

Vawda submits reply in SC

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Faisal Vawda has submitted reply in the Supreme Court over a contempt of court notice. Vawda, an independent senator from Sindh, refused to tender an unconditional apology over a press conference on May 15. "The press conference was not aimed at insulting the judiciary and it was meant for the betterment of the country," Faisal Vawda said in his reply to the court.



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BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrives in Shenzhen on his 5-day official visit to China.

NEPRA raises power tariff by Rs3.76 per unit

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Tuesday hiked the per unit price of electricity by Rs3.76 per unit on account of quarterly fuel adjustment.

According to a notification issued by the power regulator, the increase will be applicable for three months this year — June, July and August. As a result of the latest hike in electricity prices, consumers will face higher electricity bills, with additional rates of Rs 1.90 per unit in June, Rs

0.93 per unit in July and August.

Furthermore, this tariff hike will add an additional burden of Rs 46.61 billion on electricity consumers and will also be applicable to K-electric consumers. Earlier this month, Nepra authorised ex-Wapda distribution companies (XW-Disco) to levy a Rs2.83 per unit charge in consumers' electricity bills for May as part of fuel cost adjustment (FCA) charges. Nepra said the FCA pertains to the month of March.

In April, Nepra raised

the power tariff by Rs4.9 per unit on account of fuel adjustment for the month of February 2024, warning that demand was continuously declining which would result in to a further increase in the tariff. The power regulator has reviewed and assessed a National Average Uniform increase of Rs4.9213 per kilowatt hour (kWh) in the applicable tariff for former Wapda power distribution companies (XWDISCOs) on account of variations in the fuel charges for February.

PTI ready to hold talks with 'real power': Alvi

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Former president and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Dr Arif Alvi said on Tuesday that his party would hold dialogue with the one who has real power to make decisions.

He stated this while responding to a question about the impression that incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan was not in favour of holding dialogue with his political opponents to bring stability to the country. The statement came after multiple calls from the incumbent government urging the embattled Imran Khan-founded party to hold talks to find a solution to end the political crisis, however, the former ruling party failed to give a clear response so far.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Alvi also said that he has "lost all hope as accountability is impossible in Pakistan". He praised the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) verdict in the diplomatic cable case for which he claimed that "the case was lodged for no reason". As a former head of the state, Dr Alvi maintained that it was prerogative of a prime minister to decide whether to apprise the nation or not regarding a cipher.

The ex-president criticised that the "entire elite class is opposing the accountability or investigation" into the sensitive matters. "I have lost all hope as accountability is impossible in our country," he added. "From [former military ruler] Ayub Khan till today, accountability is not our priority. Our people are so sure to see no justice here in Pakistan," he alleged.

"Pakistan has suffered a major loss due to regime change," Alvi said referring to the ouster of PTI-led government in April 2022. He went on to say that the political developments also impacted the national economy by creating uncertainty everywhere which led the local business class to invest abroad.

IHC orders to de-seal PTI office in Islamabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered the Capital Development Authority to immediately de-seal Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) office in the federal capital.

Justice Saman Riffat announced the reserved decision early on Tuesday, accepting the PTI's plea against the office being sealed. CDA had sealed the office, located in Islamabad's G-8 sector, a few days ago for 'violating building rules'.

As part of an anti-encroachment operation, a portion of the PTI headquarters was demolished, while the political party's office was sealed, earlier this month. As per the CDA officials' statement, a large-scale encroachment was established by occupying land adjacent to the plot.

Despite several warnings and notices, including ones issued on November 19, 2020, February 22, 2021, June 14, 2022, and September 4, 2023, the violations were not addressed, while on May 10, 2024, the CDA issued orders to seal the plot, the CDA

spokesperson added. Asked about the operation, CDA had claimed that it was part of a campaign against encroachment in the capital and was being carried out without any discrimination.

Court stays execution of five court-martialled former naval officers: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday stayed the execution of five former naval officers who were sentenced to death by the General Court Martial (GCM).

In a written order issued by the IHC, Justice Babar Sattar noted that the case before the court relates to the fundamental rights of the petitioners guaranteed under Articles 9 and 10 A of the Constitution. "It is the contention of the petitioners that they were granted death sentence in a General Court Martial (GCM) and during such proceedings they were not allowed the assistance of a counsel," it added.

Further, the verdict said a counsel for the petitioners submitted that the permissible documents to be shared with the petitioners such as the abstract of evidence and court of inquiry were also not shared with them. As per the order, the petitioner

stated that without access to such documents an appeal was filed, which was dismissed, and the death sentence was upheld.

The petitioners' counsel was only provided with limited access and the counsel of the petitioners was shown some documents, which prevented the petitioners from defending their rights, the order cited the petitioner as saying. As per the assistant attorney general, the chief of the naval staff has the discretion "to form an opinion that supply of any proceedings may be prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State".

The chief of naval staff has formed an opinion that sharing details of the proceedings, including the findings recorded by the GCM and the order passed in appeal upholding the death penalty, would be prejudicial to the safety or the interests of the state, the verdict added. "The question before the court is as to how the interests of the State are to be balanced against the interests of an individual to his right to live as well as his right to due process guaranteed by Articles 9 and 10A of the Constitution.

Modi claims victory for his alliance in India's general election

NEW DELHI (AP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed victory for his alliance on Tuesday in India's general election, despite a lackluster performance from his own party as it faced a stronger than expected challenge from the opposition, which pushed back against his mixed economic record and polarizing politics.

Modi told a crowd at his party's headquarters that his National Democratic Alliance will form the government for the third consecutive time, saying Indian voters had "shown immense faith" both in his party and the coalition alliance. Still, for the first time since Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party swept to power in 2014, it appeared unlikely it would secure a majority on its own, and the prime minister would instead need the support of the other parties in his coalition for his third five-year term in the world's largest democratic exercise.

That would be a stunning blow for the 73-year-old, who had hoped for a landslide victory. Despite the setback,

many of the Hindu nationalist policies he's instituted over the last 10 year remain locked in place. Modi pledged to make good on his election promise to turn India's economy, the world's third biggest, from its current fifth place, and not shirk with pushing forward with his agenda.

