Lahore police have arrested a woman kidnapper, recovering three abducted girls from her, the news channel and police reported on Saturday.

According to the details, the lady kidnapper used to lure girls with the promise of jobs and later force them into illegal activities. She and her gang members also sold the girls in different cities of the country against money.

The police had launched the operation after the registration of FIR by the family members of the abducted girls. Police teams have been formed to arrest the remaining gang members.

House's sanctity must be protected, says PA Speaker

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan has emphasized that the sanctity of the house must be protected in any case and urged each member to play their proactive part in this regard.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, he stressed the importance of adhering to democratic traditions and attributed the degradation of the house to its members. He criticized the opposition for creating chaos during the Chief Minister's speech, calling it intolerable. He asserted that all MPAs must uphold the

house's dignity and protest in a civilized manner.

As the custodian of the house, the speaker asserted his responsibility to maintain decorum and ensure the assembly's proceedings align with Constitutional guidelines. He reaffirmed that while members are free to speak in their mother tongues, abusive language would not be tolerated. Promising to maintain order, he questioned how legislative business could proceed amid such misconduct, remarking that the assembly is neither a public gathering venue nor a

protest container. He vowed to protect the Punjab Assembly's honor, citing his constitutional oath.

Malik Ahmad Khan announced that the tolerance for the opposition's actions had reached its limit, leading to the formation of an ethics committee.

This committee will review the language used by members of the opposition and provide appropriate responses. He revealed that several opposition members had been barred from participating in house proceedings for using appropriate and unethical language.

IPS arranges welcome party

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Institute of Professional Studies arranged welcome party for migrated students. According to details, IPS Director Bilal Afridi invited Dr Kashif Amin, Assistant Professor at Hazara University, as the chief guest for welcome party, so that he could share his thoughts and experiences with the students. Additionally, the Chief Guest provided guidance to the students and reaffirmed that the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) is one of the top-ranked business administration affiliated institutes with the University of Peshawar." The chief guest and the students each received additional certificates and shields.



City administration takes steps for security

KARACHI (PPI): The city administration has taken proactive measures to ensure the provision of security and civic facilities during Muharram-ul-Haram.

According to the Karachi Commissioner office information, a

committee has been formed in each district, headed by a Deputy Commissioner, comprising representatives from concerned departments such as police, Rangers, town municipal administrations, Solid Waste

Management Board and Karachi Water & Sanitation Corporation. The committee will work in coordination with the religious leaders and permit holders and relevant departments to ensure the provision of security and civic facilities.

5-day training session for working journalists organized by CPDI

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: The Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) organized a five-day capacity-building training program for working journalists from various regions of Punjab. The training aimed to equip journalists to safely report on human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic processes.

The training session took place in Islamabad, and journalists from different regions of Punjab participated. The trainers, Myra Imran, Aftab Alam, Zahid Abdullah, Nizam Khan Salarzai, Tanzeela Mazhar, Waqas Naeem, Bilal Dar, Hashain Ghayur, Adnan Rahmat, Zafarullah Khan, Saifullah Khoso, and Ghulam Murtaza, shared their expertise on various subjects. They provided awareness on AI and contemporary journalism, as well as digital techniques.

The experts offered detailed information about different aspects of journalism through interactive



sessions and activities. The training aimed to help participants understand the difference between traditional and modern journalism, promote independent journalism in Pakistan, uphold freedom of expression, use artificial intelligence, report in an unbiased manner, modernize journalism using digital media, combat misinformation and disinformation, and understand the negative effects of information.

At the end of the five-day workshop, journalists

from different districts in Punjab expressed mixed reactions. They emphasized the importance of modern technology in promoting digital journalism, acknowledging the significant revolution brought about by this technology.

Several countries, including America, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Germany, have initiated Urdu services for delivering news through data journalism. Urdu websites are being used to provide news in various coun-

tries across the world, including Norway, Sweden, and Canada. Members of the Pakistani community in America noted that in the past, they relied on the Pakistani library to read three or four days old Urdu and English newspapers while abroad.

However, modern journalism has now enabled them to receive the latest news instantly. Certificates were presented to the participating journalists at the conclusion of the workshop.



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Governor clarifies to personally bear Kundi Farm’s expenses

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday clarified to personally bear the expenses of Governor House Dera Ismail Khan.

In a statement issued from Tajikistan, he said declaring Governor House Dera Ismail Khan as Governor House Peshawar and using it as a camp office was a legal requirement and necessity for other officials.

The Governor House Dera Ismail Khan was declared Governor House Peshawar for the same legal requirement, but I will bear its expenses personally, he said and added, for more than the last 24 years, I have been active in practical politics. Our family also

participates in politics and we have been bearing all these expenses from our own pocket. I will continue to bear the expenses of Governor House Dera Ismail Khan from my pocket, he clarified

The Governor said that the decision to grant Kundi Model Farm Di Khan the status of a government residence was based on providing accommodation to security personnel and staff on duty.

Faisal Karim Kundi reiterated his commitment to transparency and accountability, stating that he has never exceeded his delegated powers during his extensive political career.

Governor expresses sorrow over fire incident in Nauthia Bazar: The

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed deep sorrow over the outbreak of fire that engulfed shops and cabins in Peshawar’s Nauthia Bazar.

The blaze resulted in significant financial losses for traders and shop owners, prompting Governor Kundi to sympathize with them.

“The incident of the fire is extremely tragic,” said Faisal Karim Kundi.

Governor Kundi emphasized the need for a thorough investigation into the incident.

“The affected shopkeepers have suffered a considerable financial loss due to the fire,” highlighted Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

Governor Kundi assured that the provincial government would ensure financial assistance to the affected traders and shopkeepers.

Governor expresses condolence over ambulance accident: The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed grief and sorrow over the Ambulance accident near DI Khan Motorway Hakla Interchange.

In a condolence message, the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed regret over the death of five persons in the accident.

He expressed heartfelt sympathy to the affected family and relatives.

The Governor prayed for the departed soul of the deceased persons and the speedy recovery of the injured in the accident.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing a meeting with a delegation of World Bank.

KP advisor denies PM’s claim of 590b, calls it false

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Information Advisor, Barrister Dr. Saif, has rebutted Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif’s assertion of allocating 590 billion rupees to the province, labeling it as false. Responding to the statement, Barrister Saif clarified that the mentioned funds were allocated for Swat’s construction and rehabilitation during the 2010 operation, and the province has yet to receive arrears under the NFC Award.

Launching military operation: Govt must take parliament, stakeholders into confidence: Sherpao

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday said the government should take the Parliament and all other stakeholders into confidence before launching the military operation.

Speaking at a press conference at Watan Kor after a meeting of the central and provincial office-bearers of the party, he said launching the military offense without clear objections would be unable to achieve the desired results.

“Any decision made in haste will prove to be counterproductive,” he remarked, adding the affectees of the past military operations were yet to be fully rehabilitated and compensated. Aftab Sherpao said launching the operation was an extreme step, therefore, consensus should be developed over it.

He said they were hoping the 2024 general election would bring political stability, but unfortunately that did not happen. He said now the opposition parties were using the term “Form 47 government” for the rulers. He demanded the resignation of the chief election commissioner and members of the Election Commission of Pakistan for failing to hold a free and fair election.

Commenting on the federal budget, the QWP leader said it brought no relief for the poor, adding the government should adopt austerity measures instead of taxing the salaried-class and the poor, who were already grappling with record inflation.

He opposed the imposition of tax on air fares of the people working in the Gulf states, saying that they were the ones who sent billions of dollars of remittances so the government should facilitate them.

Aftab Sherpao said imposing GST was regressive taxation and taxing the baby milk would affect the children. He said the government prepared the budget on the diktats of the International Monetary Fund, which was calling the shots.

The QWP leader said all political parties had expressed reservations about the federal budget. He said new taxes were imposed on the people without considering their plight. He said the government introduced taxes worth Rs1500 billion but



it was raised to Rs1700 billion when the budget was passed.

Aftab Sherpao warned the government against amending the 18th Amendment and said that his party would not compromise on the rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said the QWP would resist any bid to slash the shares of the province in the National Finance Commission Award. He said KP produced cheap and surplus electricity but its residents were facing prolonged loadshedding.

Earlier, the meeting discussed the political and economic situation of the country and passed several resolutions.

The participants expressed their views on the economic and political situation of the country. One resolution asked the government to lower its expenditure and provide relief to the have-nots. Another resolution expressed reservation about launching the military offense and demanded the government to evolve consensus over this matter by taking the parliament and the political parties into confidence.

In another resolution, the meeting warned the government against amending the 18th Amendment. The fourth resolution condemned the federal excise duty on the air fares for the people working in the Gulf States.

The last resolution condemned the unannounced and prolonged loadshedding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which produced cheap and surplus electricity.

Minister directs steps to maintain peace

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law, Aftab Alam Afridi has directed concerned authorities to work together and take measures to maintain peace during Muharram.

He said this during a meeting with elders belonging to different schools of thought at Kohat on Saturday. Deputy Commissioner, MPAs and representatives of police, Rescue 1122 and Pesco also attended the meeting.

Minister directed to utilize resources to maintain law and order situation stressing devising a result oriented and applicable plan to achieve the objective.

He also urged people to play their role for peaceful observance of Muharram and foil attempts of elements to disrupt peace and create rift among people. He also advised people to be patient and respects sentiments of each other during Muharram.

Explosion leaves several injured

PESHAWAR (INP): A tragic gas leakage explosion at Shelton Guest House in University Town, Peshawar, has resulted in multiple injuries, including women and children suffering burns. According to a spokesperson from Khyber Teaching Hospital, eleven injured individuals have been admitted, with two in critical condition.

Reports indicate that the explosion caused fires and roof collapses, prompting emergency measures at the hospital. Among the injured, five women and six men have been transferred for medical care.

Rescue operations by Rescue 1122 are ongoing to evacuate victims and contain the fire. Meanwhile, two seriously burnt patients have been transferred to the Burn and Trauma Hospital in Hayatabad, where their condition remains critical with 80% burns each.

Operation continued

PESHAWAR (APP): In the light of the orders issued by the provincial government, the operation against electricity theft and illegal connections is going on, spokesperson PESCO said here on Saturday.

According to detail, an operation was conducted against electricity theft and illegal connections in Sufid Deri, Matni sub-division along with WAPDA officials and local Police, the spokesman said.

During the operation, 104 coils (Kunds) were removed, while 36 slow meters, 2 transformers and Rs.200,000 were also recovered, the spokesman said.

There are total dues of more than Rs.380 million on Sufid Dairy feeders, which have to be paid by these consumers, said the spokesperson.

Peshawar district administration is following a zero tolerance policy against kunda culture and electricity theft, spokesperson said.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister Aftab Alam Afridi chairing a review meeting of Kohat Area Development Project.

Reward, punishment system must be made equitable

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman, Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faiq Shah demanded reforms to implement reward and punishment system on an equitable basis.

Talking to a group of political, social activists and office bearers of the party on Saturday, Mr Shah said law around only thief of hen tightened while robbers of country and assets gained clean chit in graft cases.

This is delaying tactics of the law and power, in which one person put behind the bars and other release, he added.

For the last 70 years, this process has been going on, and people must be awakened about it, Shah asserted.

Above that only the law of apology, exemption and

NRO is being carried out, Shah said.

He said any big one has done major atrocity, crime, he/she will easily gain NRO.

Shah continued to say that the KP government is only restricted to warning, while the Punjab government is relying on tiktok and in Balochistan, a government of cheaters.

He added the formula of divide and rule is going on. He said people come in deceiving tactics, because of which, it is the consequences of actions.

Shah said the givers of 200 free of cost electricity units are slaves of IMF, which are the experts and masters of imposing heavy tariff bills, taxes and inflation.

The whole tax is being collected from poor people,

he added.

Faiq said one of the biggest opposition is currently ATP, which is moving along with people, and our party only wanted to empower people.

He said his party’s agenda is removal of darkness of ignorance and planning to put Pakistan in the rank of developed nations.

The ATP chief urged competent and young people to come forward and become part of the country-wide movement of this party, whose sole purpose is to give power and authority to them.

Shah said ATP leadership will not accept any high position.

He added his party is the name of a collective leadership of people, in which people from all segments of the people will participate.

‘She The Peace-builder’ remieres at PPC

F.P Report

PESHAWAR: The powerful short film “She The Peace-builder” premiered at the Peshawar Press Club, drawing an impassioned audience of media representatives, women’s rights activists, and influential community members.

Directed by Zeenat Bibi and produced in collaboration with Search for Common Ground and the Aurat Foundation, the film delivers a compelling message on the indispensable role of women in establishing peace in tribal districts.

The film’s narrative spotlights the creation of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) committees in the former Federally

Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), underscoring their effectiveness in resolving local conflicts. However, it exposes a glaring injustice: women are systematically excluded from these committees and denied the right to present their cases before the jirga (tribal council). This blatant exclusion impedes the path to sustainable peace and violates women’s fundamental rights.

Through riveting storytelling, “She The Peace-builder” tackles critical issues such as property rights, divorce, domestic violence, and child custody, which overwhelmingly affect women in these regions. Director Zeenat Bibi issued a fervent call to action, emphasizing the

urgent need to amplify women’s voices and secure their representation in ADR committees.

She implored the government to allocate specific seats for women, ensuring their full participation and addressing their pressing issues.

The event, co-hosted by Zeenat Bibi, Rahat Shinwari, Naveed Yousafzai, and a women’s rights activist, sought to galvanize awareness and action regarding the essential role of women in peace-building. The screening served as a powerful reminder of the critical need for women’s inclusion in decision-making processes to achieve genuine and lasting peace.

Weather to remain cloudy in province

PESHAWAR (APP): Weather will remain cloudy in most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Peshawar, an official of the Meteorological Department said here Saturday.

Giving details, the official said that southern and plain areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will remain under heat and chance of rain and thundershowers in Chitral, Dir Upper and Dir Lower, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Kohistan, Battagram, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Torghar, Haripur and Swabi.

Chance of rain with strong winds in Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera Charsadda, Kurram, Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tang and Dera Ismail Khan.

The minimum temperature in the city of Peshawar is 31, while the maximum is likely to go up to 41 degrees Celsius, Meteorological Department officials said.

The humidity in the air in the city is a record 54 percent, Meteorological Department officials informed.

During the last 20 hours, 40 mm rainfall was recorded in the upper districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Malam Jabba, Meteorological Department officials said.

Balakot recorded 38 and Dir Upper received 2 mm of rain in late night, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

Farkhanda Naseer completes M.Phil



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Farkhanda Naseer of Azakhel bala, Nowshera, completed her M.Phil on the topic of Critical Analysis of literary contributions of Syed

Akbar Sabir. Farkhanda who has done all her education privately is appointed as subject specialist in Government Girls Higher Secondary School Azakhel bala through PCS.

Her MPhil work was supervised by Dr farkhanda liaqat and Dr Sher zaman seemab while external examiners included Dr Kiran, Dr Bushra Ikram and Dr Danish Bhattani.

CSOs demand activated DRCs with women’s participation for equal justice in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The EVAW/G Alliance Khyber and Mardan Chapter, in collaboration with Civil Society Organization Blue Veins, on Saturday raised the demand to strengthen the DRCs and highlighted the important role of Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) in empowering women and girls across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Established under the

Police Reforms, 2016, DRCs provide a significant platform for the peaceful resolution of disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms, addressing shortcomings in the formal judicial system.

“DRCs represent a significant step towards accessible justice for women and girls in our province,” said a spokesperson for

EVAW/G Alliance Khyber Chapter. “These councils offer a streamlined approach to resolving disputes outside complex judicial mechanisms, ensuring quicker and more equitable outcomes.”

Recognizing the importance of gender inclusivity within DRCs, EVAW/G Alliance members urged law enforcement authorities to prompt the activation of these councils.

They emphasize the critical need for women’s representation within DRCs to ensure fair and sensitive handling of cases pertinent to women’s rights and interests.

“We urge the police authorities to expedite the establishment and operationalization of DRCs, with a focus on enhancing accessibility for women and girls,” added the spokesperson. “It is

imperative to train DRC members rigorously in conflict resolution and legal frameworks, aligning with international best practices to uphold justice effectively.”

Qamar Naseem, Program Manager at Blue Veins, highlighted the transformative potential of DRCs for women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: “DRCs provide a localized platform where women

can resolve disputes swiftly and effectively. This initiative promises to empower women by providing them with a forum that respects their rights and ensures their voices are heard.”

Usman Afridi, a youth rights activist from Khyber District, echoed the sentiment, emphasizing, “The establishment of DRCs offers a pathway for women in tribal districts to

reclaim their rights and participate more actively in community and legal processes.”

The EVAW/G Alliance Khyber and Mardan Chapter and Blue Veins call upon all stakeholders to support the implementation and enhancement of DRCs across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, advocating for a system that prioritizes gender equity and justice for all.



In brief

Pakistan Army opens school F.P. Report

GWADAR: The Pakistan Army has inaugurated the One Unit Primary School in the Miran Bazar area of Gwadar. This initiative aims to provide educational opportunities to children in Miran Bazar. The Pakistan Army has equipped the school with essential furniture and a solar power system to ensure a conducive learning environment. Additionally, army personnel will also serve as teachers, contributing directly to the educational development of the region. The school, which offers various facilities to create a peaceful study environment, underscores the Pakistan Army's commitment to promoting education in under-served areas. The Army has also expressed a commitment to establishing more such schools in the future, catering to the educational needs of poor children and helping them secure a brighter future. The local community has welcomed this initiative, expressing a desire for the organization of more such educational institutions to support the region's development.

Muggers loot shopkeepers

DALBANDIN (PPI): Hindu shopkeepers were looted on Saturday near Station Chowk area of Dalbandin. According to a report, the unidentified robbers riding a motorcycle snatched expensive mobiles from Hindu shopkeeper Aneel Kumar, son of Phelaj Rae, and Rs15,000 from another Hindu shopkeeper Omeyat Raj near Station Chowk area of Dalbandin. The muggers managed to escape after snatching belongings of Hindu shopkeepers. Expressing grave concern over the incident, Hindu community called on the authorities to arrest the snatchers and ensure the recovery of stolen goods. Further investigation was being conducted by the concerned authorities.

RCD Highway blocked

KHUZDAR (PPI): RCD Highway in Baghbana area of Khuzdar was blocked on Saturday by protesters, who demanded of the authorities to lodge an FIR against levies personnel of Baghbana allegedly involved in killing a man in Baghbana area of district Khuzdar. According to a report, the body of the man was placed on RCD Highway in Baghbana by the relatives of the deceased. The alleged that that Muhammad Khan, son of Muhammad Hashim, a resident of Baghbana, who had recently arrived from Saudi Arabia to attend the funeral rituals of his late father, was gunned down by the personnel of Baghbana levies force the previous day. Protesters demanded of the authorities to lodge an FIR against the responsible officials of levies force Baghbana. On the other hand, levies authorities said that the deceased was accomplice of a notorious group involved in robberies, dacoities and bike snatching. RCD Highway in Baghbana area of district Khuzdar remained closed till filing this report.

Protesters call-off strike

LOWER DIR: Additional Assistant Commissioner Timergara Hazrat Bilal held a successful negotiation with those protesting against electricity load shedding in Belambat and the protesters have called off their site-in by blocking the main road.



QUETTA: People drinking fresh juices from a roadside vendor.

Precious human must be saved: Bugti

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said on Saturday that precious human lives could be saved by overhauling the emergency healthcare services of the province.

These views were expressed by him while chairing a meeting at Chief Minister's Secretariat regarding overhauling emergency healthcare services. Directing the concerned authorities to set up two modern state of the art trauma centres in eastern and southern areas of Quetta, he emphasised that projects of both the trauma centres be made workable.

He said that the authorities of Health Department and Communication and Works Department should identify suitable places in eastern and southern areas of the provincial capital for establishing trauma centres. He issued directives for providing healthcare services after outsourcing trauma centres of Khuzdar and Zhob. Secretary, Health Department, Saleh Muhammad Baloch gave briefing to the Chief Minister Balochistan.

Meeting held to protect women from harassment in Balochistan: The Women Development

Department and the Quetta Divisional Administration on Saturday agreed to work together to provide assistance to women, protect them from harassment, and create opportunities for their advancement in all fields.

Special committees will be formed in all line departments under the Anti-Harassment Act to prevent women's harassment. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on Women Development, met with Commissioner Quetta Division, Hamza Shafqat, and discussed efforts to promote gender equality in the province.