He said he would advance India's defense production, boost jobs for youth, raise exports and help farmers, among other things. "This country will see a new chapter of big decisions. This is Modi's guarantee," he said, speaking in the third person. In the face of surprising numbers, the opposition claimed they had also won a victory of sorts, with the main opposition Congress party saying the election had been a "moral and political loss" for Modi.

"This is public's victory and a win for democracy," Congress party President Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters. In his 10 years in power, Modi has transformed India's political landscape, bringing Hindu national-

ism, once a fringe ideology in India, into the mainstream while leaving the country deeply divided.

His supporters see him as a self-made, strong leader who has improved India's standing in the world. His critics and opponents say his Hindu-first politics have bred intolerance and while the economy, the world's fifth-largest and one of the fastest-growing, has become more unequal. The counting of more than 640 million votes cast over six weeks was expected to last into the night.

Some 12 hours into counting, partial tallies reported by India's Election Commission showed Modi's BJP was ahead in 114 constituencies and had won 126 of 543 parliamentary seats. The Congress party led in 45 constituencies and had won 54. A total of 272 seats are needed for a majority. In 2019, the BJP won 303 seats, while they secured 282 in 2014 when Modi first came to power.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance led in 147 constituencies and

won 139, according to the partial count. The Congress party is part of the INDIA alliance, which led in 131 constituencies and had won 99. The Election Commission does not release data on the percentage of votes tallied. Exit polling from the weekend had projected the NDA to win more than 350 seats. Indian markets, which had hit an all-time high on Monday, closed sharply down Tuesday, with benchmark stock indices — the NIFTY 50 and the BSE Sensex — both down by more than 5%. For Payal, a resident of the northern city of Lucknow who uses only one name, the election was about the economy and India's vast number of people living in poverty.

"People are suffering, there are no jobs, people are in such a state that their kids are compelled to make and sell tea on the roadside," Payal said. "This is a big deal for us. If we don't wake up now, when will we?" If Modi wins, it would only be the second time an Indian leader has retained power for a third term after Jawaharlal Nehru,

the country's first prime minister.

But if his BJP is forced to form a coalition, the party would likely "be heavily dependent on the goodwill of its allies, which makes them critical players who we can expect will extract their pound of flesh, both in terms of policymaking as well as government formation," said Milan Vaishnav, director of the South Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "This would be truly, you know, uncharted territory, both for Indians as well as for the prime minister," he added.

Before Modi came to power, India had coalition governments for 30 years. His BJP has always had a majority on its own while still governing in a coalition. Extreme heat struck India as voters went to the polls. While temperatures were somewhat lower on Tuesday, election officials and political parties still hauled in large quantities of water and installed outdoor air coolers for people waiting for results. Outside BJP party headquarters in

Mustafa tenders apology

KARACHI (PPI): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday tendered unconditional apology to the Supreme Court for his recent remarks against the judiciary. The Supreme Court (SC) had issued contempt of court notices to independent Senator Faisal Vawda and MQM-Pakistan MNA Mustafa Kamal over anti-judiciary rhetoric.

PM: 'We are coming with serious plans'

ISLAMABAD (APP): As Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif departed for a five-day official visit to China, he reiterated the commitment to strengthening bilateral ties by engaging in discussions with Chinese business leaders to secure investments and yield dividends, mutually beneficial for companies on both sides.

"We are coming with serious plans. We will engage with you and return to Pakistan with great dividends that will benefit Chinese and Pakistani companies and the two countries will have their relations strengthened and become much higher than the Himalayas or any other highest peaks and deeper than the deepest oceans," the prime minister said in an interview with the representatives of different Chinese media groups including Xinhua news agency, national broadcaster CCTV and CGTN Urdu, prior to his first official visit to China after assuming office.

He said through the visit, Pakistan hoped to promote interaction between enterprises in both countries, utilize Special Economic Zones and Pakistan's labor advantages to establish joint ventures, facilitate the transfer of industries and technologies, and enhance Pakistan's manufacturing output, to promote constructing upgraded China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

In a detailed interaction, the prime minister spelled out his government's priorities to improve the national economy through structural and institutional reforms, cost-cutting, industrialisation and facilitation of the investors. He said Pakistan intended to learn from Chinese experiences and build the SEZs with the first one to be developed at Pakistan Steel Mills premises already connected with the rail network and located near the port. He invited the Chinese provinces and companies to build SEZs and enter into joint ventures with Pakistani companies for mutual benefits.

Also inviting the Chinese textile

sector to set up their units in Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that during the visit he would also persuade Huawei to launch short courses for Pakistani youth in information technology and artificial intelligence to make them open their offices and offer their services in the Gulf states and send remittances back to Pakistan. Similarly, by learning from Chinese agriculture technology, Pakistan desired to multiply its agricultural produce and export them.

Discussing the bilateral relations, the prime minister said: "We are two iron brothers, our friendship is unshakable and our hearts beat together." He appreciated the Chinese support for Pakistan through the most difficult times and said Pakistan considered China one of its most trusted friends around the globe.

He said Pakistan firmly adhered to the one-China principle and this commitment would always be unwavering. About the Chinese development, he said: "Today, China has become a giant through vision, hard work, and serious and untiring efforts... All doubts about the Chinese model, have been rubbished by the evidence of history."

Referring to the congratulatory message from Chinese President Xi Jinping after his election, Prime Minister Shehbaz said, "This reflected the two countries' friendship, which will always be fresh in his mind." He appreciated President Xi's leadership which steered millions of the Chinese people out of poverty and that during the visit, he wanted to learn from the Chinese model of poverty alleviation.

He said Pakistan was also ready to learn from China's governance experience, deepen reforms and counter-corruption, create enabling circumstances for Chinese investors, and provide policy support for investors. About the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said since the start of its construction in 2013, the achievements of the project had been obvious to all.

"From a more convenient and

faster transportation network to a cleaner and more stable energy infrastructure, the CPEC has brought broad development opportunities to Pakistan." He said as CPEC was entering the second phase, and a new stage of high-quality development, the two countries were cooperating in agriculture, mining, labor-intensive light industry and other fields.

Referring to the launch of Pakistan's first moon satellite and multi-mission communication satellite with Chinese support, the prime minister said the scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries had promoted Pakistan's scientific and technological progress. The multi-mission communication satellite is expected to change Pakistan's current digital environment, provide fast Internet facilities for the whole country, improve people's lives, and promote e-commerce, online government affairs and economic development, he added.

Earlier, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived here on the first leg of his five-day official visit to China from June 4 to 8, to meet the Chinese leadership and the business community. As the prime minister landed at the Shenzhen Airport, he was warmly received by Vice Mayor of Shenzhen city of China Luo Huanghao, Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, Pakistan's Ambassador in Beijing Khalil Hashmi and senior diplomatic officials.

Shenzhen is the first stop during the prime minister's official visit to China. The prime minister will meet with Secretary of Communist Party of China in Shenzhen Meng Fanli to discuss the ways to promote bilateral cooperation. During his two-day stay here, Prime Minister Shehbaz and his delegation will meet the leadership of the Guangdong province and Shenzhen Municipal Government as well as leading Chinese companies in innovation and high-tech sectors.

(Continued on Back Page)

Reserved seats: Apex court resumes hearing on SIC's plea

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Hearing the Sunni Ittehad Council's appeal for allotment of reserved seats, the Supreme Court on Tuesday observed that depriving a political party of election symbol became the root cause of a series of mistakes.

The proceedings were broadcast live on the SC's website and its YouTube channel. Advocate Faisal Siddiqui, representing SIC's women candidates who were denied the reserved seats, resumed his arguments in the case. The hearing was adjourned to 9:30am, with Justice Shah stating that the counsel for both sides would have two days to sum up their arguments in the case.

During the proceedings, Justice Munib Akhtar observed that the Supreme Court decision was announced just before allocation of election symbols to parties. He remarked that there were a series of legal mistakes which began from this point. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa asked if the apex court had given ruling that the bat symbol would not be allotted to the PTI. PTI lawyer Faisal Siddiqui said, "No, the Supreme Court did not say so."

The CJP said court had not asked the PTI to not hold intra-party elections. Had the PTI conducted the intra-party elections, all the problems would have been solved, he observed. Justice Athar Minallah said the PTI was continuously complaining it had not been provided a level playing field. The chief justice said the complaint was not before the court.

Justice Minallah said the Supreme Court was responsible for protection of basic rights of the people. "We will see how to protect the basic rights of the people," he added. Justice Ayesha Malik

said the election symbol reserved for a party could not be given to a candidate of any other party.

The chief justice remarked that after apex court ruling if the PTI candidates declared themselves independent and demanded bat symbol? He observed that the PTI deprived its people of democratic right by not holding intra-party polls. He remarked, "The ECP decisions are challenged everyday. You are not now independents." In response to the SIC lawyer's argument that there wouldn't have been any problem if the apex court had explained its verdict on the bat symbol, the chief justice said the issue of reserved seats would simply not have existed if the PTI had conducted its intra-party polls.

"Why did you not ask for the bat as an independent candidate," the CJP asked Advocate Siddiqui. He said the party should've declared its candidates independents and should've then sought the bat symbol. "You should've at least tried to secure the bat symbol. The SC would then have seen whether it was to be allotted to you or not," the CJP said.

"All independent candidates cannot ask for bat," the counsel replied, stressing that Salman Akram Raja had even requested the ECP to be declared a PTI candidate. However, he added, Raja's request was dismissed. "Don't blame everything on the SC," the CJP clapped back. "Had the elections been held, they would've benefited the PTI members themselves. If you want to talk about democracy, then follow it to the letter," the CJP remarked.

"Start from the beginning, don't talk about the ECP and the establishment," he added. Justice Muneeb remarked that a candidate who portrays himself as

belonging to a party will be considered to be affiliated with it. Only those will be considered independent candidates who submit an affidavit that he is not affiliated with any political party, he said.

"How can the ECP's law declare PTI's candidates independents," Justice Munib noted. Last week, a full court had been formed to hear the case, except for the ailing Justice Musarrat Hilali. A 13-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justices Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Munib Akhtar, Yahya Afridi, Aminuddin Khan, Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Ayesha Malik, Athar Minallah, Syed Hasnain Azhar Rizvi, Shahid Waheed, Irfan Saadat Khan and Naem Akhtar Afghan, resumed the hearing on Monday.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) opposed the Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) petition against the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) verdict that denied it reserved seats for women and minorities. Earlier in May, the apex court had suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to allocate SIC's reserved seats to other parties.

SIC lawyer Faisal Siddiqui and Advocate General for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal appeared before the top court. SIC's Siddiqui said there were two different petitions filed before the apex court while the advocate general said a contempt of court plea had been filed before the PHC against the provincial government. The chief justice asked who were beneficiaries in the reserved seats case.

New Delhi, supporters banged drums and bells as the counting was underway. Earlier, party workers performed a Hindu ritual. Meanwhile, supporters at the Congress party headquarters appeared upbeat and chanted slogans praising Rahul Gandhi, the face of the party's campaign.

Speaking at the press conference with party president Kharge, Gandhi said he saw the figures as a message from the people. "The poorest of this country have defended the constitution of India," he said. Over 10 years in power, Modi's popularity has been stripped that of his party's, and turned a parliamentary election into one that increasingly resembled a presidential-style campaign. The result is that the BJP relies more and more on Modi's enduring brand to stay in power, with local politicians receding into the background even in state elections. "Modi was not just the prime campaigner, but the sole campaigner of this election," said Yamini Aiyar, a public policy scholar.

Qatari envoy calls on CM Maryam

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Qatar Ali Bin Mubarkh Al Khater called on Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday.

Matters of mutual interests and potential investment opportunities came under discussions during the meeting. A principal decision was taken to promote economic relation between Punjab and Qatar.

On the occasion, the chief minister informed the envoy about the business-friendly policies of the Punjab government and invited the Qatri businessmen to invest in the province.

CM launches Kisan Card to facilitate farmers: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has initiated the registration process for the Kisan Card, underscoring her commitment to boosting the productivity and prosperity of farmers.