Dr Buledi said that as a Parliamentary Secretary for Health, she had established special spaces for women at various public places in Quetta, including the Quetta Court, University of Balochistan, Quetta International Airport, High Court of Balochistan, and Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University.

These centers provide facilities for working women, including prayer rooms, baby feeding, and rest areas. However, some of these centers are still inactive and need to be activated. Dr. Buladi emphasized the need to provide a

safe environment for women at workplaces, stating that harassment is a serious offense under the law and will not be tolerated. She warned that any complaint of harassment would be thoroughly investigated, and those found guilty would be punished, including termination of employment. The Advisor said that all departments must establish anti-harassment committees under the Anti-Harassment Act, and progress reports have been sought from all departments.

Those departments that fail to establish these committees will be given a deadline, and if they still fail to comply, the relevant administrative secretaries and the Chief Secretary of Balochistan will be informed in writing to take action against the responsible officials. Commissioner Quetta Division, Hamza Shafqat, congratulated Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi on her new responsibilities and expressed hope that joint efforts would be made to promote women's development and protection. He assured that all possible efforts would be made to provide protection to working women and create a safe environment for them.

8 suspects arrested, stolen goods recovered

F.P. Report

LARKANA: On the strictly instructions issued by SSP Larkana Mir Ruhul Khan Khoso, Larkana police crackdown against criminals. Like those who are involved in serious cases and are wanted, while weapons, hashish, two stolen and stolen motorcycles and valuable mobile phones have also been recovered from the accused, according to the details, the Nodero Police conducted successful operations in Tugar Laro area.

Two accused involved in the robbery case after recovering the stolen CD70 motorcycle from Nadir Shahani have been arrested. The accused have been identified as Siraj Chandio and Sameer Chandio. On the other hand, the Nodero police have arrested the accused Feroze Jatoi without license pistol and bullets* and the accused Ameer alias Amiro Kori with 250 grams of hashish. More than 1200 grams of marijuana have been arrested and a case has been registered.

On the other hand, the Larkana Taluk Police arrested the accused Saddam Jakhani along with the repeater and cartridges and registered a case under the Sindh Arms Act. A case has been registered while Larkana Police staff of Dari police station have recovered the stolen valuable mobile phone of citizen Shahnawaz Jatoi and the stolen motorcycle of Larkana citizen Wazeer Luhar.

Protest against load shedding held

F.P. Report

BUNER: The Jamaat e Islami Youth Buner Chapter was staged set in front of PESCO XEN office in Swari to register protest over excessive load shedding in Buner especially the Feeders of Pir Baba and Malakpura.

The JIY Buner district chapter president Abbas Shaheen led the set in and addressed the protesters. He made it clear the JI and JIY would not let locals to suffer from over load shedding and claimed the JI and JIY leadership would always be there to protect public rights.

He accused the elected public representatives for taking mums over excessive load shedding in Buner district especially the feeders of Pir Baba and Malakpura. He claimed load shedding on these feeders was twelve hours as many hours extra than rest of the feeders which he branded injustices with the people of Pir Baba and Malakpura. He accused the elected public representatives who belong to PTI as MNA and MPAs from Buner with PTI and this party is rulling in KPK.

Spokesman of Faisalabad Police arrested 6484 drug peddlers and recovered narcotics worth millions of rupees during last 10 months. Spokesman of Faisalabad Police Rizwan Bhatti said on Saturday that during the movement launched against drug peddlers on directives of IGP Dr Usman Anwar and under supervision

JUI-F to register 1.5m more as party members in KP

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F) has set to register 1.5 million more members in the party during the ongoing membership drive to be continued till July 25. This was stated by the JUI-F provincial election supervisor Maulana Ahmad Ali Darvish while addressing a meeting of the party office bearers at the residence of Maulana Muhammad Rahim Haqqani at Sarai Payeen.

The JUI-F intra-party coordinators and co-coordinators including provincial deputy chief Mufti Fazal Ghafoor, provincial salar Ansar ul Islam Israr Marwat, Abdul Halim Javed, JUI-F district chief Sirajud Din, general secretary Haji Javed Iqbal, Maulana Amanat Shah, Haji Ikram and others were also in attendance.

Maulana Darvish said that JUI-F was a democratic party that believed in free, fair and transparent elections of its leadership. He said the party chooses its leadership after every five years through members' voting. He said the party was being organized at the Union Council level to the central level, for which the membership first phase was important.

He said that the membership process in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was going on in a very transparent manner, which will continue without any break until July 25. He informed the participants that the party would register 1.5 million more members in the province during the ongoing membership drive. The JUI-F intra-party election chief said grouping, lobbying and fake membership would not be tolerated within the party and action would be taken against all such members as per the party constitution.

Peace march held: The Shalkandi Youth Jirga held a peace march at Munda that rejected any military operation in the area. The participants, mostly students and youths, were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans against militancy and in favour of peace. The Jirga's chairman Mufti Izaz Ali Shah said they would not let any bloodshed in the area.

He said that the installation of barbed wire (fence on the border) and the alleged entry of terrorists despite an increase in the defense budget every year was a question mark that spoke of the failure of security institutions. He said that it was the professional responsibility of the

security forces to provide people with a peaceful environment. The jirga's chairman said that local residents would fully support the security forces and police in maintaining peace but this time they would not allow the government to carry out another military operation in the area. He said the people had paid the price, now they should be given the right to live in a peaceful environment.

Forest fire in Maidan hill overcome in hours: Rescue 1122 firefighters succeeded to extinguish a forest fire at Doba Mountain after eight hours of hectic efforts here. Residents said that fire broke out in the dense forest area at Doba due to unknown reasons.

The Rescue 1122 dispatched its fire fighters and fire extinguish vehicle to the area. The fire fighters continued their efforts and after eight hours of hectic efforts the fire was fully controlled, the residents added. They said that local youths and villagers also assisted the Rescue fire fighters.

Several incidents of forest fire occurred in different parts of the Lower Dir district during this summer. The forest fire at Barcharai, Osakai and Macho Talash hills inflicted huge losses on biodiversity especially on wildlife.

Managers' conference held in Landi Kotal

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Under the banner of Sarhad Rural Support program (SRSP), a managers' conference was held here in Jorga Hall tehsil Landi Kotal last day.

Tehsil Chairman Shah Khalid Shinwari, SRSP Coordinator Sartaj Khan Afridi, Additional Assistant Commissioner Rameez Ali Shah, Assistant District Education Officer Inayatullah Khan Afridi, members of parents, teachers councils, members of civic society and offi-

cials of various government departments were among the participants.

The meeting thoroughly discussed development works initiated by SRSP in State-run schools and sensitized parents and the locals of the importance of education and the educational uplift schemes.

Addressing on the occasion Tehsil Chairman Shah Khalid said that education should be given priority not only in merged tribal districts but across the country as education is the key to progress.

He urged the tribal youth to decorate themselves with the ornaments of knowledge and directed the government run-educational institutions to deliver education honestly to make learners useful citizens of the country.

He called upon the education department to fill the deficiency of teachers in the schools so that educational activities smoothly run in the area. He also appreciated the SRSP for conducting standard development works in the schools.

People welfare should be main focus: KP Minister

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In order to review progress of work on the ongoing developmental schemes under the Kohat Area Development Project, a high level meeting was held in DC Office Kohat with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Law and Finance Aftab Alam Afridi in the chair. Members of the Provincial Assembly Daud Khan Afridi and Shafiullah Jan, Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, ADC F&P, authorities concerned of the TMAs, Education, C&W, Social Welfare, WSSC and other concerned departments attended the meeting.

The meeting was briefed about the new, proposed and ongoing, developmental schemes under the Kohat Area Development Project in detail. The Law Minister directed all the related departments to jointly work for initiating people welfare plans in education, health and other



areas of public interest. He added that people welfare should be the main focus of their priorities.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat asked all the departments concerned to prepare a detailed report of the projects and submit it to his office at the earliest. He said that priority should be given to backward areas while formulating development plans so that their backwardness can be reduced and the quality of life of the people there can be improved.

DC discusses law, order situation before Muharram: Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr Azmat Ullah has said that all efforts would ensure a peaceful Muharram in District Kohat.

He was talking to media

men soon after attending a high-level meeting regarding steps to be taken for maintaining peace and law and order in Kohat District.

On this occasion, District Police Officer Muhammad Umar Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Hamid Iqbal, Assistant Commissioner Usman Ashraf, Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Retired Syed Ibn Ali, TMO Kohat Muhammad Shoaib and other heads of civil and military institutions attended the meeting. The Deputy Commissioner on this occasion said that all resources would be utilized to ensure security and maintain peace in District Kohat during Moharram. He said a proper plan has been chalked out to maintain peace.

ANP leader flays operation in KP

F.P. Report

WANA: Malik Khial Muhammad Wazir, leader of the Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party, has strongly opposed the planned Operation Azm-e-Istahkam in Lower Waziristan, declaring that local tribes will fiercely resist any military action. Khial Muhammad Wazir insisted that the operation should first target Punjab, which he described as a terrorist hub with seventy banned organizations operating there. He stated that

numerous operations in tribal areas have already caused significant human and financial losses.

He highlighted that Pashtun land cannot endure more military operations, pointing out that tribes displaced in previous operations still live in camps. "The tribes are peace-loving people and should not be forced into rebellion," he warned. According to Wazir, state-imposed wars have killed over 80,000 Pashtuns and injured millions.

Khial Muhammad Wazir vowed that this

time, the tribes will not force their families to migrate. "With the nation's support, we will fully resist the Operation Azm-e-Istahkam. The operation will only proceed over our dead bodies," he asserted.

He also criticized the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), accusing them of past massacres of Pashtuns. Additionally, he demanded that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to withdraw his support for the operation.



BALTISTAN: A view of beautiful Khamosh Water Fall at Kharmon.

Jail authorities crack down on hunger-striking prisoners

Anees Takar

MARDAN: In a move that has sparked outrage among the prisoners' families and human rights activists, the Superintendent of Mardan Jail has transferred four prisoners who were on a hunger strike to other facilities. The prisoners who had been protesting against the jail authorities' alleged mistreatment and lack of facilities, were shifted to Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu jails.

According to sources, 17

prisoners had gone on a four-day hunger strike, protesting against the Superintendent's alleged inappropriate behavior and the lack of basic amenities in the jail. The strike was called off after Member of the Provincial Assembly, Tariq Ariani, intervened and held talks with the prisoners.

However, in a surprise move, the jail authorities transferred four of the hunger-striking prisoners to other facilities, sparking anger among their families

and supporters. The prisoners' families have announced plans to stage a protest outside the jail, demanding the immediate return of their loved ones to Mardan Jail.

The development has raised concerns about the treatment of prisoners in Mardan Jail and the authorities' handling of the situation. Human rights activists have called for an investigation into the matter and demanded that the prisoners be returned to Mardan Jail immediately.

6484 drug peddlers arrested

FAISALABAD (INP): Faisalabad Police arrested 6484 drug peddlers and recovered narcotics worth millions of rupees during last 10 months.

Spokesman of Faisalabad Police Rizwan Bhatti said on Saturday that during the movement launched against drug peddlers on directives of IGP Dr Usman Anwar and under supervision

of RPO Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan in September last year, 6705 cases were registered and 52 hotspots were cleared.

He was during the operations, 6484 drug pushers were arrested besides recovery of 3026 kilogram hashish, 1270 kg heroin, 12 kg Ice and 1,13,123 litres liquor valuing millions of rupees.

As many as 28 drug addicts were shifted to drugs rehabilitation centres, the spokesman added. He said that the IGP has directed the CPOs and DPOs to further intensify the operations against drug peddlers. SHOs have been asked to improve patrolling in their areas and improve the situation through daily basis monitoring, he added.



Sunday, June 30, 2024



BERLIN: Police break up a sit-in blockade not far from the Grugahalle, in Essen, Germany.

French community honors a teen killed by police

NANTERRE, France (AP): One year after a French teenager with North African origins was killed by police — a shooting that sparked shock and days of rioting across France — his mother is leading a silent march Saturday to pay homage to her son.

It comes at a politically fraught time. Hate speech is blighting the campaign for snap parliamentary elections taking place this weekend, and an anti-immigration party that wants to boost police powers to use their weapons, and has historic ties to racism and antisemitism is leading in the polls.

Family members and friends are gathering in the Paris suburb of Nanterre to remember 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk, who was shot dead at point-blank range by a police officer at a traffic check on June 27, 2023.

Within hours of his death, Merzouk, a delivery driver from a working-class neighborhood, became a symbol. For many across France, he was the embodi-

ment of young French Black and North African men who, studies show, face police checks and discrimination more frequently than their white counterparts.

“United in our quest for justice and truth. Nahel won’t be forgotten. The fight will resonate through our steps and voices,” said Nahel’s relatives in an Instagram post. Only his mother Mounia and his close friends are expected to speak publicly during the march, and they want to avoid any politicking or tensions a day before France’s parliamentary elections.

On Sunday, French voters will cast ballots in the first round of snap elections for the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, that could lead to the country’s first far-right government since the World War II Nazi occupation.

French opinion polls suggest the National Rally party could dominate the next parliament after the July 7 second round and get

the prime minister’s job. In that scenario, Centrist President Emmanuel Macron would retain the presidency until 2027 but in a sharply weakened role.

“This march, happening now, it is a powerful symbol,” said Assa Traore, who has been fighting for justice since her brother Adama died in the custody of French police in 2016.

“It means that history can’t write itself without us. We, from the working-class neighborhoods, are the firsthand victims of these elections. We realized, from an early stage, that the National Rally and far-right parties were a danger for our country and will weaken it,” said the 39-year-old with Malian roots who will march alongside Merzouk’s family.

Merzouk’s death, which was captured on video, stirred up long-simmering tensions between police and young people in housing projects and disadvantaged suburbs, many of whom are French-born youth with immigrant family backgrounds.

German far-right party opens convention

BERLIN (AP): The far-right Alternative for Germany opened a convention Saturday after a strong performance in the recent European election, as opponents held large-scale protests and some demonstrators tried to block roads or clashed with police.

Alternative for Germany, or AfD, took 15.9% of the vote to finish second in the European Parliament election on June 9, despite a series of scandals and setbacks in recent months. A particularly strong showing in the formerly communist east has bolstered its hopes of emerging as the strongest party in three state elections in that region in September. At the regular two-day convention in the western city of Essen, co-leaders Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla are expected to seek another term in office.

A heavy police presence was in place in the city, where local authorities had tried to find a way to prevent the AfD event but lost their case in court. Up to 100,000 people in total were expected at a string of counter-demonstrations and other events over the weekend, German news agency dpa reported. Some 5,000 people participated in a peaceful anti-AfD rave titled “Bass against Hatred,” police said. Early Saturday morning, a group of demonstrators tried to get through a barrier and was pushed back by police using pepper spray and batons.

There were also incidents in which masked demonstrators attacked officers, according to police, who reported “several” arrests. Protesters staged sit-ins on streets and crossings near the convention hall. Several AfD lawmakers said they had been picked up by police from their hotel and escorted to the venue, while other delegates were able to walk there without problems, dpa reported. Weidel told delegates as she opened the meeting that “what is going on out there has nothing to do with democracy” and vowed that “we are here and we will stay.”

Lawyer: Kenya protesters traumatised by abductions

NAIROBI (BBC): Anti-tax protesters in Kenya abducted over the last week as part of a crackdown have been left traumatised, lawyers say. It is estimated 35 people suspected of leading the demonstrations against the finance bill, which has since been dropped, were picked up in an operation reportedly orchestrated by an intelligence police unit.

Most of the abductees have since been released, though the Law Society of Kenya has told the BBC 10 activists are still missing. Government spokesman Isaac Mwaura defended the police’s actions, saying “criminal elements who wanted a coup d’etat” had tried to take advantage of the peaceful protests. Some described how their phones and laptops were confiscated and they endured horrific experiences in dark rooms.

“Most of them are visibly shaken and they do not want to talk,” Faith Odhiambo, the president of the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), told the BBC. The youth-led protests began last week, with thousands of demonstrators marching largely peacefully in the capital, Nairobi, and across the country against a controversial finance bill that would have increased taxes. But tensions flared sharply on Tuesday afternoon after police officers opened fire on protesters outside parliament which was breached by the crowds.

At least 23 protesters were killed in the violence on Tuesday, according to a doctors’ association. The next day, President William Ruto bowed to pressure and said he would withdraw the bill, passed by MPs. He also reaffirmed his electoral promise to end state-instigated abductions as a political tool amid the wave of disappearances.

His deputy, Rigathi Gachagua, blamed the police’s National Intelligence Service (NIS) for the abductions. On Wednesday, Mr Ruto said that all abducted individuals had been released but rights groups dispute this - and Ms Odhiambo said as the president spoke 12 people were still missing. “But two have [since] been located. One of them was yesterday found dumped in a tea plantation butt-naked,” she said. Many of those released had no physical injuries but had been left so traumatised that they did not want to speak about their experience, the LSK president said.

“Some were left in plantations outside Nairobi, while others were thrown on the roadsides and left really shaken.” Some said they now just wanted to go to their village homes as they do not feel safe in the city and others spoke about leaving the country altogether, she added. Most of them are below the age of 30 and had been plucked from the streets or their homes by plain-clothed gunmen believed to be police officers. Most had been vocal about the anti-tax protests on X Spaces, a feature that allows users to host live audio conversations with others on the platform formerly known as Twitter.

They said their abductors had asked them about their contribution to the protests and who was funding them. “Some of them were asked who was giving them the protest ideas,” Ms Odhiambo said. George Diano, one of the first abductees, in a post on X detailed some of the trauma he had undergone and asked people to pray for those who were still missing.

“It’s never easy at the hands of those bloody animals. Many won’t talk but they really do you dirt,” Mr

Diano said. Austin Omondi, a doctor popularly known as Ja Prado on social media, who had been organising blood donations for those injured during the protests, was also abducted. He was held for six hours and later released after doctors threatened to strike. Davji Atallah, the secretary general of the Kenya Medical Practitioners Pharmacists Dentists Union, told the BBC’s Newsday programme.

“He has not talked since he came from custody because he was given threats against his life if he disclosed what took place when he was kidnapped,” Mr Atallah said. The state-funded Kenya National Human Rights Commission said it had helped secure the release of more than 300 people who had been “illegally detained”. It is thought this refers to people arrested while demonstrating. Chief Justice Martha Koome has condemned the abductions, saying they amounted to a direct assault on the rule of law. Earlier, the High Court approved the use of military force to restore order given how police were overwhelmed during the protests.

A judge said that the military deployment was critical to protect government installations but gave the authorities two days to clarify how long the deployment would last, along with its rules of engagement. Mr Mwaura told the BBC the withdrawal of the finance bill was a “huge blow to the government as it left a ‘big hole’ in the budget. “It is really a big setback,” Mr Mwaura said, blaming “misinformed” Kenyans for opposing it. “There was a very well choreographed campaign, both locally and internationally, to misinform and disinform people so that they can create a revolt.”

Preliminary election results show Mongolian People’s Party in lead

MONGOLIA: The governing Mongolian People’s Party retained a slim majority in the country’s parliament with the opposition Democratic Party making major gains, according to preliminary results reported.

Mongolia’s Prime Minister Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene declared early victory in parliamentary elections dominated by deepening public anger over corruption and the state of the economy. The prime minister told a news conference in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, his governing party won a majority in the 126-seat body. “According to the pre-results, the Mongolian People’s Party [MPP] has 68 to 70 seats,” he said.

With 99 percent of the vote counted, tallies by Mongolian media indicate the opposition Democratic Party won about

40 seats – a big jump from 2020. The results indicate opposition parties have been able to capitalise on voter discontent and eat into the governing party’s majority. “Through this election, people gave their evaluation on the past policy mistakes of the ruling party,” said Democratic Party leader Gantumur Luvsannym. The MPP is the successor to the communist party that ruled Mongolia with an iron grip for almost 70 years. It remains popular – particularly among rural, older voters – and commands a sprawling, nationwide campaign apparatus. Meanwhile, results tallied by local media outlet Ikon showed the minor anticorruption HUN party won eight seats. The votes will be counted by hand on Saturday to ensure accuracy, after which an official result is expected.

People across the vast, sparsely populated nation of 3.4 million, sandwiched between China and Russia, voted to elect 126 members of the State Great Khural. The streets of Ulaanbaatar, home to almost half of Mongolia’s population, were decked out with colourful campaign posters touting candidates from across the political spectrum, from populist businessmen to nationalists, environmentalists and socialists.

Long lines snaked around corridors at a polling station in a school in downtown Ulaanbaatar, with many voters wearing traditional clothing. Tsagaantsooj Dulamsuren, a 36-year-old cashier pregnant with her fourth child, said the election offered her a chance to “give power to the candidates” she really wanted to support. — Al Jazeera

Mauritanians vote in presidential election with incumbent expected to win

NOUAKCHOTT: Mauritania is voting in a presidential election with incumbent Mohamed Ould Ghazouani seeking a second term as he takes on six challengers in the West African desert nation. About two million people are registered to vote on Saturday in the country of 4.5 million.

Ghazouani, 67, a former soldier, has promised to accelerate investments to spur a commodities boom and more economic growth with many living in poverty despite Mauritania’s fossil fuel and minerals wealth. Elected for a first term in 2019, Ghazouani is widely expected to win due to the dominance of the governing El Insaf or Equity Party.

His opponents include antislavery activist Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, who came second in 2019 with more than 18 percent of the vote; lawyer El Id Mohameden M’Bareck and neuro-

surgeon Outouma Antoine Souleimane Soumare. Also in the race are economist Mohamed Lemine El Morteji El Wafi; Mamadou Bocar Ba of the Alliance for Justice and Democracy movement that represents mostly Black Mauritania; and Hamadi Sidi Mokhtar Mohamed Abdi of the conservative Tawassoul Party, the main opposition with the largest number of parliamentary seats after El Insaf.

If re-elected, Ghazouani has promised a gas-fired power plant from the Greater Tortue Ahmeyim (GTA) offshore project, which is on track to start production by the end of the year. He also pledged to invest in renewable energy and expand gold, uranium and iron ore mining. Ghazouani has presided over a period of relative stability since 2019, as Mauritania’s Sahel neighbours, including Mali, struggle with violence with the rise of armed

groups that have led to military coups.

Mauritania has not recorded an attack on its soil in recent years and Ghazouani, who currently chairs the African Union, has promised to manage threats from such groups. Prominent activist Abeid is challenging Ghazouani on his human rights record and the marginalisation of Mauritania’s Black African population, while Abdi has a following among conservative and religious voters. There will be a run-off if no candidate receives more than 50 percent of the vote. One opposition supporter in the capital, Nouakchott, who spoke to the Reuters news agency on condition of anonymity thought Ghazouani might struggle to win outright “if the votes are conducted transparently”. In the last election, some opposition candidates questioned the credibility of the vote, prompting some small-scale protests. — Al Jazeera

Will pro-Palestine Brits sway the UK election?

LONDON: Tim Flynn, a 71-year-old retired psychotherapist, has voted for the Labour Party all his life. But on July 4, he plans to protest against the party, with a pencil. He will mark a cross on his ballot paper next to his local Green Party candidate.

“There’s no way I can vote Labour this time,” he said. “It’s clear where [Labour leader Keir Starmer’s] politics lie. His politics lie with capitalism, with imperialism, with supporting Israel. “If you don’t vote for a ceasefire, you’ve lost my vote.” Flynn’s London constituency, Vauxhall and Camberwell Green, is a safe Labour seat. And nationally, Starmer is widely expected to win the general election with a significant majority after 14 years of Conservative rule, making him Britain’s next prime minister.

But his position on the war in Gaza has left many traditional Labour voters, like Flynn, feeling let down. Starmer voted against a motion demanding an immediate ceasefire in November. Only last week, during a radio interview as the death toll in Gaza mounted towards 38,000 people, Starmer said he would not “pronounce that something is either genocide or not” as he reaffirmed Israel’s “right to self-defence”. The Labour leader also said that every country including Israel “has to be properly held to account in the court of international law” and promised to review legal advice on arms sales to Israel as prime minister.

But that pledge is unlikely to dissuade voters like Flynn from giving up on the party. Flynn is regularly “locked

into” coverage of Gaza and the occupied West Bank. When remembering footage of a child running away from Israeli forces in the West Bank, he choked up with emotion. “They shot him in the back of his head ... I have a grandson who’s nine, to think of him being shot in the back of the head. Yeah, and they get away with it.” While that sentiment is expected to cost Labour some support, how much it will damage the party is unclear.

There are four main options for pro-Palestine Britons who feel neither Labour nor the Conservatives represent their views – to abstain or spoil the ballot, to back an independent candidate running on a pro-Palestine platform, to vote for the Liberal Democrats, or, like Flynn, to give a nod to the Greens even though they are forecast to win less than 10 percent. The Green Party says it backs an immediate ceasefire – something most Britons desire – and wants to end arms sales to Israel. The Greens also say they want to “redouble efforts” for the release of Israeli captives from Gaza, and support South Africa’s genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice. The Liberal Democrats have supported a ceasefire for months, called for the captives to be freed and want to deliver a path towards a two-state solution.

A recent YouGov report suggested Labour is losing some voters in areas home to many Muslims, “in particular to the Greens”, but the impact of this trend is unlikely to affect the result. “Whether or not any Labour MP is going to lose their seat is perhaps rather

more doubtful, because those seats are pretty safe in the first place,” political scientist and polling guru John Curtice told Al Jazeera. But Britain’s foreign policy has affected voting patterns in at least one previous election.

In 2005, during the Iraq war, Labour lost ground “quite heavily amongst areas with substantial Muslim communities”, said Curtice. Ultimately, Labour won while the Liberal Democrats made modest gains. They “opposed the Iraq war and picked up a lot of that vote”, said Curtice. “This is not the first time that there has been a bridge between some people at least in the Muslim community and the willingness to vote for Labour.”

The sense of discontent over Britain’s unwavering support of Israel, regardless of which party is in power, has reached university campuses in a series of protests inspired by the United States movement. As dozens of students at the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE) called out for a “free, free Palestine”, accompanied by the beats of a traditional drum, a moment of tension interrupted their rhythm. “Am Yisrael Chai!” a bystander shouted in their direction, a slogan meaning, “The people of Israel live.”

But gathered in the searing afternoon heat, they continued unfazed to demand the university cuts financial ties with Israel, many masking their faces with a keffiyeh. One took to a megaphone to recite Quranic verses and recalled some of the most tragic moments that have afflicted Gaza, such as the killing of six-year-old Hind Rajab. A pair of women

up next demanded “azaadi”, a Kashmiri chant for “freedom” that is now a motif of global pro-Palestine student-led encampments. As they occupied a square outside a campus building, university security workers watched on with scepticism. One accused the students of being “violent”. Voices were raised during disagreements, but Al Jazeera did not observe any physical clashes.

The febrile atmosphere eased a little at lunchtime, when a student unveiled a giant plate of maqlouba, an upside-down meat and rice dish that is popular in Palestine. Sadia Sheeraz, a 24-year-old LSE master’s student, said she hails from a “working-class” family in the northern city of Manchester that has always voted Labour. “I couldn’t in good conscience vote for Labour in the upcoming election,” she said. “I’m still undecided as to whether I will vote or not, because I’m losing faith in the electoral system. But if I do vote, I probably would vote for the Green Party.”

Labour and the Conservatives are “so morally close to each other” on the “genocide committed by Israel”, she said, adding that she had hoped Starmer, a former barrister, would be able to assess the conflict “for what it is”. “It just really makes me question not only his leadership and his authority, but also just his intellectual capacity.” A 20-year-old undergraduate LSE student, who requested anonymity, said she was backing the Green Party.

Her London constituency, Brentford and Isleworth, has been held by Labour’s Ruth Cadbury since 2015.

Cadbury, who abstained from the November motion, is expected to easily keep her seat. The student said she has emailed Cadbury several times, pleading with her to call for an immediate ceasefire. “There are a lot of Muslims in my constituency, and we all want a ceasefire in Palestine. We’ve all been emailing our MP and saying, ‘Represent what your constituents want’. But she didn’t.” Imagining Starmer as a prime minister, she said, “I’d hope he calls for a ceasefire. I hope he stops arms sales to Israel from the UK. But I don’t think we’re that hopeful. A lot of my generation, and a lot of Muslims as well in general, are turning towards the Greens because [Starmer] said that Israel has a right to defend itself, which is an abhorrent thing to say” amid the suffering in Gaza.

Many of Britain’s four million Muslims, who make up about 6.5 percent of the population, have joined weekly street protests in solidarity with Gaza and boycott movements against Israel since October 7, when the historic Israel-Palestine conflict escalated after Hamas’s incursion into southern Israel. More than 1,100 people were killed and about 250 people were taken captive during the assault led by the group that governs Gaza. With a stated aim of crushing Hamas, Israel retaliated with its deadliest war by far on the Strip.

But not all Muslims think alike, warned Shabna Begum, head of the Runnymede Trust race equality think tank. “We need to be careful not to think about Muslims as a bloc vote, as a monolith community,” she said. “Yes,

Muslim people have clearly come out in support of the Palestinian people ... but the war in Gaza is not the only issue Muslim people across the country care about, and neither can we assume that such a diverse community of people will share the same perspectives on those other issues which matter to them.” She explained that “working-class Muslim people” expect politicians to address the cost of living, access to decent and affordable housing, and healthcare.

“Political parties, across the spectrum, who do not speak convincingly to these issues can’t take for granted the so-called ‘Muslim vote’ on July 4,” said Begum. A stone’s throw from the LSE protest, Luqmaan Waqar, a doctoral student at King’s College London, said he has voted for Labour in previous elections but left the party as a member in 2020. The rise of “principled” independent candidates gives him hope, he said, since several are running on a pro-Palestine campaign and because they symbolise a gentle push towards greater political pluralism. He had briefly considered running himself but now invests his spare time in canvassing for Leanne Mohamed, a British Palestinian candidate trying to unseat Labour’s Wes Streeting in Ilford, in East London. In his nearby constituency, he will vote for Faiza Shaheen, but only because she is now running as an independent candidate having been blocked by Labour from standing with the party; Labour officials accused Shaheen of liking posts on X that downplayed anti-Semitism accusations. — Al Jazeera

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Two cheers for identity politics

CRITICS of identity politics argue that close attention to matters of race, gender and sexuality distracts from “real” politics — by which they typically mean the struggle between labor and capital over the distribution of material resources. But that view of politics assumes that class identity is an objective fact — a sociological datum or index to be read off a chart. In fact, class identity can be known only through its embodiment in words and deeds. It is just as subjective or performative as, say, gender has come to be understood in queer theory.

Allow me, then, to defend identity politics by challenging the three assumptions that its critics make. First, they take for granted that any departure from the universalism of The enlightenment is a threat to the idea of equality and human rights as well. Second, they believe that identity politics are essentialist: Social roles are assigned according to social origins, foreclosing the achievement of a chosen individuality.

Lastly, they assume that class position comes first, because, at least under capitalism, it includes and describes a greater proportion of social life. This enables people to make common cause across lines of race, ethnicity, gender and nationality. I make no argument on behalf of the linguistic protocols now shaping the cultures of companies, universities and schools in the United States and elsewhere. To my mind, the policing of language, cancel culture and similar pathologies are vestigial extremes of the kind that flourish when new ideas about individuality and new ways of conducting politics are being invented.

Both the individual and their relation to the state were redefined by the advent of market societies. Toward the end of that transition, in the late 18th century, The enlightenment’s “man of reason” was no longer understood as a product of virtuous citizenship or of religion. That person, instead, was the product of natural rights embodied as a human being, and which, in theory, could be asserted in civil society apart from and even against the state. I use the male pronoun advisedly. The “man of reason” who emerged from The enlightenment as the standard of individuality and the representative of humanity was not a woman, and he was not from Africa (or indigenous to any other continent colonized by European states between 1400 and 1800).

These “natural” exclusions held until the 20th century, when movements for socialism, women’s suffrage, civil rights and decolonization broadened the scope of equality and extended the reach of liberty. The more inclusive concept of humanity (and thus democracy) that these movements embodied had to overcome the opposition of liberals (with their defense of modern possessive individualism as epitomized by the self-made man) and reactionaries alike.

So much for The enlightenment’s universalism. As leaders of African American and Pan-African movements in the late-19th and 20th centuries understood, their constituencies were not interested in conforming to the norms of white European culture. Racial solidarity was not merely imposed on them by circumstances of birth, the natural sciences or apartheid regimes; it was something they could choose as a means to liberate their people. In the U.S., at any rate, it enabled the articulation of the “black aesthetic,” which, since the 1890s, has animated American cultural innovation by drawing, crossing, erasing and reinscribing the color line.

Likewise for the essentialism that purportedly regulates identity. Here, too, the identifications that seem so scandalous to liberals and reactionaries alike — for example, the riotous variety of gender roles and designations now available to young people — are determined by choice, not by circumstances of birth, the natural sciences or inherited social orders and moral regimes. And the new choices on hand are largely a function of the changes we associate with the coming of post-industrial society. How so? Until the 1920s, the relentless drive for profit under capitalism meant more and more waking hours were spent in wage labor devoted to the production of necessary goods like food, clothing and shelter. Since then, socially necessary labor — the hours it takes to reproduce the material groundwork of civilization as we know it — has shrunk dramatically.

In today’s advanced economies, services far out-strip manufacturing as a source of employment, discretionary consumer spending drives gross domestic product growth and profits sit idly in corporate coffers because they are not needed for investment in fixed capital that would increase productivity and output in goods’ production. As a result, the social salience and cultural significance of the class position produced by the capital-labor relation has receded. Many people, especially young people, have less reason to identify themselves with their occupation and more reasons to seek an identity and purpose beyond, or in addition to, what the workplace affords them.

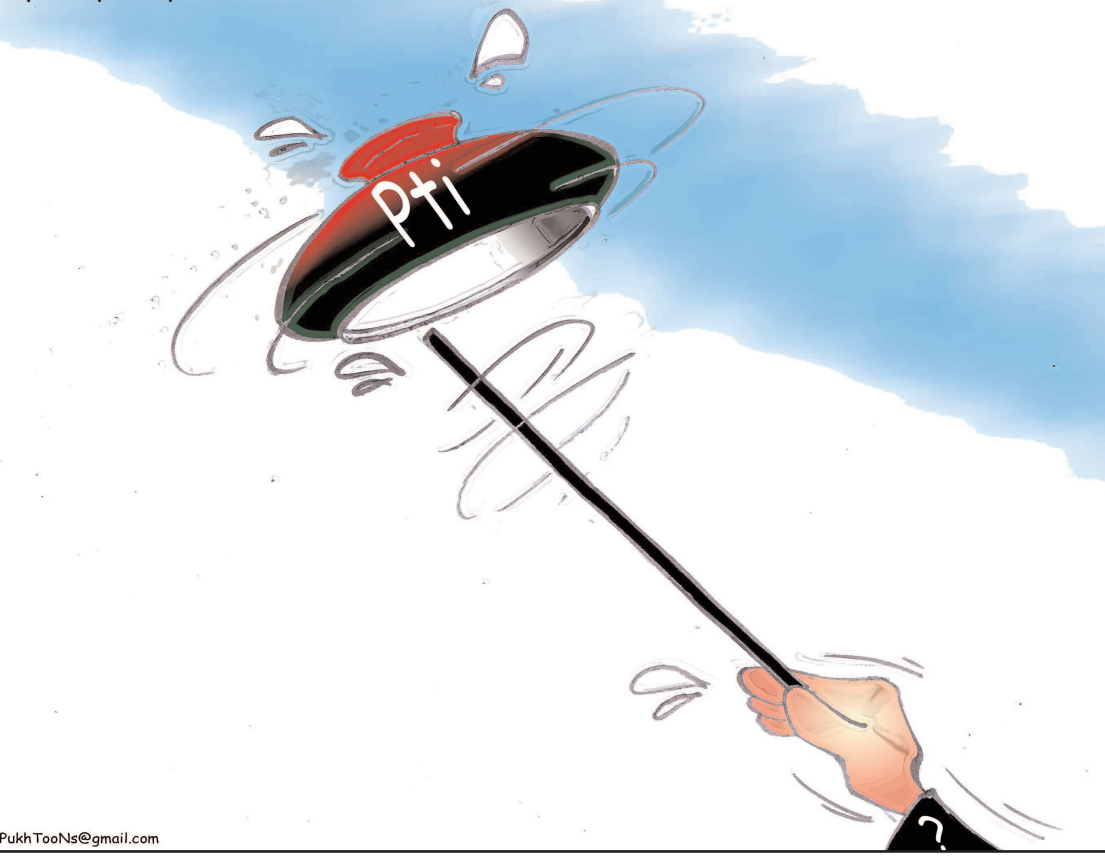
Meanwhile, the natural sciences have opened up medical means of embracing subject positions that are unbound by sexual origins. With the first such scientific breakthrough, the birth control pill, imagining female identities untethered from motherhood became routine, rather than a radical departure from social convention. And so the ontological priority of class in the political thinking of both the left and the right can be justified only by insisting on the definition of human nature specific to the Marxist tradition and the Protestant ethic, which posit labor as the “essence of Man.” In any case, like the other assumptions that inform the critique of identity politics, this one is not workable in imagining the future, for the simple reason that it ignores the past.

One might object that subject positions are merely symbolic goods that corporations and policymakers can peddle in place of substantive, distributive justice. But the legitimization of subject positions once deemed unnatural — a process carried out mainly by civil rights movements and statutes — has had measurable, material effects. Here, too, how we imagine the future must not ignore the past.

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Spin Spin Spin...!



It’s risky, but Biden needs to give way to someone who can beat Trump

Jonathan Freedland

WHAT was the worst moment? Perhaps when one especially rambling sentence of Joe Biden’s ended in a mumbled, confused declaration that “We finally beat Medicare”, as if he were the enemy of the very public service Democrats cherish and defend. Maybe it was when the president was not talking, but the camera showed him staring vacantly into space, his mouth slack and open? Or was it when he was talking, and out came a thin, reedy whisper of a voice, one that could not command the viewer’s attention, even when the words themselves made good sense?

For anyone who cares about the future of the United States and therefore, thanks to that country’s unmatched power, the future of the world, it was agonising to watch. You found yourself glancing ever more frequently at the clock, desperate for it to end, if only on humanitarian grounds: it seemed cruel to put a man of visible frailty through such an ordeal.

In that sense, the first — and, given what happened, probably last — TV debate between the current and former president confirmed the worst fears many Biden supporters have long harboured over his capacity to take on and defeat Donald Trump. For more than 90 excruciating minutes, every late-night gag about Biden’s age, every unkindly cut TikTok video depicting him as doddery and semi-senile, became real. There was no spinning it, despite White House efforts to blame a cold. Joe Biden delivered the worst presidential debate performance ever.

Expectations were rock bottom: all he had to do was turn up and show some vigour, reassure people that his marbles were all present and correct, and it would have been enough. The bar could scarcely have been lower. But Joe Biden could not clear it. And if the debate confirmed Biden’s limitations, it also served as a reminder of why those limitations matter. For one thing, Trump’s entire framing of this race is strong v

weak: he offers himself as a strongman, against an opponent too feeble to lead and protect the US in an increasingly dangerous world. Purely at the physical level of what people could see and hear on their TV screens, the Atlanta debate reinforced Trump’s frame.

But, no less important, Biden’s inability to deliver clear, intelligible statements meant Donald Trump’s lies went unchallenged. And there were so many, lie after lie after lie. Trump claimed Democrats favoured abortion at nine

against a conman” — but the weakness of the former is allowing the latter to prevail.

The simple fact that Trump spoke loudly and clearly and with, by his standards, relative self-discipline, coupled with the lack of interrogation from the moderators, granted him a plausibility he should have been denied. He is a failed coup leader, nationalist-populist menace and racist who would suck up to the world’s autocrats and throw Ukraine to Vladimir Putin’s wolves: he should be allowed nowhere near

As the former Obama administration official Van Jones put it after the debate, this is a contest of “an old man against a conman” — but the weakness of the former is allowing the latter to prevail.

months, even if that meant killing babies after birth. He claimed the real culprit for the 6 January storming of Capitol Hill was not him, but Democratic former House speaker Nancy Pelosi. He claimed it was he who had lowered the cost of insulin, when it was Biden who did that.

There were dozens more in that vein, an unceasing firehose of lies. But because CNN had made the baffling decision to have the hosts do nothing but read out scripted questions — never challenging any statement made by the candidates — it was left to Biden to hit back in real time. And he couldn’t do it. The post-match factcheckers stayed up into the early hours, attempting to set the record straight. But by then it was too late.