Under the project, agricultural loans worth Rs 300 billion will be given to farmers annually. 500,000 farmers in Punjab, owning up to 12.5 acres of agriculture land, will be able to benefit from the project.

The CM informed that in order to apply for the card, land must be registered in Land Record Center, and the mobile SIM must be registered against applicant's own ID card number.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif said every farmer will be able to get an easy loan of up to Rs 150,000 for one crop season using Kisan Card." Farmers will be able to buy fertilizers, seeds and other agricultural inputs with the card. Identity card of the farmer will be verified by NADRA, and it will be ensured that the applicant is not a defaulter of any financial institution.

The CM said the farmer will return the easy installments of interest-free loan within six months. She highlighted that after paying off the loan, the farmer will be eligible to get a loan again for the next crop.

Maryam Nawaz said for registration, applicants can send PKC (Space) ID card number to 8070 from their registered mobile number.



KARACHI: Vendors display sacrificial animals in connection with upcoming Eid al-Adha near Mazar-e-Quaid. —APP Photo

Chinese delegation visits PU

LAHORE (APP): A Chinese delegation, comprising Tong Tao, Li Dongdong and Ms Ai Wanqiao from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, on Tuesday visited Punjab University (PU) Pakistan Study Centre (PSC).

Director PSC Prof Dr Naumana Kiran welcomed the guests and introduced to the faculty while the Chairman Department of Archaeology Dr Muhammad Hameed and students were also present. The delegation was informed that the Institute of Belt & Road was established at PSC in association with Jiangsu Normal University, China, and scholars as well as student's exchanges have taken place under this linkage. The delegation showed deep interest in the activities carried out by the centre, especially with Chinese institutes.

CM distributes Rs 71m among NGOs

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah distributed cheques worth Rs 71.252 million to NGOs working for the purchase of assistive devices for differently-abled persons.

The cheque distribution ceremony was held at the Chief Minister's House and attended by Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD) Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC) Rs11.446 million, Autism Care & Rehabilitation Organization (ACRO) Rs 1.557 million, Pakistan Association of Blind (PAB) National Rs 9.430 million, Special Children School Karsaz of Pak navy Rs 4.178 million, Imran Rehabilitation Centre (Shareef Haroon Trust) Rs 3.5 million, NGO for Development of Special Persons (NDSP) Rs 586,000 and Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council (PWCC) Rs 1.425 million.

JI condemns target killings, murders in street crimes

KARACHI (PPI): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Ameer Munem Zafar has expressed his profound grief and grave concerns over the target killing of an industrialist and murder of another youth while offering resistance to street criminals.

The JI leader expressed these views at Idara Noor-e-Haq, here on Tuesday while commenting over the recent spike in target killing and street crimes in the mega city. Speaking on the occasion, he said that 20-year-old Abdul vander Basit was gunned down in Karachi in a bid to snatch mobile phone and cash, whereas Asif Salman Balwani was targeted in the broad day light.

At one hand, Karachiites have already been facing a hell like situation due to skyrocketing street crimes, whereas on the other hand a fresh spree of target killing has been witnessed in the city, he said, asking what their fault was. The Sindh government, the police department and other law enforcement agencies have failed in Karachi when it comes to the security of life and possession, he said.

ڈسٹرکٹ ایجوکیشن آفیسر زنا ناطقہ ضلع ہنگو

درخواستیں مطلوب ہیں۔

محکمہ تعلیم زنا ناطہ کے جو ملازمین دوران ملازمت فوت ہوئے ہیں یا میڈیکل بورڈ کے ذریعے رٹائرڈ ہو چکے ہیں ان کے لواحقین سے بی ایس ٹی BPS-12، جونیئر ٹیک BPS-11، لی اسٹنٹ BPS-07 اور کلاس نوٹر BPS-03 پر تقرری کیلئے اس اشتہار کے پندرہ دن کے اندر اپنی درخواستیں ڈسٹرکٹ ایجوکیشن آفیسر زنا ناطہ ضلع ہنگو کے دفتر میں جمع کریں تاکہ پابندی قسم ہونے کے بعد ضروری کارروائی عمل میں لائی جاسکے۔ مقررہ تاریخ کے بعد درخواستیں ناقابل قبول ہوگی۔ جن امیدواروں نے پہلے درخواستیں جمع کئے ہیں۔ وہ دوبارہ صرف درخواست جمع کریں۔ نوٹ: مندرجہ ذیل کاغذات اپنے درخواست کے ساتھ رکھیں۔

- 1۔ PPO بہودریا زونٹ آرڈر 2۔ سٹیٹنگ ٹگ میڈیکل بورڈ بہودریا زونٹ آرڈر، راجپوت سروس بک 3۔ نادرہ سے دستخط سرٹیفکیٹ 4۔ نادرہ سے ایف آر ڈی 5۔ سرٹیفکیٹ دوران سروس کوئی محتلف سکول انچارج سے 6۔ بیان لکھی (اعلامیہ سہجہ) کہ ہم بہن بھائیوں اور والدہ میں سے کسی نے بھی درج بالا کو نہ پرکھی ہماری نہیں ہوا ہے 7۔ بیوہ، بھائی، بہن یا اگر نہ لکھیجیشن میں ملازم ہو تو، اکی 1st Appointment Order 8۔ زنا ناطہ امیدواری حکومت میں حیرت سرٹیفکیٹ 9۔ تعلیمی اسناد بہودریا ضلع ہنگو (تصدیق شدہ) کو تحریر

حسرت زہرہ

ڈسٹرکٹ ایجوکیشن آفیسر زنا ناطہ ضلع ہنگو

INF(P)1186/24

Name Correction

My correct name is Waqar Ahmad Siddiqui S/o Iftikhar Ahmad Siddiqui while mistakenly written in my documents as Waqar Ahmed S/o Iftikhar Ahmed please make the required correction in it as Waqar Ahmad Siddiqui S/o Iftikhar Ahmad Siddiqui.