In that sense, the debate was the 2024 campaign in microcosm. Trump is a liar, convicted felon and would-be dictator who plotted to overturn a free and fair election so he could cling to power, but he is set to return to the Oval Office because his opponent is too weak to stop him. As the former Obama administration official Van Jones put it after the debate, this is a contest of “an old man

power. But because he was up against a man who could scarcely complete a sentence, he was presented as a legitimate option for the world’s highest office.

The expectation must now be that, if he faces Biden on 5 November, Trump will win. He was ahead in all of the battleground states even before the debate and there is now no clear further chance for a reset. Thursday night’s head-to-head was supposed to be that moment. Indeed, that is why the White House opted to have the debate so unusually early: to allay fears about the president’s age and to reframe the race not as a referendum on Biden, but as a choice. That gambit doubly failed, making a bad problem much worse.

So what now? Unfortunately, there is no letters-to-Graham-Brady mechanism in US politics, no equivalent to Westminster’s short, sharp defenestrations. Some imagine the likes of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama having a quiet word, but Biden is a proud and stubborn man who feels he was passed over too long, including by those two. Perhaps Democratic leaders in the House and Senate

could do it: given Biden’s decades-long attachment to Congress, he might listen to warnings that “down-ballot” candidates could suffer if he stays at the top of the ticket.

But ultimately this will have to be his decision. He won his party’s primaries earlier this year, all but unopposed; the Democratic party’s nomination is his, unless he gives it up. Some say the only person who could ever persuade him to do that is his wife, Jill. But after the debate, she loudly congratulated her husband, albeit in a manner that reinforced the sense of a man well past his prime. “Joe, you did such a great job!” she said. “You answered every question! You knew all the facts!”

Even those Democrats who concede Thursday was a calamity worry that a change now is fraught with risk. Biden could make way for his vice-president, but Kamala Harris is even less popular than he is — and Trump would relish mining the rich seams of sexism and racism that would open up. The party could throw it open to a contest fought out at its convention in August among the deep bench of next-generation Democratic talent — the Michigan governor, Gretchen Whitmer, her California counterpart, Gavin Newsom, and others — but that could be messy, bitter and rushed. None of the contenders has been tested under national lights, and Democrats would be turning their fire on each other when they need to be aiming at Trump.

One thing Democrats agree on: Joe Biden is a good and decent man who has been an unexpectedly consequential president. But communicating is a key part of governing, and Biden has all but lost that ability. For the past year or so, Democrats have crossed their fingers and hoped the evidence taking shape before their eyes might fade, not least because any other course of action entailed great risk. After this disaster of a debate, they can no longer deny that inaction, too, is a risk — and, given the perils of a second Trump presidency, surely the much graver one.

The Guardian

US must confront Israel over West Bank violence

Ray Hanania

IT is not just Israeli and Palestinian Lactions that are fueling the surge of violence in Gaza and the West Bank. It is also the conduct of American officials, who are failing to confront, challenge and stop the Israeli policies that are helping the violence spread.

America is Israel’s biggest political and financial supporter. Critics often call Israel “America’s 51st state,” a political expression that some pro-Israel activists describe as antisemitic. But, these days, everything that challenges the Israeli government’s violence is “antisemitic.” Who is going to speak out against the wave of violence that is spreading through Palestinian West Bank areas like Bethlehem, East Jerusalem and Ramallah and in predominantly Palestinian cities like Nazareth?

Those who have previously spoken out have found themselves punished when it comes to their reelection, with voting no longer decided by concerns over the economy, faltering education or rising domestic crime. The only concern seems to be a candidate’s views on Israel. Just this week, prominent African American congressman Jamaal Bowman lost his Democratic primary election to rival George Latimer, who received more than \$20 million in funding from pro-Israel political action committees.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee is bragging that all 224 candidates it backed with funding and political mailers won their primary races this election season. The price for this funding is that they support and not challenge Israel’s war against the Palestinians. That may be one reason why Secretary of State Antony Blinken last week posed for pictures with Yoav Gallant, the Israeli defense minister who the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has accused of war crimes in Gaza. This meeting sent a message of encouragement to Israel.

The Blinken-Gallant meeting also weakened the subsequent comments made on the growing violence by US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield. She told the UN Security Council that the world cannot “ignore the situation in the West Bank.” The world is not ignoring the Israeli violence in the West Bank — America is. Violence by armed Israeli settlers against Palestinian Christians and Muslims in the West Bank has been ongoing ever since the land was occupied in 1967. But violence surged in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, which took about 1,200 Israeli lives and provoked the punitive carnage on Gaza by Israel’s military, which has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians.

If the Biden administration wants the violence between Israelis and Palestinians to stop, or at

least slow down, it would help if it sent a consistent and strong message against all violence, not just that carried out against Israelis. Rather than trying to walk a political tightrope between the international rule of law and violence by Israel’s extremists, America should be speaking out just as strongly against Jewish settler attacks against Palestinians as it did against the Hamas violence of Oct. 7.

Both sides, Palestinians and Israelis, have engaged in violence. But there is one significant difference between the two that cannot be ignored. Israel is a powerful country with a formal military structure, accompanied by heavily armed militias of Jewish-only settlers, and it occupies and controls the Palestinians. Technically, the Palestinians have no independent government. They are controlled by Israel. Even before Oct. 7, Hamas was tightly encircled in the Gaza Strip by Israel’s military, creating what many described as an “open-air prison.”

While Israel responds quickly and overwhelmingly to any violence by Palestinians, its own military is often complicit in attacks by settlers. In the wake of Oct. 7, Israel sealed off the West Bank, imposed curfews and arrested and beat Palestinian civilians — men, women and children. There are thousands of Palestinians incarcerated without trial, making them hostages to Israel’s hypocritical government.

Israeli military units have launched waves of raids, killing hundreds in cities and villages in the oppressed West Bank, while giving armed Jewish settlers the freedom to roam and engage in assaults. According to the UN, more than 500 Palestinians, including 133 children, have been killed in the West Bank since Oct. 7. Another 5,000 civilians have been injured by Israeli army fire, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

While Thomas-Greenfield walked a fine political line, others at the UNSC meeting expressed greater alarm. The UK’s Barbara Woodward expressed “concern” and blamed the violence on the continuing growth of Jewish-only settlements, which “are illegal under international law.” If American politicians cannot stop pandering to political favoritism and start advocating for the fundamental principles of the international rule of law, the violence could spread beyond Gaza and the West Bank.

AIPAC has brought the conflict to America’s shores with its hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign donations, which ensure US public representatives favor Israel’s violent policies. What is stopping the violence from spreading further? The failure of America to stand by the rule of law and to be fair is fueling the violence in Gaza, the West Bank and wherever else it might soon spread.

Arab News

Debate refuels concerns over Biden’s health

Dalia Al-Aqidi

THE presidential debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump has left an indelible mark on the political landscape, stirring a mix of disappointment, shock, and concern. It was disheartening to witness the leader of the US struggling to articulate his thoughts clearly.

The debate’s agenda was broad, encompassing critical issues such as abortion rights, immigration policies, and international relations with Ukraine and the Middle East. From the outset, Biden’s performance was uneven. At 81, his halting speech and occasional raspy voice, attributed by his campaign to a cold, did little to inspire confidence and refueled existing concerns about his age and his ability to serve another term.

Trump himself is 78, and the debate brought to the forefront the age and health of both candidates. Never before have two contenders

for the White House been so old, which did not go unnoticed by the public. Biden’s struggle to deliver his points coherently contrasted sharply with Trump’s more aggressive and clear-cut approach, which was a focal point for viewers and pundits alike. Vice President Kamala Harris tried to mitigate the fallout by defending Biden’s performance. She acknowledged that her boss had a slow start but emphasized his strong finish, arguing that he demonstrated a clear commitment to substantive issues over stylistic concerns. Harris pointed to the president’s broader record in office as evidence of his capability and dedication to the American people.

However, the public’s reaction was swift and telling. A snap poll suggested that 67 percent of viewers believed Trump outperformed Biden, a significant shift from pre-debate expectations when only 55 percent believed Trump would

do better, and 57 percent expressed a lack of confidence in Biden’s ability to lead the country compared with 44 percent for Trump. These numbers reflect a stark reality: the debate shifted the focus from policy issues to concerns about Biden’s personal fitness for office.

The implications for the Democratic Party are profound. The debate has exacerbated internal tensions and brought to the surface the challenges of its candidate. There is no straightforward mechanism within the Democratic National Committee’s rules to replace an incumbent president on the ticket. Any move to replace Biden would require opening the nominating process at the convention, a scenario fraught with political risks and complexities.

Prominent Democrats are already feeling the pressure. Reports have emerged of

top Democrats urging Biden to reconsider his re-election bid; and many House Democrats are privately expressing the need for a new nominee. This internal discord is a testament to the deepening concerns about his ability to secure a second term. As the most obvious successor, Kamala Harris faces her own challenges. Her current approval rating of 38 percent raises questions about her viability as a candidate against Trump. This adds another layer of complexity to the Democrat dilemma. The party must navigate these turbulent waters carefully to avoid further detachment from its base and to present a unified front in the election.

Furthermore, it exposed a broader issue within American politics: the increasing emphasis on the age and health of candidates. This is not confined to Biden and Trump, but

reflects a growing trend in which voters scrutinize their leaders’ physical and mental fitness.

This shift in focus from policy to personal capability is a significant departure from traditional political evaluations and indicates a new era in voter expectations. Additionally, the role of the media in shaping public perception cannot be overlooked. Liberal-leaning media outlets have been critical of Biden’s performance, which has contributed to the growing unease within the Democrats. The media’s portrayal of the debate and its aftermath plays a crucial role in influencing public opinion and, ultimately, voter behavior. In light of these developments, the Democrats face a daunting task. Replacing Biden would involve complex logistical and political challenges. Opening the nominating process at the convention would be unprecedented and could

lead to a fractious and divisive outcome. The party must carefully weigh the risks and benefits to avoid destabilizing its electoral prospects.

Moving forward, the party’s strategy must be clear and compelling to reassure both its base and the broader electorate. The election is fast approaching, and the Democrats’ ability to present a robust and unified front will be crucial in determining the outcome. Convincing Biden to step aside would be daunting, but ensuring the party’s strength and unity heading into the election is necessary. By preparing thoroughly for a smooth transition and rallying behind a new candidate, the Democrats can bolster their already slim chance of maintaining control of the White House. The time for strategic action is now, and the stakes could not be higher.

Take it on trust, Britain’s politicians beg voters

“We’re not pitching you a new Netflix series,” intoned Labour’s shadow business secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, this week. “We’re not putting on politics as entertainment.” And certainly absolutely no one could accuse the extremely likely next government of that. The thing about a new Netflix series, of course, is that the streamer will want to have an absolutely nailed-down idea of how much it is going to cost and how it will be funded before it gets the green light. Weirdly, you have to do this if you are pitching Is It Cake?, but not if you are seeking to run the world’s sixth-largest economy. This means it’s possible that the thing the frontrunner party tells you is the manifesto is not actually a manifesto, but something else. Cake, maybe. Is it cake?

“We want to return to serious government,” Reynolds continued loftily, “to effective policy and to politics as public service, not as pantomime.” Right. One of the things we’ve heard for some time now is ordinary people saying they just want politics to be boring again – which is understandable, but always feels rather cargo-cultish. It is as though the fact that politics was boring back in the good times logically means that the good times can be restored by somehow making politics boring. I ... don’t think it works like that. Without wishing to unleash any spoilers for the season ahead, the UK faces huge and deepening problems – and anyone who tells you they can be fixed by “boring politics” is selling something.

A number of sales pitches are available. If populism is claiming there are simple answers to complex problems, then pretty much every manifesto offered this election is a populist one. For my money, the most ominous thing that happened this week was the underplayed Institute for Fiscal Studies slatdown of another Labour frontbencher, this time Nick Thomas-Symonds, who had told an interviewer: “We’ve also been open, always, that we may open the books and discover that the situation is even worse than it is at the moment.”

Ah, “the books”. Please not “the books”. Just as it was not accurate for Margaret Thatcher to pretend that the public finances were

entirely analogous to a housewife’s budget, so it is not accurate to try to flog people the idea that the United Kingdom is a small business the Labour party is apparently about to buy, sight unseen, while hoping it doesn’t find any nasty surprises in “the books”, or perhaps under “the bonnet”.

But listen, don’t take it from me. Take it from the IFS director, Paul

Labour and the Conservatives for claiming their manifesto policies could be funded by extremely “trivial” cuts to services or tax rises, when the reality is that they will require far more significant tax rises or cuts, likely both. One of these sins of omission is going to matter, and it isn’t the Conservative one.

During this campaign, no politi-

That really won’t wash ...” It was Johnson’s familiarity with the books, in fact, that led his organisation to issue rebukes to both Labour and the Conservatives for claiming their manifesto policies could be funded by extremely “trivial” cuts to services or tax rises, when the reality is that they will require far more significant tax rises or cuts, likely both. One of these sins of omission is going to matter, and it isn’t the Conservative one. During this campaign, no politician has said the plain fact: this country will soon not be able to afford even its current “lifestyle” (if I may deploy some mirthless air quotes), let alone the one to which Labour rightly aspires. The received wisdom is that Theresa May once told the truth during a campaign – justifying what was immediately branded her “dementia tax” – and tanked the election. It was, as always, more complicated than that, but it still passed immediately into strategy folklore. The British people’s appetite for fantasy was again held to be insatiable, and without any side effects. As they draw to a close, then, the past 14 years of Conservative government can be characterised as an era where evasion as a presentational device became evasion as a policy position. Successive governments simply haven’t told the hard truths or done the hard work the country has needed. Nothing big has been done, except in the endless rabbit holes of constitutional politics the Conservatives have led us down. And those big things have only made matters worse. Meanwhile, during that same period, there has also been just the vaguest sense that British people don’t like politicians lying to them. Lying is one of those things that undermines trust across the board, not just in the team that’s doing it. It was the same with Partygate, with MPs’ expenses and with the current election gambling scandal. Going further back, it was the same with the Iraq war. These things undermine trust in ALL politicians, and by extension in the democratic process, and if that’s unfair because one side was worse than the others, then feel free to go house to house explaining to normal people that they’re looking at it all wrong. In the end, Keir Starmer’s Labour is asking an electorate whose trust in politicians is already the lowest it has ever been to take something on trust. And even his detractors should wish him luck and hope things can only get better – the country deserves it. Reality being what it is, though, people may come to resent the deliberate evasions of the would-be government sooner rather than later. Maybe the moment of reckoning can be covered up, or put off by some more evasions – “the books”. But if that fails, and the next government is left having to explain reality to an even less trusting electorate, then what can it say? Sorry, but ours were the good type of untruths? Let’s hope the public will understand, or the transfer of power will simply be a transfer of anger.

Johnson. “Oh dear, oh dear,” he responded to Thomas-Symonds’s comment. “The old ‘we may open the books and discover the situation is even worse ...’ The books are wide open, fully transparent. That really won’t wash ...” It was Johnson’s familiarity with the books, in fact, that led his organisation to issue rebukes to both

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The received wisdom is that Theresa May once told the truth during a campaign – justifying what was immediately branded her

President Macron’s strategic dissolution of the National Assembly, which gave the far right a very real chance at obtaining power, inadvertently ignited a flame within the left. Immediately, left-wing activists from various factions started calling for a united front. We all knew this was a big ask – after all, the theory of “irreconcilable lefts” is still alive and well. But within days, the Greens, Socialists, Communists and France Unbowed negotiated and agreed on constituencies, ensuring a single left unity candidate in each legislative race rather than splitting the vote, as well as on a detailed “legislative contract” to govern.

This new broadchurch electoral alliance, supported by social democrats like former President Francois Hollande as well as outspoken anticapitalists like former presidential candidate Philippe Poutou, is a refreshing development that may actually trigger a left-wing resurgence.

Its name, the New Popular Front, is a nod to the Popular Front (Front populaire) that won the 1936 parliamentary elections. The similarities between the two left-wing groups, formed nearly a century apart, are significant. Back then, as now, the left faced rising fascist forces. Yet, through unity and determination, they secured groundbreaking social reforms: paid annual leave, a 40-hour work-

week and more. Today’s New Popular Front aims for a similar transformation with a “programme of rupture” from the Macron era, with a plan to spend 150 billion euros (\$161bn) by 2027 and raise an equivalent amount to support public services, accelerate the green transition, and help families struggling with the cost of living.

The new alliance is not just a coalition of parties but a movement supported by unions, civil society, and ordinary citizens. And it has triggered an unprecedented wave of grassroots mobilisation. The stakes are incredibly high, and people have recognised the gravity of the situation. The record number of French citizens living abroad who participated in online voting underscore this widespread realisation. In every neighbourhood, in every community, people are coming together to campaign, to vote, and to emphasise the historic gravity of this moment. It is a groundswell of activism that is as inspiring as it is necessary.

This surge of activism is driven by the belief that the left is strong, confident and united – but also by the concern of what might happen if the far right prevails. People are genuinely afraid of a far right victory unleashing a new wave of racist violence. Centrists and right-wingers claim there’s an equivalence between the New Popular Front and the National Rally. But

of course, if the left wins, minorities wouldn’t have to fear for their safety. The same cannot be said in case of a National Rally victory.

Alice Diop, an acclaimed French filmmaker raised in the Paris suburbs by parents who immigrated from Senegal in the 1960s, have expressed this concern the best. “The far right in power isn’t merely unsettling morally; it’s a genuine fear,” she said. “For people like me, it’s a matter of life or death.”

We’ve already had a preview of the violence that could erupt if the far right triumphs, with left wing activists facing unprecedented hostility, vitriol and even physical attacks during the short campaign period. Just last week, a Green activist carrying leaflets filed an official complaint with the police after being assaulted by two individuals who identified as National Rally supporters.

France is facing a very real threat from the far right, but the Left has stepped up to the task, united behind a positive message, and provided the French people with a credible, hopeful alternative. “Nobody thought we could do it, and we still did it,” Tondelier’s words resonate deeply because they capture a collective sentiment. It’s not just about political strategy; it’s about survival and dignity, a battle for the soul of our country. It’s a powerful antidote to the despair and fear that the far right thrives on. — Aljazeera

Beware criminalisation of environmental protest

Nick Rodway

IN February, as the Australian summer drew to a close, environmental activist Ali Alishah walked into the Styx Valley in Tasmania, Australia’s southernmost state. Alongside him was Bob Brown, former leader of the Australian Greens in the federal parliament and chair of the environmental organisation Bob Brown Foundation (BBF).

An island sitting in the wilds of the Southern Ocean, Tasmania is globally renowned for its environmental values: one-fifth of its landmass is recognised by UNESCO as a Wilderness World Heritage Area. And yet, even amongst all this natural splendour, the Styx Valley, is – as the name suggests – almost mythological. Towering through the valley are some of the best-known stands of swamp ash (Eucalyptus regnans), the tallest flowering plant in the world.

In the part of the Styx where Alishah and Brown found themselves, however, the rumble of logging trucks echoed through the trees. An area of the valley, less than a quarter of a mile from the Wilderness World Heritage Area and which included an old-growth forest, was being cut down by native forestry contractors.

After conducting a non-violent protest, Alishah and Brown were arrested and charged with trespass in an area set aside for forestry operations. While Brown is due to face court in July, Alishah was held in remand and then sentenced to three months in prison, one of the most significant convictions for environmental protest in Australia this century.

The case of the Styx Valley protest has thrust Brown and the BBF into the spotlight and ignited discussion across Australia about the rights of protesters and of freedom of expression through activism. Notably, it has raised questions about the legitimacy of a suite of anti-protest laws which have been enacted across the country in recent years. The laws, which have been passed in the majority of Australian states, have drawn international scrutiny. For example, global NGO, Human Rights Watch, found last year that the state of New South Wales is “disproportionately” targeting climate protesters, “punishing them with hefty fines and up to two years prison for protesting without permission”.

Similarly, in the state of South Australia, legislation passed in 2023 increased the penalty for “obstructing a public place” from \$500 (752 Australian dollars) to a maximum of \$33,000 (50,000 Australian dollars). This led the Environmental

Defenders Office to declare that the “intention of the law is to punish only a small section of society for their actions – climate protesters”.

However, it is Tasmania, where the BBF chiefly operates, where legislation has reached beyond the individual in order to prosecute organisations. In 2022, legislation was put to the state parliament that would see penalties increased for protesters who obstructed business activities. “Body corporates” who supported protesters would be subject to fines of over \$66,000 (99,000 Australian dollars), enough to potentially bankrupt nonprofit organisations.

While the state government labelled protesters “radical extremists” who “invade workplaces and endanger employees”, its proposed bill faced scrutiny and resistance: The legislation was eventually passed, albeit with significant amendments. Those organisations that support environmental protest now face fines of more than \$30,000 (45,000 Australian dollars), less than half of what was originally proposed.

But if the state government had hoped that this bill would deter activism, it seems that it has had the opposite effect. Instead of backing down due to the severity of financial consequences, environmental organisations across Australia have been galvanised to further challenge the legitimacy of the laws. Leading this is Brown and the BBF. Brown won a landmark case in 2017 in Australia’s High Court which related to an earlier version of Tasmania’s anti-protest laws. The presiding magistrate found that the legislation “directly targeted implied freedom of expression” and was therefore unconstitutional.

Last month, on May 17, Alishah was released after serving his prison sentence for the Styx Valley protest. He immediately issued a statement, saying that the “useless and draconian” legislation that had resulted in his conviction had had the “opposite effect” of what it sought to do, which was “to deter people from standing up for the protection of Tasmania’s forest estate”.

“I can categorically state that anti-protest laws do not work because it is an honour, in fact, a duty, to stand up and protect our native heritage,” Alishah said. As the debate around the right to protest is being fought out in Australia’s judicial system, a key question has not received the scrutiny it deserves: As native forests are receiving greater protections in many countries around the world, why are

they being cut down in Australia?

The answer, it appears, is for not a lot at all. In fact, the numbers show that the native forestry industry is, in any respect, struggling to stay afloat. Native forestry differs from plantation timber in that plantation forests are vast monocultures of a particular species; native forests are ecologically diverse. Currently, almost 90 percent of timber in Australia comes from plantations. The market’s move away from native forestry products to plantation has been so extreme that it has led the states of Western Australia and Victoria to abandon their respective forestry industries, citing a lack of economic viability.

In Tasmania, the story is the same. Research collated last year by public policy think tank The Australia Institute found that forestry jobs – in both plantation and native forests – make up less than 1 percent of jobs across the state. Moreover, the figures put forward by The Australia Institute outline that the Tasmanian state government has been subsidising the industry for decades. In essence, what these figures reveal is that Tasmanians are in fact paying, through their tax money, to have their forests cut down.

This includes habitats which house critically endangered species. Perhaps the most famous of these is the swift parrot (Lathamus discolor) the fastest parrot in the world. These birds, endemic to southeastern Australia, require the native forests of Tasmania to nest and breed, areas of which are currently earmarked to be logged. In March, a team from The Australian National University found that the population size of the species is “declining in large part due to logging of their Tasmanian breeding habitat”. The researchers declared that swift parrots “will go extinct unless we urgently change how we manage Tasmania’s forests”.

Despite these concerns, the incumbent Tasmanian government has committed to opening up areas of protected reserves to logging, with the state forestry minister, Felix Ellis, advising that he was committed to the industry and was “not going to be blackmailed by environmentalists”. With the Tasmanian government declaring its commitment to forestry and activists refusing to back down, the only certainty, it seems, is that environmental protest legislation will continue to be enacted and challenged across the island. The other Australian states, with the legitimacy of their own laws also in question, will be watching intently.

US targets Chinese tech to lay its ghosts to rest

Harvey Dzodin

FOR years Huawei has been facing accusations from the West that its products have “backdoors” that allow the company to obtain data that flow on the networks they build and maintain, and give China access to telecom networks globally.

Among others, British intelligence officials have tried to find Huawei’s backdoors. But since the backdoors are a figment of the West’s imagination, they came up empty handed. Despite their failure, however, they have continued to allege Huawei’s backdoors harm the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries. None of them could do better, however, than making baseless accusations that theoretically there “could” or “might” be such backdoors. Such paranoid accusations have cost the countries that have opted to replace perfectly functioning Huawei components with often inferior Western products at least \$1 billion each.

Incidentally, the Western products have their own backdoors open to Western intelligence. Huawei itself had to quickly replace up to 4,000 components at the cost of \$2 billion to comply with Western sanctions. What an efficient twofor. They inflicted huge damage on Huawei, a global leader in digital communications technology, almost killing it, while getting Huawei’s components replaced with inferior Western ones.

A recent article in The Intercept, a left-leaning reader-supported news website, said that no Western intelligence has

proved that such backdoors exist in Huawei devices or have been used by the company. Now, TikTok, the target du jour, is about to be banned in the US because of its foreign ownership. TikTok has about 150 million users in the US, some of whom depend on it for their livelihood. The threat to ban TikTok would enable the sale of this proven money-maker new media to US buyers. Not surprisingly, several associates of former US president Donald Trump, including former Treasury secretary Steve Mnuchin, like vultures around a carcass, are moving in for the rich kill.

On Thursday, however, a dozen social and racial justice groups expressed concerns that the federal initiative to mandate a sale or ban of TikTok could stifle speech within minority communities. They argued that such actions would disrupt a vital platform that many rely on to forge online connections and champion various causes. US-style democracy is truly amazing — it’s a case of “from each according to his need, to each according to his greed”.

The purported threat of TikTok to US national security has turned into an anti-China campaign, but the official record tells a different story. US intelligence has produced no evidence that the popular short-form video hosting platform has ever coordinated with Chinese authorities. But this fact hasn’t stopped many in the US Congress and even President Joe Biden from touting legislation that

would force the sale of TikTok.

In interviews and testimonies to Congress about TikTok, top officials of the FBI, CIA and other US intelligence agencies have qualified the national security threat posed by TikTok as purely hypothetical, because with access to much of the government’s most sensitive intelligence, they are well placed to know.

The basic charge is that TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, a Chinese company, could be compelled by the Chinese government to use the platform in targeted operations to manipulate public opinion, collect data on US citizens, and even spy on individual users. TikTok has categorically denied ever having shared US users’ data with the Chinese government, and emphasized that it would not do so even if asked.

Although top US security officials seem happy to echo the allegations of the Chinese government’s control of TikTok, they stop short of saying that the company has actually coordinated with the Chinese government. Recently, Reuters reported that as president, Donald Trump signed a covert action order authorizing the CIA to use social media to influence and manipulate domestic Chinese public opinion and views on China. Other covert US cyber influence programs are known to exist with regard to Russia, Iran, other foreign actors, and terrorist groups. In other words, the US is the one to watch out for.

The China Daily

Europe’s future now lies with France

Joshcka Fischer

ALTHOUGH the EU’s 27 member states are formally equal, the reality is that there are huge differences between them. The two largest and most economically important, Germany and France, are also two of the EU’s founding members. Their disproportionate political influence within the bloc cannot be denied.

Before the two came together in the 1950s, as part of the European Coal and Steel Community, their long-standing enmity had torn Europe apart through countless wars. With Germany’s total defeat and partition in 1945, West Germany — under US protection — and France had a chance to reconcile and lay the foundation for a lasting peace.

The 1957 Treaty of Rome not only helped to accelerate the reconstruction of war-torn Western Europe, it also established a new (Western) European political order. By permanently integrating West Germany and France, it finally eliminated the traditional source of major European wars. It is no exaggeration to say that the reconciliation of these two traditional enemies after the Second World

War is the reason the EU exists today. But it was not always smooth sailing. In 1954, an early attempt to establish a European Defense Community was derailed when the French National Assembly rejected the idea. Similarly, in 2005, the French (along with the Dutch) shot down an effort to create a Constitution for Europe.

Now, the French far right, after finishing first in this year’s European Parliament election, led French President Emmanuel Macron to dissolve parliament and call a snap election. Once again, the future of the EU hinges on the question: What do the French want? This question has returned at an especially inauspicious moment: Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has brought war back to Europe and former US President Donald Trump currently looks well positioned to return to the White House next January. If Marine Le Pen’s National Rally wins the French election, and Trump wins in November, what will become of Europe? Would the European project be able to survive such a con-

fluence of forces?

France, after all, is indispensable to that project. If either it or Germany ever broke away from it, the show would be over. To be sure, the EU has 25 other member states, and all of them are important — some more so, and some less. But Europe can live with an Italian government led by a party with neo-fascist roots. If the French far right secures a majority in this summer’s election and Le Pen goes on to win the presidential election in 2027, that would be a totally different matter. The rise of a neonationalist government and chief executive in France would threaten the very fabric of the union. Europe’s other like-minded leaders, such as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, would feel even more emboldened to stand in the way of EU policy-making. Worse, this would be happening just when the EU needs to strengthen itself in the face of a broader geopolitical and technological realignment.

While France has always been susceptible to nationalist narratives, Germany — owing to its history — has long been immunized



Minister direct PSQCA to check urea product

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain Saturday directed the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority to check value-added urea products of fertilizer companies to ensure the quality of the commodity across the country.

The minister chaired a meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee, which discussed issues related to the availability and pricing of urea fertilizer in the country.

Dr. Mussadiq Malik,

Minister of Energy, Petroleum Division also attended the meeting whereas, CEOs of FFCL, Engro Corporation, Agritech and Fatima Fertilizer Corporation participated in the meeting, said a press release.

Rana Tanveer Hussain also directed the introduction of toll-free numbers to receive complaints against price increases and to facilitate the growers across the country by providing them all agriculture inputs on sustainable rates.

The minister further said that the estimated availability of Urea during the

Kharif season 2024 was recorded at 3,394 thousand tons, while the total consumption of urea during the Kharif season is expected to be around 3,156 thousand tons.

He noted that there was sufficient stock of Urea fertilizer available in the country for the Kharif season and stressed the need to ensure an uninterrupted supply of the commodity at affordable prices during the season.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that all manufacturing units will operate at full capacity to meet local

demand.

He said that fertilizer companies will implement a uniform pricing mechanism across the country from the next season and emphasized that retail prices should be uniform across the the country.

The minister further said that provincial governments and companies will monitor Urea prices and dealers to ensure a smooth supply of the commodity to farmers of the country.

The minister warned that the dealers who charge higher prices than the retail price will be blacklisted.

Speakers emphasize on compliance of environmental laws

F.P. Report

KARACHI: "Textile and leather sectors being the biggest contributors to Pakistan's economy are striving to comply with international environmental standards to remain competitive in the international market." This was shared by the speakers during the media briefing session organized by WWF-Pakistan under its International Labour and Environmental Standards Application in Pakistan's SMEs (ILES) project at a local hotel in Karachi. This 8-year project (2017-2024) supported by European Union (EU) is implemented at Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Hub and industrial areas in KPK. This project aims to support the enforcement, implementation and compliance with the international labour and environmental standards by public and private sectors in Pakistan.

Briefing the media, Mehak Sikander, Coordinator Freshwater Programme, WWF-Pakistan said that Pakistan's textile and leather sectors are the largest export earning sectors in Pakistan. However, these sectors face serious

business challenges due to compliance issues, raw material availability and international market competition.

She informed that through this project, the capacity of relevant departments was developed to effectively enforce the environmental laws and standards in Pakistan. The project also aimed to promote resource efficient and cleaner production practices in the textile and leather sectors.

Sikander shared that the ILES project supported more than 50 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to adopt smart environmental management practices which helped to annually conserve 1.54 million cubic meters of water and 130 million kilo watt hours of energy, save 37,462 tons of chemicals and eliminate 37,483 tons of carbon emissions. These initiatives resulted in saving around 530 million rupees annually.

To train and build the capacities of public sector institutes and enterprises, project conducted over 62

workshops in different cities across Pakistan. These workshops aimed at improving reporting mechanisms for multilateral environmental agreements, sustainable development goals and international environmental laws and standards. Moreover, the project also developed six documentaries on resource conservation in textile and leather sectors. The project also supported in drafting cleaner production policy for Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).

Speaking on the occasion, Imran Sabir, Director, SEPA, said that the agency is conducting monitoring of environmental compliance in the textile and leather industries of Sindh. With the support of WWF-Pakistan, the agency plans to introduce the online portal to digitalize environmental monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the province.

He said that this was for the first time that the initiative was taken to digitalize the environmental monitoring data. Moreover, he said that environmental degra-

dation should be addressed as it leads to climate change and environmental challenges to the country. "We are committed to support initiatives which are environment friendly and promote sustainable development in Pakistan", he added.

Irfan Ansari, General Manager Sustainability and Utilities, Al-Rahim Textile Industries, shared that it is essential to conserve water, reduce carbon 6 ensure wastewater treatment for sustainable growth of the industries in Pakistan.

He said that the textile industries should promote sustainable production and ensure responsible management and use of the natural resources. He further said that their textile brand has reduced the water consumption by 40 per cent and increased the water recovery by 50 per cent through efficient wastewater recycling.

He emphasized the need for taking initiatives that help contribute to the protection of natural resources and promotion of sustainable production.



KARACHI: Coordinator Freshwater Programme WWF-Pakistan Mehak Sikander speaking during a media briefing session.

APBF calls for solid economic plan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has called for solid economic plan, terming the new budget of 2024-25 as the uncertain one in view of deteriorating energy crises following the tough conditionality of the International Monetary Fund.

The APBF condemns the imposition of more taxes in the budget, questioning how inflation can be maintained at 11 percent when more than 45 percent of revenue targets will be achieved from tax and non-tax measures and the elimination of tax exemptions, said the APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood.

Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the APBF had taken all trade and industry associations on board for preparation of proposals for the upcoming budget. He said that efforts were made to give government a set of suggestions for upcoming budget to make it business-friendly.

The APBF chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that the FBR's reforms initiatives are not bearing fruit, as the revenue collecting agency could increase the number of sales tax return filers mainly due to rise in the type of those filers, who haven't paid any tax, implying that bad governance and weak tax man-

agement of the tax department still persist.

Ibrahim Qureshi emphasized the evident expectations drawn from the budget 2024-25. It highlighted the same measures which have been in discussion for the success of the IMF program, he added. First of all, she indicated the prosperous increase in the revenue which was targeted at Rs9.4 trillion in the previous year, however, it has jumped to Rs12.97 trillion which is nearly Rs13 trillion for the current fiscal year. This is a significant jump and is an over-ambitious target for the FBR to collect revenue, he said.

Syed Maaz Mahmood urged the authorities to introduce new tax incentives and extend the period of existing ones for attracting new foreign direct investments in line with the potential of the country. With a view to wipe out corruption there needs to develop local software and Apps with simplified system in Urdu so that interaction of human resource should be reduced, he suggested. He suggested that taxes should be charged one time by any provincial or federal government, as provinces levy same kind of tax which the federal government has already imposed, escalating the cost of production and discouraging the registered

manufacturers.

The APBF president said that Pakistan's inflation rate is the highest among all the South Asian nations. He said that the world is moving towards alternative sources of electricity generation but the Pakistan government's policies are contrary to it.

He said that Pakistan is the most frequent customer of the IMF and the governments often depend on borrowing from the lending arm and accepted stringent conditions, despite the fact that this institution is merciless money lender, which has always forced Pakistan to adopt bad policies like new taxes in the budget, rupee depreciation and massive increases in the electricity and gas tariffs.

He said that even though Pakistan's economic crisis is a recurring factor in the country's political unrest, it has a history of ignoring the nation's true issues, which include poor governance, a broken judicial system, outdated laws, complicated tax system, lack of transparency, duplication in the government system, ineffective bureaucracy, improper use of our human, natural and water resources, lack of efficient local government, inadequate/unreliable data for country's planning, and the consistent flaws in policies in execution by the government departments.



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain chairing a review meeting on fertilizer industry.

Gold rates remain unchanged

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola 24 karat gold witnessed no change and was traded at Rs.241,700 on Saturday.

The rates of 10 grams of 24 karat and 10 gram 22 karat gold also remained stagnant at Rs.207,219 and 189,950 respectively, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The per tola and ten gram silver were also trade on same rates at Rs.2,850 and Rs.2,443.41 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market remained stagnant at Rs2,326, the Association reported.

'Made in Pakistan' organized

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Commerce, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, and the Embassy of Pakistan in Tashkent are organizing the first 'Made in Pakistan' Exhibition from 28-30 June with the cooperation of the Government of Uzbekistan.

Made in Pakistan Exhibition, Tashkent is an initiative under the Regional Connectivity Policy of the Government of Pakistan to bring businessmen from Pakistan and Uzbekistan under one roof, to explore ways, to enhance trade and establish long-lasting partnerships, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

The event was inaugurated by the Deputy Minister of Industry, Investment and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Gulamov Shokhrux Khasanovich along with the Ambassador of Pakistan Ahmed Farooq, Federal Secretary of Commerce Pakistan Ahsan Ali Mangi and Chief Executive, TDAP Muhammad Zubair Motiwala.

More than 80 Pakistani companies from diverse sectors are showcasing their products in the exhibition and approximately 750 B2B meetings were held with local businesses. The visitors attending the event expressed interest in Pakistani products and were impressed with the diverse range and quality being offered by Pakistani businesses.

Business community group to defeat opponents in next polls

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman of All Pakistan Car Dealers Association KP and President of Peshawar Traders Chamber, Ghulam Bilal Javed, has strongly condemned the recent petty tactics of the Businessmen Forum Group.

Issuing a news statement on Saturday, Ghulam Bilal Javed stated that they are trembling with fear as they foresee their defeat at the hands of Peshawar's business community in the upcoming Sarhad Chamber elections.

He said the group controlling the chamber has always disliked those who

raise their voices. Their vision is to keep the chamber as a paper entity, and anyone who stands up to them is not allowed to work effectively, he added.

He further stated that being denotified from the position of Federation Convenership does not affect him personally.

Instead, by the grace of Allah, the business community will soon oust them from the chamber and hold them accountable for the millions of rupees spent on the chamber.

Javed emphasized that Sarhad Business Alliance has always stood for the rights of the trading community and will continue to

do so. The alliance will not bow down to any pressure or conspiracy. Reflecting on his past association with the Sarhad Chamber and the reward he received from these opportunistic people, he urged all voters of the Sarhad Chamber to cast their votes wisely, considering what has happened to him, and to bid farewell to the self-serving group.

He concluded and saying the time for using the Sarhad Chamber for personal gain is soon coming to an end. Sarhad Business Alliance has unsettled the occupying group, and defeat is destined for the conspiratorial and trader-hostile paper group.

FRIA pleads for reviving growth

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has pleaded for formulating economic plan aimed at reviving growth in large-scale manufacturing, small and medium-sized segments, the service sector, and exports.

The FRIA senior vice chairman Shahbaz Aslam said the government should prioritize resolving the energy crisis by providing sufficient and affordable electricity and gas to industries. The import bill should be reduced by imposing bans on luxury products. He highlighted controlling inflation to ensure affordable living costs for the masses and containing the cost of production for businesses at a local level.

He stressed the need for a revisit of the economic policies, as the economic indicators throughout the 2024 remained very depressed amidst high inflation, low exports, depleting foreign reserves and continued uncertain position of the local currency.

Shahbaz Aslam said that almost all indicators of the economy continued to show poor performance

during 2024, including volatile exchange rate, unprecedented hike in markup rate, repeated increases in electricity rates, gas shortage, price spiral, mismanagement and bad governance, becoming the hallmarks of the government.

He observed the negative economic indicators and uncertainty over resumption of the International Monetary Fund program continued to push the rupee towards a new historic low against the US dollar especially in first half of the calendar year of 2023.

He said that massive fall of rupee value continued to damage the economy, as the rupee witnessed a huge depreciation; one of the highest devaluations of local currency in Pakistan's history in this period. Mian Anjum urged the policy makers to concentrate on increasing tax-to-GDP ratio which was the lowest in Pakistan in the region in 2023. The FRIA leader warned if the govt failed to take appropriate measures for economic revival, the trade and industry will face a complete shutdown, asking the government to con-

vene a conference, taking the business community onboard.

He called for solid economic plan from all the stakeholders, in view of deteriorating energy crises following the tough conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), making this fiscal year more complicated and unstable for the economy.

The FRIA leader said that the government should provide its economic stability plan to avert further losses, warning that numerous global issues are impacting world economies.

The PIAF senior leader observed that besides increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market. He said that the monetary tightening and exchange rate depreciation resulted in higher inflation, public debt and debt servicing. The empirical evidence showed that the one percent monetary tightening hiked the inflationary pressure by 1.3 percent in the case of Pakistan, he added.