مشتري هوشيار باش

محالیاں پیر زادہ مرحوم ولد گل محمد مرحوم متعلق میاں گوہر خان تحصیل پشاور مورخہ 22.11.2021 کو رضاے الٰہی سے انتقال کر گئے ہیں۔ مرحوم کے سوگواران میں (1) نرین (بیوہ) (2) طاہر الیاس (نابالغ دختر) (3) عائشہ الیاس (نابالغ دختر) (4) حفصہ الیاس (نابالغ دختر) اور عمر الیاس (نابالغ بیٹا) شامل ہیں۔ مرحوم کے نام منقول اور غیر منقول جائیداد ہے۔ سوگواران اور ناکہ کے علم میں یہ بات آئی ہے کہ چونکہ لوگ ہمارے علم میں لائے بغیر ہمارے نام سے فرضی اور جھوٹی عقار نامے بنا کر لین دین کر رہے ہیں جس سے ہمیں غلط طور پر انکار کر کے۔

لہذا اس نوٹ کے ذریعہ اطلاع عام دی جاتی ہے کہ ہم کسی قسم کے لین دین کے ذمہ دار نہیں ہوں گے۔

TENDER NOTICE

Bids/Quotations are invited from well reputed, authorized Dealers/Firms/Companies for purchase of the following equipment for a UNDP-Funded project.

Procurement of Equipments

S.No	Particular	Qty
1.	Core i9 14th Generation 14900/M3 Pro Chip, 14-inch, Minimum 16GB RAM, Minimum 512GB SSD	04

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

1. Firm/organization can express their interest via email: procurementglor@gmail.com.
2. The bids should reach on or before 01/07/2024 up to 11:30 AM which will be opened on the same day at 12:00 PM in the presence of the representatives of the firms who choose to be present.
3. Bids will be evaluated under single stage single envelop procedure of KPRA Rules 6 (2)(1) of 2014.
4. The firms/vendors should be registered with sales tax and income department and must be reflected on active tax payer list of FBR. The bidder is also required to be registered with KPRA.
5. Incomplete tender shall not be entertained.
6. The firms/vendors shall be bound to supply the items within the stipulated time as mentioned in the purchase order or tender form.
7. All taxes levied by the government will be deducted from the invoice of the successful bidders.
8. Bids are required to be valid for 02 months.
9. The Competent Authority may rejects all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal. The Procuring agency shall upon request communicate to any bidder, the ground for its rejection of all bids or proposal, but shall not be required to justify those grounds.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders for supply of **Raw Ration, other misc: articles** for use of Central Prison Peshawar from the contractors/ firms and from the Companies/ firms registered with **Director General Health Services Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar** for the supply of standard medicines on rebate for Jail Hospital; are invited for the **Financial Year 2024-25**.

Tender Documents along with list of items/ specifications etc. of the required items can be obtained from the office of the undersigned till **25th June, 2024 (Tuesday)** during the office hours without call deposit. Articles/ items will be supplied during the financial year **2024-25 on F.O.R Jail gate basis**. The same may also be downloaded from the official websites of KPRA (www.kppra.gov.pk) and Inspectorate General of Prisons KPK (www.prisons.gov.pk)

NOTE

1. Earnest money amounting to **Rs. 3,000,000/- (Rupees Thirty Lac Only)** in the shape of call deposit in the name of the **Superintendent Central Prison Peshawar** is obligatory at the time of submitting tender documents. In the absence of earnest money, tender of the concerned firm/ contractor will be rejected.
2. Tender documents along with list/ specification of required items duly completed in sealed envelopes will be dropped in the box placed in Jail premises latest by **10:30 am on 26th June, 2024 (Wednesday)** after which no tender/ envelop will be received/ allowed to be dropped in the box/accepted.
3. Sealed Tenders will be opened at **11:00 am on 26th June, 2024 (Wednesday)** in the office of the Superintendent Central Prison Peshawar in the presence of the Committee and contractors/ their authorized representatives who opt to be present.
4. Income Tax, Sales Tax, Professional Tax, Stamp Duty or any other tax(es) levied by the Government will be deducted from the contractors/ suppliers in accordance with the rules/ policy.
5. In case of failure in timely supply or supply of substandard items or failure to abide by the rules/ terms and conditions of contract, the required ration items will be purchased from market on prevailing market rates and the difference shall be deducted from the Bill/ Security of the contractor; moreover, the concerned contractor/ supplier may be black listed and his earnest money/ security may be forfeited to the state besides levying of fine.
6. Proof of registration with Revenue Authority and being a filer/ taxpayer must be submitted at the time of obtaining tender documents. The inclusion of the contractor/ firm in the ATI Active list is also mandatory.
7. Certification from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Authority under Section 15 of **KPFS&HFA Act 2014** and a letter of satisfactory performance from a client/ reference must be produced at time of obtaining tender documents.
8. Financial position of the last **three years** including bank statements/ audit report must be produced at the time of obtaining tender documents.
9. Purchase Committee reserves the right to reject the tender of any contractor/ firm wholly or partially by assigning reasons.
10. Final approval of the rates/ contract will be accorded by the Competent Authority.

INF(P)1189/2024

SUPERINTENDENT
CENTRAL PRISON PESHAWAR. Phone & Fax: 091-9210544

**MobilinkBank**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

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

Branch	Haripur
Branch code	0017
Date of auction	13 th June 2024
Time	12:00 PM
Call deposit	PKR 3000/-

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address
Nimra Noor	61101-5939569-6	Doyan Abi, P/O Kts Tehsil & District Haripur.

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

Mobilink Bank

**MobilinkBank**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

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

Branch	Mardan
Branch code	0019
Date of auction	11 th June 2024
Time	12:00 PM
Call deposit	PKR 2000/-

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address
Azmat Ali	16101-1003003-7	Machine Korona, Post Office Par Hoti, Mardan.

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

Mobilink Bank

Govt soon to launch ‘Ehsaas Nojawan Rozgar Scheme, says Fakhar



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jahan, has urged the youth to focus on curricular and co-curricular activities in the educational career.

He has said that our youth has natural abilities and talent in every aspect and there is a need to provide opportunities for co-curricular activities to bring out these abilities in educational institutions.