MENA, central Asian telecom stakeholders address policy

SHANGHAI, China (APP): Huawei announced that telecom stakeholders from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Central Asia regions came together at a roundtable during MWC Shanghai 2024, the leading connectivity event in the Asia-Pacific region, to address policy and cybersecurity standards.

The session, 'Middle East and Central Asia ICT Policy and Governance Forum' was moderated by the GSMA, bringing together regulators and operators from the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. The stakeholders included senior officials from the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology and Huawei to discuss industry policies, successful practices, and valuable insights on key industry trends.

Themed "Driving Policy and Innovation to Shape Our Digital Future," the forums discussed the importance of spectrum, optical, and datacom policy planning. They explored how carriers, enterprises, oversight agencies, and regulators can enhance mobile security capabilities

and provide guidance for risk management strategies.

The meeting also sought to promote the adoption of GSMA's Network Equipment Security Assurance Scheme (NESAS) and Mobile Cybersecurity Knowledge Base (MCKB). Attendees also reviewed industry policies and best practices, with examples from China's successful cases.

Jawad Abassi, Head of MENA at GSMA, who moderated the roundtable discussion, said, "The GSMA regularly explores a range of security considerations including secure by design, 5G deployment models and security activities. Good security practices and policies by industry suppliers are essential. The mobile ecosystem should empower advancing positive policy and spectrum outcomes, driving digital innovation to reduce inequalities in our world and tackling today's biggest societal challenges."

At the forum, Jeff Wang, President of the Public Affairs and Communications Department, Huawei, said, "To fully reap digital dividends, we need to pay more attention to enhancing connectivity, embracing

digital application, and empowering digital talent."

NESAS demonstrates how global collaborative efforts can address cybersecurity, offering a standardized assessment mechanism jointly defined by GSMA and 3GPP. It serves as a fundamental security baseline, developed in accordance with security standard guidelines pertaining to vendors' product development and lifecycle processes. NESAS is valuable to operators and vendors and is intended to be used alongside other mechanisms to ensure network security throughout its lifecycle.

MCKB seeks to help stakeholders manage risks in the 5G ecosystem by providing essential insights for their risk management strategy and guidance covering best practices and risk mitigation measures.

The framework offers clear instructions for taking step-by-step actions to build security assurance while considering the entire risk spectrum of mobile end-to-end networks. It aims to enhance mobile security competencies and capabilities, strengthening the work of carriers, enterprises, oversight agencies,

and regulators.

The forum featured policy implementation and cybersecurity. The ICT Policy Implementation session explored spectrum planning for 5G and 5G-A networks, universal service funds (USF) and policies to promote mobile connectivity in rural areas, strengthening regulation of mobile and fixed networks to improve digital economy foundations. The session provided recommendations for various countries, such as UAE, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iraq, based on their specific needs and achievements in these areas.

More than 50 countries globally are investing in super-fast optical fiber networks and Giga broadband to handle the network demands from future technologies like AR/VR and high-definition streaming.

This digital upgrade is crucial to support the development of the regional ICT industry while ensuring a smooth user experience. Operators in the MENA region especially need to improve their optical fiber networks to ensure homes and offices have the speed and stability for these advancements.

Global stocks mixed

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Equity markets were mixed Friday as investors assessed fallout from a bumpy US presidential debate and looked ahead to weekend elections in France that could boost the far right.

US stocks had initially risen following an improving reading of the personal consumption expenditures price index, a closely-watched benchmark that boosted the odds of a Federal Reserve interest rate cut.

But yields on US Treasury notes rose as the day progressed, pressuring the market in the final session of the first half of the year.

All three major indices finished down in New York, with the tech-rich Nasdaq suffering the biggest drop at 0.7 percent.

Nonetheless, all three major indices are up handsomely in 2024 so far, with the S&P 500 up more than 14 percent.

US President Joe Biden's performance in a debate with predecessor Donald Trump was widely criticized by observers, who said it raised concerns the president is too old to run again.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javera Sartaj Khan, Additional District Judge-II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Dagar Appeal. No. 31/13. Institution 6/3/2024. Date of hearing 2/7/2024. Shamsul Qamar etc. Vs. Local Government etc. Notice to No. 10. Nisar Ahmed S/o Said Arif Khan resident of Nari Tangi Amnawar Tehsil Gagra, District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the Court at 8:00 a.m. dated 2/7/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Pakistani cueists qualify for knockout round

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani cueists on Saturday earned victories in the ACBS Asian 15Red U21 & 6Red Men's Snooker Championship 2024 and qualified for the knockout round at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. On Day 3rd in 6red Men's, Awais Munir (Pak) beat M. Rikaz (Sri Lanka) 4-1 (33-11, 66-0(65), 16-54(54), 39-04, 39-05); Awais Munir (Pak) bt Ziyad Alqabbani (KSA) 4-0 (44-05, 33-14, 33-18, 36-32); Asjad Iqbal (Pak) bt Fawad Alsalmi (KSA) 4-0 (50-08, 41-09, 52-01, 49-0). In U21 15red, M. Hasnain Akhtar (Pak) bt Langyi Ryan Li (Hong Kong) 3-2 (69-43, 41-65, 7-76(76), 75-24, 63-35); Ahsan Ramzan (Pak) bt Suhail Saeed (UAE) 3-0 (91-6, 86-31(57), 75-38).

Shaheer wins bronze medal

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan's Muhammad Shaheer Tariq on Saturday has secured a bronze medal in the Mas-Wrestling event at the Children of Asia International Sports Games held in Russia. This marks a historic victory for Pakistan, as it is the first medal the country has won in these games. Shaheer displayed exceptional skill and determination, defeating his Indian counterpart 2-0. His impressive performance continued as he triumphed over athletes from Mongolia and the host country, Russia, in other matches. The ongoing Children of Asia Games in Russia witnessed Pakistan's breakthrough in the Mas-Wrestling event, with Shaheer Tariq's victory bringing pride and recognition to the nation, says a news release issued here on Saturday.

Tanveer grabs gold medal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's talented blind archer, Tanveer Ahmed bagged a gold medal in the Para Archery World Ranking Event and European Cup 2024 at Czech Republic. "I downed Misos Christose of Cyprus with an extensive lead of 6-2," he told APP on Saturday. Tanveer expressed his delight on winning the final, saying, "I am thrilled to have made it this far and won the final. I'm eager to win as many laurels for my country as possible, making the nation proud. I prepared very well for the mega event," he said. Tanveer's remarkable achievement has brought pride to Pakistan, and his determination to excel in the final is inspiring.

Netball C'ship finals on Sunday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army, Wapda, Police and Pakistan Navy have qualified for the semifinals of National Netball Championship here at Liaquat Gymnasium of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Saturday. In the quarterfinals, Pakistan Army beat Punjab by 25-12 goals, Wapda beat AJK by 59-3 goals, Police beat Sindh by 26-20 goals and Pakistan Navy beat KPK by 32-17. Punjab, Pakistan Army, Sindh and CRA entered in the woman semifinals. In the quarterfinals, Punjab beat Wapda by 22-25 goals, Sindh beat PNF Elite 38-8 goals, Pakistan Army defeated Gilgit Baltistan by 26-8 goals and CRA beat AJK by 16-9 goals. In the semifinals match, Punjab will meet with Pakistan Army and Sindh will face CRA. Both Men and Women finals of the Championship will be played on Sunday.

India great Kohli retires from T20 internationals after World Cup win

BRIDGETOWN (AFP): Virat Kohli said he had played his last Twenty20 international after starring in India's thrilling seven-run win over South Africa in the T20 World Cup final in Barbados on Saturday.

The star batsman put a run of low scores behind him to make 76 as he was named player of the match, with the 35-year-old Kohli saying afterwards: "This was my last T20 World Cup, and this is what we wanted to achieve."

"One day you feel you can't get a run, then things happen. God is great, and I got the job done for the team on the day it mattered. 'Now or never (that was my) last T20 for India, wanted to make the most of it. Wanted to lift the cup, wanted to respect the situation rather than force it.'"

Kohli, pressed on whether he had played his last T20 international, added at the presentation ceremony: "This was an open secret, it's time for the next generation to take over, some amazing batsmen will take the team forward and keep the flag waving high." Former India captain Kohli, one of the outstanding batsmen of his generation, scored more on Saturday than he had in the rest of the tournament.

Prior to Saturday's showpiece match at the Kensington Oval, he had managed just 75 runs in seven innings during the competition at a woeful average of 10.71 But after he was dismissed for just nine in a semi-final win over England, the defending champions, current India skipper Rohit Sharma said: "Virat is a quality player. 'Any player can go through that (a run of low scores). 'We understand his class. When you have played for 15 years, form is never a problem. He's probably saving it for the final.'"



BRIDGETOWN: Rohit Sharma of India lifts the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup Trophy following the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup West Indies & USA 2024 Final match between South Africa and India at Kensington Oval.

Pak players bag gold medals in Asian Junior Squash Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Sohail Adnan, Muhammad Hamza Khan, Mehwish Ali, Ahmed Khalil and Obaid Ullah won a gold medal in the Asian Junior Individual Squash Championship here on Saturday.

In Boys U-13 final, Sohail Adnan (Pak) beat Huzaifa Shahid (Pak) 12-10, 12-10, 5-11, 4-11, 11-8. Sohail won Gold Medal and Huzaifa got Silver.

In Boys U-15 final, Shiven Agarwal (IND) beat Muhammad Raziq Putra (MAS) 11-7, 8-11, 11-5, 13-11. Shiven won Gold Medal and Raziq got Silver.

In Boys U-17 final, Nikhelswar (MAS) beat Abdullah Nawaz (Pak) 9-11, 9-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-6. Nikhelswar won Gold Medal and Abdullah got Silver.

In Boys U-19 final, Muhammad Hamza Khan (Pak) beat Harith Daniel (MAS) 11-5, 12-10, 11-9. Hamza won Gold Medal and Harith got Silver.

In Girls U-13 final, Aadya Budhia (IND) beat Goushika (IND) 11-5, 11-5, 11-4. Aadya won Gold Medal and Goushika got Silver.

In Girls U-15 final, Harleen Tan (MAS) beat

Lo Pui Yin Chloe (HKG) 11-8, 11-4, 11-6. Harleen won Gold Medal and Lo Pui got Silver.

In Girls U-17 final, Enna Kwong (HKG) beat Tang Helen (HKG) 6-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-1. Enna won Gold Medal and Tang got Silver.

In Girls U-19 final, Thanussa Uthrian (MAS) beat Akari Midorikawa (JPN) 11-8, 11-7, 11-2. Thanussa won Gold Medal and Akari got Silver.

In Consolation Plate Event, Girls U-13, Jacintha Han (SIN) beat Nurul Nageena (MAS) 11-3, 11-6, 11-13, 11-2. Jacintha won Gold and Nurul Nageena got Silver.

In Girls U-15, Wong Sui Ling (HKG) beat Chang Ka Yu (HKG) 12-10, 3-11, 7-11, 11-3, 11-9. Wong won Gold Medal and Chang Ka got Silver.

In Girls U-17, Mehwish Ali (Pak) beat Saiesha Ranjan (SIN) 11-7, 11-9, 11-7. Mehwish won Gold Medal and Saiesha got Silver.

In Girls U-19, Shamina Riaz (IND) beat Nargol Raminzadeh (IRI) 11-8, 11-6, 11-6. Shamina won Gold Medal and Nargol got Silver.

In Boys U-13, Vidhuran Ruthiran (MAS) beat Wong Ho Kiu (HKG) 11-5, 5-11, 11-7, 14-12. Vidhuran won Gold Medal and Wong got Silver.

In Boys U-15, Ahmed Khalil (Pak) beat Ong Zhi (SIN) 11-5, 11-3, 11-6. Ahmed won Gold Medal and Ong got Silver.

In Boys U-17, Obaid Ullah (Pak) beat Junho Kim (KOR) 11-9, 11-9, 14-12. Obaid won Gold Medal and Junho got Silver.

In Boys U-19, Lo Wa Sern (MAS) beat Veroon Heng (MAS) 11-4, 11-3, 11-5. Lo Wa won Gold Medal and Veroon got Silver.

Duncan Chiu, Secretary General of Asian Squash Federation graced the ceremony as the chief guest and awarded trophies and medals to the players.

Air Marshal Kazim Hammad, Senior Vice President PSF along with Squash legend Qamar Zaman, VP PSF Adnan Asad and number of players and officials also attended the ceremony. In addition to the Main Draw, medals were also awarded to the players for Consolation Plate.

Arshad starts training for Paris Olympics

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's star javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem on Saturday, has resumed training for the upcoming Paris Olympics 2024.

According to the details, the Olympian, who suffered a leg injury a few weeks ago, got back on track and partook in light practice at the Punjab Stadium.

The leg injury forced Nadeem to withdraw from a couple of events in Finland but the star athlete shared that he is undergoing rehab and is "feeling better".

"I have to go to Paris to play Diamond League, pray that I stay fit," said Nadeem.

"I have been suffering from injuries for a long time, but that is part of the game."

"I played an event a year after the Tokyo Olympics. If I am fit, I will try to do my best throw in the Olympics."

Ahead of his participation in the Paris Olympics, Arshad Nadeem will also participate in the Diamond League in Paris on July 7.

The star athlete shared that he was eager to end Pakistan's medal drought at the Olympics.

"It has been too long that Pakistan has not won any medal at the Olympics, what was it, 1992 that we won it last in hockey? I am aiming to win that medal really, and I will do all that I can in my power to achieve that," stated Nadeem.

For the unversed, besides clinching the gold medal at the CWG in 2022, Arshad Nadeem also secured the silver medal in the World Athletics Championship 2023 in Budapest.

He created history by becoming the first Pakistani to earn a medal at the World Athletics Championship.

He also earned his qualification for the Paris Olympics during the World Athletics Championship.

The automatic qualifying benchmark for the Paris Olympics was 85.50 meters, which Nadeem breached with an amazing 86.79-meter throw.

The star player also got his hands on the gold medal in the ongoing 34th National Games last year. He proved his mettle once again as he recorded the longest throw of 78.02m in his third attempt.

Pakistan team to feature in AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalization Committee (NC) has announced the participation of the Pakistan Women's Futsal team in the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025.

For the first time, the women's team will compete in any premier futsal competition under the umbrella of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

The qualification round is scheduled to begin at the start of 2025, with the round of 12 set to take place in May 2025.

To prepare for the AFC

Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025, the PFF has successfully organized five Futsal National Cup (FNC) competitions in major cities across Pakistan, said a press release.

MRF clinched the title of the Women's Futsal National Cup in Lahore. In Quetta, Hazara remained the crowned champions of the Women's Futsal National Cup. Smuff emerged victorious in the Women's Futsal National Cup in Islamabad, while the Karachi City team secured the win in the Women's Futsal National Cup in Karachi.

These competitions were a part of PFF's efforts to develop women's futsal in Pakistan.

Chairman of the Pakistan Football Federation Normalisation Committee, Haroon Malik, expressed his views, stating, "I am pleased to announce that the PFF NC has confirmed the participation of the Women's Futsal team in the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025."

This participation highlights PFF's commitment to developing women's futsal in Pakistan and providing our players with opportunities to compete at the international level", he said.

Kasatkina beats Fernandez to seal Eastbourne title



breaking back.

The wind was taken out of Fernandez's sails and Kasatkina ruthlessly closed out the contest, with victory secured when the 21-year-old overhit a forehand return.

Kasatkina ends losing streak in finals

Kasatkina has struggled in finals over the last few years.

She lost her past five WTA finals, with three of those defeats coming in a final will have pleased her, especially on the eve of Wimbledon where she has never gone beyond the quarter-finals.

Fernandez, meanwhile, showed flashes of quality when she came to the net but too often unforced errors during rallies from the baseline proved her undoing.

"It's a beautiful tournament at Eastbourne and I enjoyed my time here. Hopefully we have many more of these finals," Fernandez said.

"My team have pushed me the past couple of months and the hard work is paying off so now we have to keep going, working and never give up."

EASTBOURNE (Agencies): Daria Kasatkina saw off a spirited performance by Leylah Fernandez to win the Eastbourne International in straight sets.

The Russian sixth seed triumphed 6-3 6-4 as she secured her seventh WTA title in one hour 50 minutes at Devonshire Park.

Kasatkina, who lost to American Madison Keys in last year's final, took control of the first set and closed out the match despite a brief fightback from the Canadian in the second set.

"It's been a year but it feels like only a few days since the final last time," Kasatkina, 27, said.

"It was a tough battle today. It's been a long road to the title but I am really proud."

Fernandez's serve was broken in the first game after she fluffed a sliced drop shot and Kasatkina backed it up with a hold of serve.

The Canadian eventually found some rhythm and forced three break points in

a hard-fought fifth game which lasted just over 20 minutes, including a stoppage while a member of the crowd received medical treatment.

After 11 deuces, though, Kasatkina secured a vital hold and from that point she had the momentum for the remainder of the first set, clinching it with a second break in the ninth game after Fernandez double-faulted.

Kasatkina, who knocked out Emma Raducanu in the quarter-finals, initially showed no let-up in the second set as she advanced into a 3-0 lead.

But Fernandez dug deep and managed to get back on serve with a crucial break and hauled it back to 3-3 before breaking her opponent for a second time in the set, this time Kasatkina double-faulting at the key moment.

When Fernandez went 4-3 up with a second break the match looked destined for a third set, but Kasatkina responded to the setback by immediately

Vinicius Jr helps Brazil to 4-1 win against Paraguay

LAS VEGAS (Agencies): Vinicius Jr scored twice as Brazil kick-started their Copa America campaign with a 4-1 win against Paraguay.

After a disappointing draw against Costa Rica in their first match, Brazil needed to beat Paraguay before their final group fixture against Colombia.

The nine-time winners were gifted a chance to open the lead in the 30th minute when they were awarded a penalty for handball following Lucas Paqueta's shot from outside the box, but the West Ham midfielder blazed his spot-kick wide.

Paqueta made amends four minutes later when he played in Vinicius Jr to open the scoring following a brilliant team move.

Savinho doubled Brazil's lead just before the break with his first goal for Brazil when he scored from close range following



a mix-up in the Paraguay defence.

Vinicius Jr, who has largely struggled to replicate his Real Madrid form with his country, grabbed his second four minutes into first-half stoppage time when he closed down a clearance to make it 3-0.

Paraguay, bottom of the group on zero points, reduced the deficit shortly after the break thanks to a fantastic long-range strike from Getafe's Omar Alderete.

But Brazil were handed another controversial penalty for handball in the 65th minute, with Paqueta making up for his earlier

miss by netting Brazil's fourth.

Tempers flared in the latter stages as defender Andres Cubas was sent off for kicking out at Aston Villa's Douglas Luiz.

Elsewhere, Group D leaders Colombia continued their impressive start to the competition with a 3-0 win against Costa Rica.

Liverpool winger Luis Diaz opened the scoring on the half-hour when he converted from the penalty spot.

Colombia doubled their lead just before the hour when former Tottenham defender Davinson Sanchez headed home from a corner.

Jhon Cordoba smashed in a third from close range.

Colombia can ensure they finish top of Group D by avoiding defeat against Brazil in their final group stage fixture on Tuesday evening (02:00 BST on Wednesday).

Thompson wins Jamaica's 100m Olympic trials in 9.77 seconds



KINGSTON (Agencies): Kishane Thompson became the joint-ninth fastest man in history after running the 100m in 9.77 seconds to win the men's 100m at the Jamaican Olympic trials on Friday.

The 22-year-old, who had not raced at all this season before the trials, is in just his second season as a professional.

But his time of 9.77 seconds means he is now the fourth-fastest Jamaican in history behind Usain Bolt, Yohan Blake and Asafa Powell.

"My coach instructed me just to run the first 60 metres,

nothing more - after that, shut it down," said Thompson.

"If I came second or third, I would've made the team. The goal wasn't to prove anything tonight, just run the 70 or 60 metres and see where I was."

In the women's 100m, Shericka Jackson recovered from a bad start to win in 10.84 seconds ahead of rivals Tia Clayton and two-time Olympic champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who ran 10.84secs and 10.94secs respectively.

"Coach and I sat down and talked about how we wanted the approach the season, and I think we did pretty good, hav-

ing only ran one 100m prior to the national trials," Jackson told Reuters.

Elsewhere, Grant Holloway has unfinished business in the 110m hurdles at the Games after qualifying at the US Olympic team trials in Oregon.

The 26-year-old won silver in that event at Tokyo in 2021 but was far from satisfied with finishing as runner-up.

"Do I look at it every day like it should have been mine? No. I've done four world championships, indoors and out, and I've got four gold medals. I feel like I've already solidified myself in that realm," said

Holloway.

Holloway is looking to make amends in Paris and his 12.86secs time on Friday was the fastest of his career.

He finished narrowly ahead of rivals Freddie Crittenden and Daniel Roberts, who finished with times of 12.93secs and 12.96secs respectively.

In the 100m hurdles, Lolo Jones became the first woman over the age of 40 to compete in the US trials.

The 41-year-old, who has competed at three Games, came last in her heat but qualified for Saturday's semi-final.



In brief

RWMC distributes cheques among sanitary workers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) Saqib Rafiq Saturday said that sanitary workers were the heroes of successful Eid ul Azha cleanliness operations who performed their duties diligently. Speaking at the honorarium cheque distribution ceremony, he said that honorarium was being given in recognition of their best services on Eid days on the instruction of the Chief Minister, Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Saqib expressed gratitude to the entire staff of RWMC for their exceptional performance during the Eid holidays and said that RWMC had removed over 9,000 tons of animal waste from the district during the three days of Eid ul Azha despite rain. He said sanitary workers are valuable assets of RWMC who perform their duties despite holidays, epidemics, rains and others, adding their problems would be resolved on priority. On the occasion, water coolers were also distributed among the sanitary staff so that they could work efficiently during the hot season.

Police arrest two for shooting

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a swift response on Saturday, police have arrested two suspects for shooting and injuring a traffic warden while performing duty. The incident occurred when the traffic warden, Hamza, stopped Nauman for violating a traffic signal. Nauman, along with his accomplice Aizaz, opened fire, injuring Hamza. During the altercation, Traffic warden Asrar's uniform was also torn. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani took immediate notice of the incident and ordered the prompt arrest of the suspects. A special team, led by SDPO Cantt, was formed and used scientific investigation methods and human intelligence to capture the suspects. SP Potohar Nasir Nawaz confirmed that the arrests were made with solid evidence. CPO Hamdani emphasized that those who threaten the lives and property of citizens and police officers will be held accountable by the law.

Police returns cellphone

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) officials found and handed over a lost mobile phone worth Rs 470,000 to its owner. According to details, a woman near Havelian Interchange contacted with Motorway police and said that during a stay on the motorway some time ago, she lost her mobile phone. The NHMP North zone officials took immediate action on her request and after tracing the lost phone handed it over to her. The woman expressed her gratitude and admiration for the Motorway Police's honesty and dedication to their duty. Muhammad Saqib, the spokesperson for the Motorway Police, highlighted the significance of this incident as a reflection of the department's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the public. The Motorway Police continues to earn public trust through such acts of integrity, underlining their reputation as wardens of the motorways.

'Supremacy of Parliament cornerstone of strengthening democracy'



ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah Saturday said that the supremacy of the Parliament was essential for the growth and development of democratic institutions in the country.

"A strong Parliament is vital for ensuring the representation of people's voices and holding the government accountable for its actions" they expressed in their separate messages on International Day of Parliamentarism, observed every year on 30th June to commemorate the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889 and to recognize the importance of

parliamentary diplomacy in promoting peace, security and sustainable development worldwide.

The Speaker said that this day was significant as it highlighted the crucial role Parliaments play in promoting democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law. He reiterated the Pakistani Parliament's commitment to upholding these principles and ensuring the democratic institution's continued growth and development.

He said that a strong Parliament was the cornerstone of a stable democracy and it is essential for ensuring the protection and promotion of democratic values. He said that the National Assembly was committed to strengthening

the institution and ensuring the supremacy of the Parliament in the country.

The Speaker also highlighted the importance of international cooperation and collaboration among Parliaments, as embodied by the IPU, in achieving these goals.

He said that Pakistan was an active member of the IPU, and the country was committed to working with the IPU to achieve peace, democracy and sustainable development globally. He reiterated the National Assembly's dedication to strengthening the institution and ensuring the supremacy of Parliament in the country. He also acknowledged the significant role played by the Parliament in promoting peace, security and

sustainable development in the region.

Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah said that the National Assembly was dedicated to promoting democratic values and ensuring the representation of all citizens in the democratic process. He acknowledged the importance of international cooperation and collaboration among Parliaments, as embodied by the IPU, in achieving these goals.

He said that the Parliament was committed to upholding the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and ensuring the institution's continued growth and development. Pakistan Peoples Party has always been at the forefront of efforts to strengthen Parliament and ensure its supremacy in the country, he expressed.

The Deputy Speaker also acknowledged that President Asif Ali Zardari took a significant step towards strengthening Parliament by surrendering his powers under Article 58(2)b during his previous tenure, thereby empowering the institution.

He expressed his hope that the newly elected Parliament would rise to the occasion and meet the high expectations of the people, fulfilling their promises and working tirelessly for the betterment of the nation.

Police conducts operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have conducted search operations in Chuntra, Chakri, Mandra, Taxila, Saddar Barooni, Bani, Wah Cantt, Morgah and adjoining areas, said a police spokesman here Saturday.

He informed that Rawalpindi district police, women police and other law enforcement agencies under the supervision of senior police officers, participated in the search operations.

He said that Rawalpindi district police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mehmood Hamdani conducted search operations. During operation, Police have searched 177 houses, 47 shops, collected data of 8 tenant besides checking 300 suspects. The search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under the National Action Plan in different areas of the district, particularly to ensure law and order, the spokesman added.

Famous poet Majeed Amjad remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): The birth anniversary of renowned poet Majeed Amjad was observed on Saturday. Born on June 29, 1914, Majeed Amjad was famous for his poems and his first poetry compilation titled "Shab-e-Rafta" was published in 1958.

However, six of his books appeared on the literary scene only after his death. His first sustainable job as editor of a weekly journal Urooj ended in 1939. Thereafter, he qualified as inspector of civil supplies in the Department of Food and Agriculture in 1944.

He lived in Sahiwal for most of his life. During his career, he wrote many beautiful poems about nature and the disregard of it by humans.

Naqvi alerts Capital administration on dengue threat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday directed the Islamabad administration to stay alert regarding the threat of dengue fever in the wake of monsoon season rains.

The minister has directed the Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA)/ Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, to ensure the implementation of all SOPs to prevent the spread of dengue fever.

The minister directed that immediate drainage of water from low-lying must be ensured. He instructed that the dengue prevention plan should be implemented in letter and spirit and any negligence in this regard would not be tolerated.

He also directed that hospitals and laboratories in the city be contacted to collect data on dengue cases and to ensure coordination for a unified response.

Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, briefed the

Minister on the measures being taken to prevent the spread of dengue and apprised that a working group is being established to prevent the spread of dengue in the border areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. He said that the Islamabad and Rawalpindi administrations will work as one team to carry out dengue prevention measures during the current season.

So far, 9 cases of dengue fever have been reported in Islamabad.

PTI lobbying in US for anti-Pakistan resolution, says Aqeel Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Spokesperson of government on legal affairs, Barrister Aqeel Malik Saturday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has been presenting a false narrative against the US for two years and left no stone unturned in getting the anti-Pakistan resolution passed there.

He was addressing a press conference in Islamabad along with PML-N's leader and MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik. Barrister Aqeel Malik said that yesterday Shaista Malik presented a resolution in the House where the uproar of a party against it

was sad. In response to the resolution of the US, our resolution was opposed by this party, he said.

He said that a political party is running a digital terrorism, adding that the PTI has also hired lobbying and PR firms in US.

Barrister Aqeel Malik said that the protection of our country's flag is the duty of every Pakistani, adding that no Pakistani will compromise on integrity and freedom. He said that America has never raised its voice against human rights abuse in Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion MNA Shaista Pervaiz

Malik said that firms have been hired in America where anti-Pakistan work is being done. She said that the government has taken concrete measures for the development of the country and economic stability.

She said that no political party will be allowed to block the development of the country. She said, "we do not want to spoil relations with any country and want good relations with the US but we do not want America to interfere in our sovereignty".

She said that everyone should think about the country's interest instead of their personal interest.

Urs arrangements reviewed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting of a committee for development and arrangements of Hazrat Bari Imam Complex here on Saturday.

During the meeting, the arrangements for the annual Urs Mubarak of Hazrat Bari Imam were reviewed in detail, said a press release issued by the Foreign Office.

Speaking on the occasion, Ishaq Dar directed that

extraordinary security arrangements should be made on the occasion of Urs besides ensuring all possible facilities to the pilgrims coming from different parts of the country and from all over the world to participate in Urs celebrations.

He also instructed to ensure special arrangements for women pilgrims participating in Urs at Hazrat Bari Imam Complex.

Visitors should not suffer any inconvenience during the celebrations, Ishaq Dar added.

In the meeting, a special committee was also formed in connection with the arrangements for Urs, which will include the Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Deputy Commissioner and other officials.

The meeting was attended by Hanif Abbasi, Gen (retd) Afzal Janjua, Secretary Interior, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and other high officials.

SP Rawal conducts Khuli Katchery to address public complaints

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

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

relief to the citizens.

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

On the occasion, the SP said that 'Khuli Katcheries' were being held to provide the citizens immediate relief and addressed their complaints besides it also helped improve standards of policing.

The SP issued orders to the officers concerned to complete inquiries and send reports within given time frame.

He said that all-out efforts were being made to ensure dispensation of speedy justice purely on merit to the people and improve service delivery standard.

The spokesman informed that the SPs were holding 'Khuli Katcheries' to provide relief to the citizens.

Residents can submit dues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The residents of the federal capital can now submit their dues at the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) One-Window operation till June 30 (Sunday) at 9 PM.

In a move to facilitate citizens, Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin

Naqvi has directed that all possible conveniences be provided at the One-Window operation. CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa has been directed to personally oversee the operation.

Muhammad Ali also visited the One-Window operation and led a meet-

ing to review the arrangements. In the meeting, it was decided that the allotments of properties bought at auctions would be cancelled if the due instalments were not paid. He said those failing to pay their instalments by June 30, 2024, will face cancellation of their allotments.

CDA to provide help for establishing center

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa Saturday said that the authority would provide full support and assistance to the Chinese for establishing a four-tier data center in the federal capital.

During meeting with Chinese delegation, he said "We commend

China's initiative to invest in Pakistan."

Muhammad Ali said that it was a significant step towards promoting technology in Islamabad on the directive of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Minister for Syed Mohsin Naqvi, said a news release.

The delegation has expressed keen interest in setting up a state-of-

the-art four-tier data center in Islamabad.

They highlighted that the project would bring advanced technology to Pakistan and announced their plans to invest one billion Chinese Yuan in the country.

The data center would be the first of its kind in Pakistan and is expected to significantly boost technological development in the country.



RAWALPINDI: People take a nap under a metro bridge in Chandni Chowk to escape the scorching heat. —APP Photo

1,300 migrants returned

KABUL (BNA): In the past 24 hours, 1,322 migrants have been forcibly returned to the country. Based on information from the Media Office of the Ministry of Refugees, 155 families, comprising 803 individuals, were forcibly returned from Pakistan to the country. After registering with the Refugee Affairs office, they were referred to the offices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration for assistance.

Ministry denounces remarks

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of National Defense criticized recent comments regarding the potential violation of Afghanistan's national sovereignty, labeling it as ill-considered. The Ministry of National Defense's statement criticized recent remarks about the potential violation of Afghanistan's national sovereignty as ill-considered and an attempt to obfuscate the issue, asserting that such comments serve no one's interests.

Afghanistan's internal issues will not be raised at Doha meeting: Mujahid

KABUL (TOLONews): Women's rights is an internal issue and it will not be raised at the upcoming international meeting on Afghanistan in Doha, Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), said on Saturday.

Mujahid told a press conference in Kabul that the Islamic Emirate's conditions for participation in the meeting had been accepted and its delegation would go to Doha to talk and resolve the problems.

He added that the third Doha meeting will discuss economic issues, narcotics and the achievements of the Islamic Emirate.

"Within the framework of the country's national interests, we ask all countries not to leave the people of Afghanistan alone in these difficult circumstances, but to fulfill their obligations towards the rights of the Afghan people and to contribute to the reconstruction and economic strengthening of Afghanistan and to remove obstacles," Mujahid said. He also called on the countries par-



ticipating in the Doha meeting to engage positively with the Islamic Emirate.

The third UN-sponsored meeting on Afghanistan is scheduled to begin today (Sunday) in the Qatari capital Doha.

Special representatives of countries on Afghanistan are expected to

attend the meeting.

Zabihullah Mujahid will lead IEA's six-member delegation at the meeting. The delegation includes representatives of IEA's political office in Qatar, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, counter-narcotics deputyship of the Interior Ministry and Da Afghanistan Bank.

Bamyan hospital sans ear, throat treatment facility

BAMYAN (Pajhwok): Some residents in central Bamyan province have complained about the non-availability of ear and throat diseases treatment facility and said patients have to travel to other provinces for the treatment.

Abdul Ghani, a resident, told Pajhwok Afghan News the non-availability of Otolaryngology Ward in the provincial Hospital put local people in trouble.

He said: "My four-year-old son suffered from earache for more than a year, but he is still having problems and suffering from the disease despite after visiting Bamyan provincial hospital several times."

He added that after visiting the Hospital he was only given an ointment and a little antibiotic, which had no effect on the disease, and as a result, he was told to transfer his patient to Kabul for treatment.

Sharifa, another resident who suffered from sore throat, said that she visited the Provincial Hospital but there was Otolaryngologist, she asked public health officials to address this issue.

She said: "I have been facing the problem of sore throat for more than six months, the doctors of the hospital have diagnosed that my throat has extra meat and I have to go to Kabul for the operation."

She said there is no specialized facility in Bamyan for the treatment of sore throat, ear and nose diseases treatment.

Sharifa said due to economic problems she was unable arrange medical treatment for her problem but she has to go to Kabul for treatment as there was no other option available for her. Heath experts also termed the non-availability of Otolaryngologist a huge issue being faced by the people.

Alli Yar Mohammadi, an internal diseases specialist, said Complications in the ear and throat are usually caused by viral, bacterial infection, inflammation of the tonsils, influenza, and ear blockage by a foreign object, rupture of the eardrum, cold, and neglect of personal hygiene.

These diseases are usually accompanied by pain, burning and itching of the ear and throat, and if not treated in time, the patient will suffer from serious problems, he added.

Dr. Jafar Zaki, head of the Public Health Department, said only the internal diseases, child internal diseases, gynecology wards were functional in the Provincial Hospital.

There are still no wards of Otolaryngology, Neurosurgery and Orthopedics in the Provincial Hospital and patients suffering from these diseases are mostly sent to Kabul for treatment.

Efforts are being made to solve the problems of the clients, and health needs have been partnered with the Ministry of Public Health and the Aga Khan office, which is responsible for providing health services in Bamyan, in order to provide treatment for all kinds of diseases, especially ear and throat in Bamyan.

Omari stresses need to mechanize agricultural in Kunduz

KUNDUZ (TOLONews): Attaullah Omari, acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, in a meeting with local officials, farmers, and residents of Kunduz, emphasized the mechanization of agriculture and livestock in the province.

In the meeting, Omari also pledged to make efforts to establish standard cold storage facilities and address the challenges faced by the residents of Kunduz.

He said, "In the field of agriculture, it's not just about cold storage; plant protection, plant quarantine, improved seeds, and the identification of water, soil, and air are all gaps we are working step by step to address."

Farmers and local officials in Kunduz called for cooperation in marketing the province's agricultural products.

Mohammad Hanif, a farmer, said, "Just as water-



melons were very cheap this year, honorable Minister, please take whatever measures are necessary regarding watermelons so that next year we can export them wherever we want."

Mohammad Nasim Rasuli, Deputy Trade Director of Kunduz Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said, "The problem is very serious.

Some products, like onions, become cheap in their season. Pakistan buys them and sells them back to us at high prices when they are out of season."

Kunduz is one of the agricultural and livestock provinces in northern Afghanistan, known for its various agricultural products such as wheat, barley, maize, rice, watermelons, and melons.

Afghanistan's exports reach \$304m in first quarter of 1403: MoIC

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce spokesman Abdulsalam Javad Akhundzadeh says Afghanistan's exports carried out regularly in the first three months of 1403 solar year and \$304 million have been exported during this period.

Akhundzadeh said that most of these exports were made to Pakistan, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, India, Austria, Uzbekistan, Russia and other countries.

"Afghanistan's exports and imports during the first quarter of 1403 solar year were about two billion and 577 million dollars, of

which 304 million dollars were exports and 2.273 million dollars were imports," he said.

Meanwhile, members of the private sector asked MoIC to provide more facilities in the field of transportation to increase the country's exports.

"As much as the facilities are provided to the traders, they can take advantage of these good opportunities," said Mirwais Hajizadeh, deputy of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock.

Economic experts believe that the more Afghan products are mar-



keted in the world markets, the more exports will increase and will positively affect the country's economic situation.

Earlier, the Islamic Emirate repeatedly empha-

sized that it has an economy-oriented policy and is trying to become a connecting point in the region in addition to increasing the export of Afghan goods to different countries.

Female hospital staff in Kabul go on strike due to salary reduction

KABUL (Khaama Press): Female employees of four hospitals in Kabul, Afghanistan, have announced their strike due to reduced wages to 5,000 Afghamis.

According to reports, staff from the Sihat-e-Tafal, Stomatology, Sheikh Zayed, and Wazir Akbar Khan hospitals have participated in the strike.

Images released by the media on Saturday show dozens of women in medical uniforms gathering in front of these hospitals. Some of these women have criticized the Taliban's decision to reduce the salaries of female employees as "unjust," stating that 5,000 Afghamis is insufficient even for the most basic living expenses.

In mid-last month, a letter addressed to the Taliban administration surfaced in the media, revealing that Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzadeh, the Taliban leader, has set the salary for female government employees at 5,000 Afghamis.

The letter from the Taliban's administration to its finance department stated, "All female employees of the previous govern-



ment, whose salaries are now being paid, will receive 5,000 Afghamis in both budgetary and non-budgetary units, and all salaries will be equal."

In recent weeks, the Taliban's decision to reduce the salaries of female employees has drawn repeated criticism from women activists, who have labeled this action as part of

the group's ongoing efforts to marginalize women.

Earlier, Volker Turk, the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, had also objected to this decision.

Amidst oppressive policies against women in Afghanistan, including severe restrictions on education and employment opportunities, the recent reduction of female doc-

tors' wages to 5,000 Afghamis has sparked significant outcry.

Female employees of hospitals such as Sihat-e-Tafal, Stomatology, Sheikh Zayed, and Wazir Akbar Khan in Kabul have initiated a strike in protest against this wage cut, highlighting the dire financial implications for their livelihoods.

UN Rapporteur: Excluding Afghan women from Doha talks has high costs

KABUL (Khaama Press): The UN's Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Afghanistan has stated that if women are excluded from the Doha talks due to the Taliban's presence, the cost of such exclusion would be very significant.

In an article published in The New York Times, Richard Benett argued against allowing the Taliban to leverage their threat of non-participation in negotiations to dictate terms.

The UN's special rapporteur, in his article on Friday, criticized assessing the success of the Doha talks solely based on the Taliban's participation.

He highlighted that focusing on politically neu-

tral issues in the third round of Doha talks was designed to entice the Taliban to the negotiation table. He emphasized that respect for human rights, especially women's rights, must be a precondition for any interaction with the Taliban.

Benett also referred to an independent assessment requested by the Security Council last year, recommending that any roadmap for Afghanistan's reintegration into the international community must include measurable human rights advancements.

The UN special rapporteur emphasized that the UN does not recognize the Taliban as a government and should not treat them as

such. He pointed out that historical precedent shows the non-participation of all Afghans in political processes undermines the credibility and sustainability of such talks.

Richard Benett mentioned that although some civil society members and women's groups will participate in sideline sessions "under significant external pressure," their inclusion should have been considered from the outset.

In his article, Benett argued that leaving Afghan women activists out simply because the global community finds Afghanistan too costly to deal with is easy but would greatly harm those women and girls who

defy it. Benett wrote, "We are obliged to respond to their courage by increasing protection, support, and solidarity."

The UN's special human rights rapporteur added that next week, the third international special representatives meeting for Afghanistan in Doha will focus on the country's future political path. Benett stated, "Following talks with the Taliban, the agenda of the session will focus on drug trafficking and aiding the private sector." He added that human rights or women's issues will not be discussed, and women or civil society representatives will not participate.