He said that the provincial government is making effective efforts to make the youth stand on their own feet and they are starting a big

project of "Ehsaas Nojawan Rozgar Scheme" in the province, which aims to empower the young generation economically.

He expressed these views while addressing the opening ceremony of "Literary Week" under Pak International Medical College at Hayatabad in Peshawar on Tuesday.

A large number of college management officials, teaching staff and students were present on this occasion. In the same festival, various activities in culture, knowledge and literature and other fields will be organized.

On this occasion, the advisor on sports said that it is very important to organize co-curricular activities

like Literary Week in our educational institutions so that the students are engaged in co-curricular activities along with the curricular activities, which is very important for the mental health and relaxation of the students.

He urged the youth to spend these precious moments of education and training on learning without wasting so that tomorrow they can become the best and successful doctors in their field for the society.

In the ceremony, other participants also addressed the event, while on this occasion, a shield was presented to advisor by chairman of the college Dr. Tariq Safi on behalf of the institution.

World Environment Day: Time to combat desertification, drought

PESHAWAR (APP): Every year, World Environment Day is being celebrated with a renewed pledge to create awareness among masses on nature issues and sensitize them against the adverse effects of climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss and desertification which are posing serious challenges to the food security and existence of living creatures. Besides environmentalists, foresters and wildlife experts, the civil society, intelligentsia, nature clubs and educational institutes have planned special programs in KP to highlight the significance of pollution free environment, and the negative effects of desertification and climate change on the living creatures. This year's theme of the World Environment Day is 'land degradation, desertification and drought resilience.'

According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, up to 40 per cent of the planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of the world's population in globe.

Likewise, the number and duration of droughts had also increased by 29 per cent since 2000 which may affect over three-quarters of the world's population by 2050. "Pakistan is also confronted to the monster challenge of desertification and prolonged droughts. A visitor could easily see the damages of desertification and drought at Swabi, Mardna, Nowshera, Peshawar, Kohat, Karak, DI Khan and Lakki Marwat while travelling on Islamabad-Peshawar motorway and Indus Highway," said Niaz Ali, former Chief Conservator of Forests KP while talking to APP.

"This earth is our home. From the day we are born till the day we die, this earth nurtures living creatures and makes us the person we become," he said, adding protection of earth from environmental challenges should be our collective responsibility.

"The nature is always nourishing and loving besides provides us with all the resources we need for living and necessary for our wellbeing. For both physical and mental wellness, nature provide us with the best of everything for survival and it is our prime duty to conserve water, forests and biodiversity for future generation. On June 5, 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held at Stockholm in Sweden. Honoring the day, in 1973, the world celebrated its first World Environment Day and since then, the special day is observed on the same day across the world including Pakistan. Niaz Ali said that land degradation and desertification mostly caused by climate change-weather patterns has been emerged as big challenge before regional countries including Pakistan to counter. Declaring desertification and land degradation are major threats to food security, he said that desertification turns fertile land barren and unproductive due persistent drought and extreme weather conditions including flooding and torrential rains.

Every year, he claimed that the drought, desertification and land degradation make around six million hectares of land unproductive and cause about USD 42 billion economic losses globally that may lead to starvation and hunger due to water scarcity in next few decades if not controlled properly. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) report revealed that more than 3.2 billion people, or two in every five, are affected by land degradation and desertification and up to 143 million could move within their countries by 2050 to escape water scarcity and falling crop productivity mainly caused by climate change.

Also, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had disclosed that the planet would reach a 1.5C increase in temperatures by 2030, leading to extreme drought, food shortage and floods. The Ex Forest Chief said about 45 percent of food consumed globally comes from the world's drylands and falling of agriculture productivity, food shortages and water scarcity in South Asia were likely to create food insecurity.

He warned that about 20 percent more productive land was likely to be degraded in South Asia in the next few decades if desertification and floods were not controlled. Professor Dr Muhammad Nafees of the Environmental Sciences Department, University of Peshawar said that Pakistan was among 110 countries in the world where about two-third of agricultural land and around 80 percent of arid and semi-arid lands were affected by land-degradation, desertification and drought.

He said our population was increasing with over two percent growth rate that started exerting extra pressure on agriculture, houses and other socioeconomic sectors. He feared that the country might face food's insecurity challenges in next few decades if the existing population continues with such high rate and the climate change issue was not addressed on priority basis. The Sustainable Land Management Program (SLMP-Phase II), a project of Ministry of Climate Change data revealed that around 1.5 to 2.5 million hectares of irrigated land, 3.5 to 4 million hectares of rain-fed agricultural, and 35 million hectares of rangelands were either becoming barren or non-productive due to desertification, land degradation and drought per year.

The underground water resources in the western dry mountains of Sindh and Balochistan are shrinking due to heavy exploitation of aquifer without any natural recharge besides excessive car washing pumping. Dr Nafees said the lowing laying areas in Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab located directly on banks of rivers were facing increased problems of land degradation due to climate change impacts, floods, improper land use practices, over-grazing, deforestation and excessive removal of vegetation for fuel. He said the unlawful cuttings of forests by local communities for domestic consumption, timber mafia and conversion of agriculture land into residential colonies have aggravated the problem of desertification and land degradation. He said the rate of deforestation nationally was about 27,000 hectare per year especially in community owned natural forests of KP and Gilgit-Baltistan, resulting an increase in dry-land areas and conversion of agricultural lands into deserts.

To combat desertification, land degradation and drought, he said sustainable land management project (SLMP) Phase-I was launched in nine dry-land districts of Pakistan where over 12,000 hectares of degraded rangeland were rehabilitated though reseeded and community based restoration of the grazing management system. Similarly, around 8,000 hectares of additional land were brought under sustainable rain-fed agriculture and water conservation measures. Following successful implementation of SLMP Phase-I, the project was later extended to 14 desertification prone districts under SLMP Phase-II in 2015 to protect the fertile land from being converted into deserts. The project was implemented in high desertification and land degradation prone areas of Chakwal, Bhakkar, Khushab, Layyah in Punjab, Tharparkar, Omarkot, Sanghar in Sindh, DI Khan, Lakki Marwat in KP, Pashin, Kila Saifullah, Mastung, Tach and Lasbella in Balochistan.