According to him, if

these exclusions are the cost of the Taliban's presence in Doha, the price is very high.

Richard Benett noted in his article the Taliban's anti-women policies and the deprivation of women from education and work as a consequence of these policies.

Richard Benett highlighted Afghan women's early characterization of Taliban policies as sexual apartheid in the 1990s. He emphasized the need for international law to criminalize these policies, stating that they not only harm present Afghan generations but also perpetuate gender dehumanization for future ones.

Afghanistan, Malaysia to cooperate with each other

KABUL (BNA): Naqibullah Ahmadi, Charge d'Affaires of Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, met with Dato' Jaafar Sidik, the Director General of the National Archives of Malaysia, at the office of the National Archives.

During the meeting, both sides provided information about the archives of their respective countries and discussed the initiation of cooperation.

In this meeting, Naqibullah Ahmadi, stated that Afghanistan has a rich ancient history spanning thousands of years. This country has witnessed various empires and civilizations, with historical, cultural, and civilizational artifacts from



each era preserved in the National Archives of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Dato' Jaafar Sidik expressed hope for future bilateral cooperation with the National Archives of Afghanistan under Malaysia's technical training program. This cooperation would include the training of experts, the

exchange of systems, and collaboration in the digitization of documents.

It is worth mentioning that during the meeting, they reviewed various artifacts, writings, historical documents, diplomatic notes, and other items related to Afghanistan preserved in the National Archives of Malaysia.

Propaganda to divide people from IE ineffective

KABUL (TOLONews): Khairullah Khairkhwa, Acting Minister of Information and Culture, stated at the Gul Senjed Poetry program in Logar that propaganda efforts aimed at creating a distance between the people and the Islamic Emirate are ineffective.

Khairkhwa said that the purpose of organizing such literary programs is to encourage poets and strengthen national unity.

Khairullah Khairkhwa said: "There is false and negative propaganda on social media. Judges, commanders, representatives, and mullahs are involved and interfere in everything.

These are the devils. We must respect our nation, observe these programs, and find peace in our hearts."

Several participants of the poetry program requested that such programs be organized in the remote areas of the province.

Sayedullah Zaeen, a participant, said: "I have come to the Gul Senjed Poetry program for the first time, and the entire program was good because poets recited their poems in each segment. More attention should be paid to poetry programs, and they should be expanded to districts and remote areas. There, poets will rise and

share their poems with each other, creating an atmosphere of love and brotherhood."

Sabaon, another participant, said: "The poetry program was good and should be organized more for the youth because it encourages them to learn from others."

These participants consider the organization of such literary programs in remote areas essential for discovering hidden talents and capacities.

This poetry program is held annually in Logar province, attracting poets and cultural enthusiasts from various provinces.

Art exhibition held in Kabul to encourage artists

KABUL (TOLONews): An educational institution organized an exhibition with the aim of showcasing artwork and encouraging artists in Kabul.

The exhibition's organizers stated that paintings, calligraphy, and miniatures by more than 10 artists were displayed at the exhibition. Mohammad Mansour Rahimi, the exhibition organizer, said: "In this exhibition, miniatures, painting, and calligraphy artworks are displayed, featuring nature scenes and very interesting landscapes."

Several exhibition participants said such exhibitions are beneficial for encouraging artists and the requested more of such programs.

Khadija, one of the participants, said: "Holding such exhibitions is very useful because we can showcase our artworks."



Zahra, another participant, said: "Such exhibitions that contribute to the growth of art in the country should be held more often

so that we can display our works."

According to the organizers, the exhibition was held for one day.



KARACHI: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami holding a protest against Israeli airstrikes on Gaza

PTI criticizes govt's stance on US's resolution

F.P. Report

MINGORA: Barrister Gohar, a prominent leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has expressed strong criticism of the current government, accusing it of a lack of commitment to investigating election-related issues and dismissing the significance of a resolution by the US House of Representatives.

In his recent statement, Barrister Gohar emphasized that the opposition plays a crucial role in any democracy, a role he believes is being undermined by the current administration.

"The government does not want to investigate the issue of elections," Gohar asserted, pointing out that the resolution passed by the US House of Representatives should not be viewed as interference by the American government. He further noted that PTI was not consulted regarding the resolution passed in Pakistan's National Assembly.

Gohar highlighted the fundamental importance of the opposition in a democratic setup and accused the government of lacking tolerance and understanding of the opposition's role.

"There is no tolerance in

this government. They do not know what opposition is," he stated, adding that he had not read the American resolution presented in the National Assembly but understood it addressed the need for ensuring human rights and transparent elections. The PTI leader also condemned the government for not allowing opposition members to speak in the assembly, labeling this as a suppression of democratic discourse. He specifically criticized a statement made by Defense Minister Khawaja Asif during the National Assembly session, claiming it had caused damage to the country's reputation. "Khawaja Asif made this statement without taking the assembly into confidence. He could not defend his statement," Gohar said, condemning the minister's remarks for portraying Pakistan negatively on the international stage.

Gohar also brought attention to the recent actions taken against the opposition leader in the Punjab Assembly, whose vehicle, office, and staff were withdrawn, an act that PTI strongly condemns. The controversy stems from a resolution passed in the National Assembly yesterday, which responded to

a resolution in the US House of Representatives. The National Assembly's resolution, introduced by Member of Assembly Shaista Parvez Malik, expressed concern over the American resolution's remarks regarding the use of Pakistani votes in the upcoming February 2024 elections. The resolution in the National Assembly underscored Pakistan's status as a free and independent country that will not tolerate external interference in its internal matters.

The National Assembly's resolution also urged the US and the international community to address the plight of people in Gaza and Occupied Kashmir, calling for attention to human rights violations in these regions. The resolution conveyed Pakistan's desire to foster mutual relations at an international level and expressed expectations for a constructive role from the US House of Representatives in the future. This development marks a significant moment in Pakistan's ongoing political discourse, highlighting the tensions between the government and the opposition, as well as the country's sensitive stance on international interference and human rights issues.

KP govt decides setup of separate secretariat for southern dists

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided establishment of separate Secretariat for southern districts of the province.

According to a notification issued here on Saturday the competent authority Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is pleased to authorize Muhammad Abid Majeed (PCS SG BS-21) Additional Chief Secretary, Home and Tribal Affairs Department to act as Additional Chief Secretary (South) (designate), in addition to his existing responsibilities, with immediate effect, till further orders.

The Additional Chief Secretary (South) (designate) will prepare a concrete proposal for consideration of the Provincial Cabinet regarding establishment of separate secretariat for southern districts comprising of Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan Divisions alongwith their relevant merged districts, for all the Departments and their Directorates.

The ACS will also finalize proposal in consultation with all stakeholders for formulating legal framework, amendments in Rules of Business, Financial and Administrative Powers independent of the existing structure for efficient and focused planning, execution, service delivery and other related matters. He will be answerable to the Chief Minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

CJP emphasises justice, role of women in societal growth

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa says no society can grow without justice. CJP Isa said that representation of women in all sectors is necessary. He said it while addressing a symposium in Islamabad titled 'Access to Justice for All'.

Justice Isa said that women have been given their rights by the Constitution of Pakistan. Women's participation in every sector will be ensured, the CJ said, adding new laws can be adopted to protect women's rights.

He said that the Constitution guarantees the protection of women in the workplace. He said that children from 5 to 16 years of age should get an education. He further said that the performance of women on reserved seats in the assembly is better than that of men. Moreover, women can also be directly elected. The chief justice said that Islam has given rights to women, the first word of the Quran is Iqra which does not differentiate between the two (men and women). He said that there is a Qazf in Islam and our law.

The CJ said that men are also complaining that there is a quota system for women. The right to inherit for women is an important problem in our country. The chief justice said that Islam has made the share of women in inheritance. In Islam, the condition of four witnesses is necessary to prove adultery. "Accusing or desecrating women is punishable by 80 lashes in the Quran," he said.

Tehran to hold run-off presidential polls on July 5

TEHRAN (Reuters): Iran is set to hold a run-off presidential election on July 5 after none of the candidates managed to secure more than 50% of the votes amid historic low turnout on Friday.

"None of the candidates could garner the absolute majority of the votes, therefore, the first and second contenders who got the most votes will be referred to the Guardian Council for the second round," said an Interior Ministry spokesperson Mohsen Eslami.

The presidential elections, which were not due until 2025, were brought forward after late president Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash last month. The polls coincide with escalating regional tension due to the 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 programme.

With more than 24 million votes counted, moderate lawmaker Massoud Pezeshkian led with over 10 million votes ahead of hardline diplomat Saeed Jalili with over 9.4 million votes, the interior ministry said on Saturday. The run-off will see Pezeshkian and Jalili contesting each other to secure their place as Raisi's successor as the duo emerged as leading candidates in yesterday's polls.

Pezeshkian 69, is a heart surgeon who has represented the northern city of Tabriz in parliament since 2008. He served as health minister under Iran's last reformist president Mohammad Khatami, who held office from 1997 to 2005 and has endorsed Pezeshkian's bid in the current elections. Meanwhile, Jalili is a former nuclear negotiator and held several senior positions in the country, including in Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's office in the early 2000s.

He is currently one of Khamenei's representatives in the Supreme National Security Council — Iran's highest security body. As per Eslami, parliament speaker Mohammad

Iran warns Israel of 'obliterating' war if Lebanon attacked

TEHRAN (Reuters): Iran on Saturday warned that "all Resistance Fronts," a grouping of Iran and its regional allies, would confront Israel if it attacks Lebanon. The comment from Iran's mission to New York comes with fears of a wider regional war involving Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement. The two sides have engaged in near-daily exchanges of fire since the war in Gaza began. Such exchanges have escalated this month, alongside bellicose rhetoric from both sides. Israel's military said plans for a Lebanon offensive had been "approved and validated," prompting Hezbollah to respond that none of Israel would be spared in a full-blown conflict.

In a post on social media platform X, the Iranian mission said it "deems as psychological warfare the Zionist regime's propaganda about intending to attack Lebanon." But, it added, "should it embark on full-scale military aggression, an obliterating war will ensue. All options, incl. the full involvement of all Resistance Fronts, are on the table." The war in Gaza began in October when Hamas Palestinian militants attacked southern Israel. Iran, which backs Hamas, has praised the attack as a success but has denied any involvement. Alongside Hezbollah's attacks on northern Israel, Iran-backed rebels in Yemen have repeatedly struck commercial ships in the Red Sea area in what they say are acts of solidarity with the Palestinians.

Iran also backs other groups in the region. The Islamic republic has not recognized Israel since the 1979 revolution that toppled Iran's United States-backed shah. Fears of regional war also soared in April, after an air strike that levelled Iran's consulate in Damascus and killed seven Revolutionary Guards, two of them generals. Iran hit back with an unprecedented drone and missile attack on Israel on April 13-14. Iran's state media later reported explosions in the central province of Isfahan as US media quoted American officials saying Israel had carried out retaliatory strikes on its arch-rival. Tehran downplayed the reported Israeli raid.

Bagher Ghalibaf received about 3,383,340 votes and Mostafa Pourmohammadi had 206,397 votes.

Out of around 61 million eligible voters, some 24,500,000 voters headed to the polls, he added, with a turnout of around 40% — the lowest yet in the history of the country. Out of Iran's 13 previous presidential elections since the 1979 revolution, only one has led to runoffs in 2005.

The Guardian Council, which vets electoral candidates had originally approved six contenders. But a day ahead of the election, two candidates Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani and Raisi's vice president Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi dropped out of the race.

A pressing challenge faced by all

the candidates is how they would tackle the prevailing economic woes of the people who are finding it difficult to make ends meet. The next president is not expected to usher in any major policy shift on Iran's nuclear programme 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 hardline watchdog body made up of six clerics and six jurists aligned with Khamenei vets candidates. It approved just six from an initial pool of 80. Two headline candidates subsequently dropped out.

ECNEC clears re-alignment of KKH, PC-1 of New Gwadar Airport

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has cleared the re-alignment of KKH between Thakot and Raikot at a estimated cost of RMB 13.067 billion as well as the revised PC-1 of New Gwadar International Airport.

The new Gwadar Airport was scheduled to become operational within the current calendar year. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday chaired that ECNEC meeting held at Prime Minister's House due to other pre-occupations of the Prime Minister. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister, Planning Minister, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, representatives of provincial governments as well as senior officers.

The meeting considered 21 agenda items recommended to it in various meetings of Central Development Working Party (CDWP) and accorded approval for 19 projects. To expedite the reconstruction and rehabilitation of flood affected areas in Balochistan, the forum accorded approval to 4 sub-components of \$400 million World Bank funded Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Programme (IFRAP). This included \$155 million housing reconstruction and restoration sub-component, \$50 million road infrastructure sub-component, \$40 million livelihoods component and \$30 million irrigation

infrastructure component.

An amount of Rs 11.2 billion has been allocated in Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2024-25 for reconstruction projects in Balochistan. The forum directed that reconstruction activities in Balochistan be undertaken expeditiously while ensuring top quality. A number of projects being undertaken in Sindh were also approved by the forum, including the revised Flood Response Emergency Housing Project at a cost of Rs 296 billion, including Rs 50 billion committed by the federal government.

An amount of Rs 30 billion has been allocated in PSDP 2024-25 as federal share for housing reconstruction in Sindh. The Chair informed the forum that the federal government remained committed to providing its share in housing reconstruction efforts in Sindh. Other projects included in Sindh ADP that were approved included Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project Phase-II and Competitive and Livable City of Karachi.

The forum also cleared revised PC-I of operationalization of Green Line BRTS in Karachi at a rationalized cost of Rs 13.502 billion while observing that Sindh government consider increasing the fare to reduce subsidy being borne by the federal government as well as NHA executed rehabilitation and reconstruction of 86-km long stretch of national highway (N-5) between Moro and Ranipur. Other projects approved by

the forum included electrical and mechanical works and allied buildings as well as access roads of Lowari tunnel at a cost of Rs 33.257 billion and 48 MW Jagran Hydro power station at Rs 13.995 billion so that the project is completed by December 2024.

The forum also extended the Sehat Sahulat Program till end December 2024 with the direction to Ministry of National Health Services to submit by 15 September its recommendations regarding shifting the program to current budget, improving its fiscal sustainability and reforming the regulatory and monitoring framework. Prime Minister's Programme for Elimination of Hepatitis C Infection was also approved at a cost of Rs 68.25 billion to be shared equally between federal government and provinces. The Ministry of National Health Services was tasked to prepare an implementation plan with well-defined targets and measurable indicators within 3 months.

The forum also directed the Planning Commission to carry out an exercise for reviewing the Public Sector Development Programme in view of the shrinking fiscal space available with the federal government and timely completion of on-going projects. The forum did not clear the re-modified PC-I for the up-gradation of Railways main line-1 (ML-1) and advised the Pakistan Railways to consider preparing smaller projects and packages with specific for financing and implementation.

Israeli forces intensify attacks in Shujayea as Gaza death toll rises

GAZA: The Israeli military has said its troops are intensifying operations in the Shujayea neighbourhood east of Gaza City and "fighting simultaneously above and below ground". In a situational update on Saturday, it claimed troops had eliminated "a large number of terrorists" over the past day and located a weapons storage facility within a school compound.

It said the air force also struck "terror targets and armed terrorist cells, including a terrorist cell that was on its way to fire at troops". The Israeli military earlier issued a statement requiring residents in Shujayea and adjacent areas to move southwards along the arterial Salah al-Din Street, which crosses the length of the enclave.

Reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary said Israeli forces targeted a group of Palestinians in Gaza City trying to fill water containers at a distribution point. "Four Palestinians from the same family, the al-Ghazi family, were killed in this shelling. Among them was a child," she said.

"We saw a video online showing the child in the arms of his father, covered with blood, lying on the ground before the paramedics were able to go and transfer them to the hospital." United Nations spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the new Israeli offensive in Shujayea has forced the displacement of "at least 60,000" residents.

"Humanitarian partners are reporting new displacement ... Yesterday, the Israeli military ordered people living in 28 residential blocks in areas east of Gaza City to immediately

evacuate ... at least 60,000 people were displaced from this area, which spans over seven square kilometres (2.7 square miles)". Dujarric said.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army said its troops were continuing its intelligence-based operation in Rafah in southern Gaza and had "eliminated numerous terrorists in the area" over the past day. In central Gaza, the army said it "eliminated numerous terrorists" on the ground, and the air force had struck "several anti-tank missile posts". Two projectiles were also identified crossing from Gaza into Israel's Sderot — the Aerial Defense Array intercepted one, and the other fell into an open area.

Dujarric also said that a military operation in the area of al-Mawasi in southern Gaza, designated a "safe zone" by Israel, resulted in many casualties and the displacement of at least 5,000 people. At least two people were killed in an Israeli bombing near al-Istiqama Mosque in the al-Jnaina neighbourhood east of Rafah, sources told Al Jazeera.

A number of others were injured when Israeli forces opened fire in the vicinity of al-Alam roundabout, west of Rafah. On Saturday, Gaza's Ministry of Health said at least 37,834 people have been killed and 86,858 wounded in Israel's war on Gaza since October 7. The updated death toll included 40 Palestinians killed and 224 wounded in the past 24-hour reporting period, it said.

Meanwhile, Palestinian fighters engaged Israeli forces in fierce battles in northern Gaza City's Shujayea neighbourhood a day after tanks and troops rolled in and sent tens of thousands of terrified civilians fleeing. In

a statement, al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, said it blew up a booby-trapped residential building in Shujayea, killing four Israeli soldiers and wounding five others.

The improvised explosive device used was an undetonated F-16 missile recovered intact after it was fired from an Israeli warplane, it said. The Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, said its fighters also continue to engage in "violent clashes" while "inflicting deaths and injuries" in attacks with anti-tank rockets and small-arms fire.

A day earlier, Israeli forces carried out heavy air and artillery attacks and sent armoured vehicles into war-ravaged northern Gaza in a renewed assault after pulling out in January saying Hamas had been "dismantled" in the area. Palestinian civilians are leaving on foot carrying their meagre belongings through rubble-strewn streets in the intense summer heat. Israel displaced at least 60,000 people from Gaza City since Thursday, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.

No official confirmation of soldiers' deaths Shujayea was immediately available on Friday but Israel's military did report one soldier was killed and nine were wounded in clashes throughout Gaza over the last 24 hours. Ground operations backed by air raids are continuing in northern Gaza, killing "dozens" of fighters, the army said on Friday. The heavy fighting follows comments by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week suggesting the "intense phase" of the war is winding down. — Aljazeera

US has sent Israel thousands of 2,000-pound bombs since Oct 7

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The Biden administration has sent to Israel large numbers of munitions, including more than 10,000 highly destructive 2,000-pound bombs and thousands of Hellfire missiles, since the start of the war in Gaza, said two US officials briefed on an updated list of weapons shipments.

Between the war's start last October and recent days, the United States has transferred at least 14,000 of the MK-84 2,000-pound bombs, 6,500 500-pound bombs, 3,000 Hellfire precision-guided air-to-ground missiles, 1,000 bunker-buster bombs, 2,600 air-dropped small-diameter bombs, and other munitions, according to the officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly.

While the officials didn't give a timeline for the shipments, the totals suggest there has been no significant drop-off in US military sup-

port for its ally, despite international calls to limit weapons supplies and a recent administration decision to pause a shipment of powerful bombs.

Experts said the contents of the shipments appear consistent with what Israel would need to replenish supplies used in this eight-month intense military campaign in Gaza, which it launched after the Oct. 7 attack by Palestinian Hamas militants who killed 1,200 people and took 250 others hostage, according to Israeli tallies. "While these numbers could be expended relatively quickly in a major conflict, this list clearly reflects a substantial level of support from the United States for our Israeli allies," said Tom Karako, a weapons expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, adding that the listed munitions were the type Israel would use in its fight against

Hamas or in a potential conflict with Hezbollah.

The delivery numbers, which have not been previously reported, provide the most up-to-date and extensive tally of munitions shipped to Israel since the Gaza war began. Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah have been trading fire since the start of the Gaza war, and concern is rising that an all-out war could break out between the two sides.

The White House declined to comment. Israel's Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The shipments are part of a bigger list of weapons sent to Israel since the Gaza conflict began, one of the US officials said. A senior Biden administration official on Wednesday told reporters that Washington has since Oct. 7 sent \$6.5 billion worth of weapons to Israel.