Project Director, billion trees afforestation project Diyar Khan said to counter land degradation, desertification and drought on basis of scientific management, KP's first Range Management Policy "REDD+" (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) strategy and Green Growth Initiative (GGI) was implemented, which are showing tangible results. He said that billion trees plus program was being launched for sustainable conservation of forests imperative to combat desertification and droughts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Chanzeb condoles demise of ex-IGP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzeb, Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture, went to the house of Provincial Secretary Environment, Climate Change, Forests and Wildlife Shahid Zaman in Hayatabad Peshawar and condoled with him on the demise of his father and former IG Police Gohar Zaman khan who breathed his last the other day.

The deceased's nephew and Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Department Engr Baatur Zaman was also present on this occasion. Zahid Chanzeb remained there for some time, expressed heartfelt sympathies with Shahid Zaman and other members of the family. He also offered Fateha for the deceased.

Complaint cell established

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A special cell has been established in the office of the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher, to address the issues and complaints of the public related to industries, Commerce, and Technical Education sectors. Special Assistant will personally monitor the public complaints received in the cell. In this regard the public can send their applications/complaints online through Pakistan Citizen Portal (Minister Industries) or through the office email address (sacm.industries@gmail.com).

NCHR flays targeted attack in Sargodha

PESHAWAR (APP): The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) KP strongly condemned brutal attack on Nazir Masih, in Sargodha's Mujahid Colony. In a press statement issued here on Tuesday, NCHR says it is deeply disturbing that Masih succumbed to his injuries after being severely beaten by a violent mob. This heinous act of violence resulted in the loss of a precious life. Such targeted attacks based on religion or belief are a clear violation of human rights and must be met with swift and decisive action by the authorities, it demanded.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairnig 4th meeting of Provincial Task Force on Population Welfare.

Kundi emphasizes economic and social development

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa held pivotal meetings with the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries Pakistan (FPCCI) Islamabad and the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce to discuss critical economic and social issues.

These meetings highlighted the Governor's commitment to fostering youth and women's employment, enhancing sports facilities, and implementing skill development programs across the province.

Meeting with FPCCI: In his address to the FPCCI, the Governor underscored his office's dedication to creating more employment opportunities and supporting youth and women through sports and technical vocational programs.

He urged the business community to back these initiatives, pledging full support and open communication channels. The FPCCI members raised concerns and suggestions, including the development of a special economic zone in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in Dera Ismail Khan.

They emphasized the



need for literacy programs for youth and women and campaigns against drug abuse. The Governor requested a detailed proposal from the business community to address these pressing issues.

Meeting with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce: During the meeting with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, the President of the Chamber stressed the importance of political stability for economic progress.

The Governor, representing the state of Pakistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was seen as a key figure in promoting reconciliation and stability.

Executive Member Amir Hamza highlighted the potential of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism industry, pledging support for the Governor's drug campaigns and tourism promotion efforts. The Chamber proposed inviting the diplomatic community to visit Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, particularly Swat, to showcase its beauty and potential.

The Governor assured attendees that their suggestions, including the creation of industrial estates and resolving infrastructure issues in existing economic zones, would be addressed.

He proposed the formation of a special security force for the business community and emphasized the need for transparency and a characteristic policy to ensure effective governance.

ATC Judge advocates Structural reforms in judiciary

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Syed Asghar Ali Shah said the reforms in the judiciary for provision of swift and affordable justice is need of the hour, on Tuesday.

He that after religion, the greatest blessing is patriotism, and a nation and country can progress only through patriotism.

This he said while addressing a farewell function held on his retirement eve in which judicial officers and staff bid him farewell.

Other speakers praised Syed Asghar Ali Shah's services and commitment to justice, and presented him with a shield in recognition of his services.

He expressed his concerns about the prolonged hearings of cases, which are causing frustration

among the public. He also stressed the need for accountability in the judiciary and structural changes to improve the judicial system.

He suggested that the selection process of judges must be conducted through commission examination as well as appointment of judges from the judicial officers' cadre, rather than directly from the bar in High Courts as well as in Supreme Court.

Aquaculture is emerging new potential sector, says expert

PESHAWAR (APP): Aquaculture is emerging activity providing new opportunities to the rural population in the country and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to its diverse ecological zones has an edge over other provinces.

Talking to APP, Omar Hayat Khan, a noted expert on fisheries and aquaculture said that the availability of different ecological temperature zones with land, water and human resource provide an edge to develop aquaculture as a sub sector of agriculture.

He said that the untapped renewable aquatic resource provides ample opportunities to develop export led interventions in aquaculture in the province. The untapped potential can provide employment opportunities to youth in rural areas and also provide to meet the millennium goals to which Pakistan is a signatory.

The Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has invested millions of rupees to develop hatcheries of the carp and trout fishes. But now they need further improvements to cater to the need of private sector. Adequate opportunities are available to attract foreign direct investment in the field of new technologies and new fish products which are in high demand

in the foreign markets such as warm water Grouper fish.

He said that the existing Government hatcheries can be utilized by the foreign direct investors to utilize the services of these facilities for production of fish seed and get partnership with private sector for fish production for export though chamber of commerce and industries, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other chambers of commerce and industries in the country to produce fish feed for this particular this new intervention.

Omar Hayat said that modalities with the direct foreign investors should be worked out or a model be developed by the Board of Investment and Trade (BOIT), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The private direct investors can be attracted to this new activity as the private sector can produce the fish for both processing and direct export demanding of the exporting country, China is one of them.

The step, he said will provide support to the underutilized fish processing units in the country. The owners of these fish processing units will fully support this endeavor of the provincial government.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa budget, he

said is silent on the innovative approach to development of fisheries and aquaculture. This sub sector of agriculture potential can be developed for tourism point of view in the newly merged districts as well as Malakand and Hazara divisions. Each district provides unique opportunity of development of fisheries and aquaculture. These two regions of Hazara and Malakand have the potential to further develop Trout Fish Aquaculture for local consumption and for export.

The impediments have to be removed with provincial government support to overcome proper production of quality trout fish seed by providing financial support for procurement of requisite equipment for production of quality trout fish seed for the private sector.

In Mardan, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and DI Khan Division have the potential to develop Group, Talpia and other warm water fishes which have export potentials. Board of Investment and Trade, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can play a crucial role in attracting direct private investment by aligning the private sector. Coordinated efforts are required from all quarters' i.e Fisheries Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

BOIT, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Ministries of Commerce and Industries.

Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has for first time earmarked budget for the development of Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Development Strategy. Fisheries Department should coordinate development of policy with SMEDA and other stakeholders as it has been doing so for other provincial departments.

The southern districts of Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Karak, Haripur have another potential of small dams which can also be utilized for fish aquaculture. The potential is immense but due focus has to be given on improvement of the Management and aligning the Fisheries Department activities to attract direct foreign investment.

The investors should be facilitated and SIFC has also needs to be taken on board for the new initiatives in sub sector of fisheries and aquaculture to harness the full potential of the aquatic resources of the provinces to generate new employment opportunities and trigger financial uplift in rural areas and earn high required foreign exchange for the country.



In brief

FESCO issues shutdown plan

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown program for Thursday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the program issued by the company, power supply from Khawaja Habib Ullah, Khuda Yar, Pir Salah-ud-Din, Kallar Wala, Bungalow, City Mamonkanjan, Ghausia Colony and al-Awwal feeders linked with 132-KV Mamonkanjan grid station will remain suspended from 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. while Kararwala feeder connected with 132-KV Scarp Colony grid station will observe shutdown from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. and then from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday (June 06, 2024).

Bugti expresses grief

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday expressed his grief over the death of 11 people including workers in the Sanjadi coal mine and expressed his resentment over the unsatisfactory security arrangements in the coal mines. In a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Secretariat, it has been stated that the Chief Minister of Balochistan has ordered to determine the responsibility of the incident. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that mine owners have to strictly implement the prevailing SOPs saying that often due to carelessness of mine owners precious human lives were lost which was a tragedy. He also directed the Secretary Mines Department to make it mandatory to implement the SOPs set to prevent loss of precious human lives in the mining sector adding that strict action should be taken against mine owners and companies not implementing SOPs. The CM also expressed sorrow over the loss of precious human lives in the Sanjadi mine accident and condoled with the bereaved families.

Hot, dry weather expected

SUKKUR (APP): Mainly hot weather is expected in most areas of northern Sindh while very hot with dust raising winds are likely in southern parts of Sindh during the next twenty-four hours. However, the temperature of different districts recorded on Tuesday noon, Sukkur and Khairpur 47 centigrade, Ghotki 46 and Shikarpur 48 degree centigrade.

Cop martyred, two injured

KASHMIRE (INP): A cop was martyred while two others injured when robbers attacked a police check post here on Tuesday. According to details, a gang of robbers stormed Hadhey police check post in Kashmir. A cop identified as Abdul Aziz was martyred in the attack while Shahmeer Brehmani and Maula Bux were injured. The assailants also took away the official weapon. The body and injured were shifted to hospital. Heavy contingent of police and Rangers started operation against the attackers.

Two killed

SWABI (INP): Two brothers were killed when armed men of two rival groups traded fire here, police said on Tuesday. According to details, armed men of two groups which were in dispute exchanged fire in Darang Pahari area of Swabi. In cross firing two real brothers Bakht Sher and Colonel Sher were killed while six others sustained injuries.

Land owners seek lease cancellation of minerals excavation

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Elders and owners of Deolai Shamshi Khan hill on Tuesday demanded the government to immediately abolish the awarded lease on their land the excavation of which, according to them, was creating difficulties for them. Speaking at a news conference and addressing a protest rally outside the Timergara press club, the elders led by village council Shamshi Khan chairman Malik Aurang Zeb Khan, Malik Yaqub Khan, Muhammad Bilal and others alleged the assistant director mines and minerals department had awarded a lease to a contractor without their consent for excavation of mines and minerals from their land at Deolai hill.

They said the contractor had started the excavation and excavated precious minerals. They said that heavy loaded trucks were damaging the village link road while the act had also destroyed natural springs and pastures in the surrounding areas. They said the link road leading to the site was a small road and could not afford heavy load.

The elders said that granite was being sold in the market at Rs 600,000 while the contractor paid only Rs 1800 to the govern-

ment and Rs 3000 to the owner which was not justified.

They said the land owners had also met the district administration, high ups of the communication and works and forest departments in this regard but to no avail. They threatened to take to the streets and block the main Chakdara Timergara road at Shamshi Khan if the problem was not solved.

JAMIAT AHL E HADITH: The Jamiat Ahle Hadith leaders on Tuesday demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and Inspector General of Police to arrest the killers of Sheikh Insamullah and provide security to religious scholars. The demand was made by senior deputy chief of the organization Dr. Sheikh Ali Muhammad Abu Turab, naib nazim aala Sheikh Ateequr Rehman, provincial chief Maulana Rohullah Tauhid and others while speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club.

They condemned the attack on two of their colleagues in Maidan on May 30 during which Sheikh Inamullah was killed while his brother Maulana Abdul Aziz was injured.

They said that Jamiat Ahle Hadith was a peaceful and patriotic organization but both the brothers were

attacked in Maidan when they were going to offer the Fajr prayer in a nearby mosque. They said that it was a target killing and the government should arrest its perpetrators. The leaders also expressed dissatisfaction with the police investigation and demanded the IGP and DIG to play their active role in arresting the attackers.

EMALE TEACHERS: The female teachers of the Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) in the Lower Dir district have complained that they have not been paid for the last two years. In a joint statement the teachers said that they faced financial difficulty because of nonpayment of their salaries. The teachers said the KP government had failed to pay them for the last two years.

The teachers pointed out that a total of 1,531 male and female teachers had been serving in community schools established to bring out-of-school children to schools in the province. They said that the teachers of the basic community schools were running their houses with meager salaries.

They threatened to stage a protest sit-in outside the chief minister house at Peshawar if their salaries were not released before Eid ul Azha.

Commissioner chairs meeting to discuss forest fire

Shafi ullah

SWAT: Commissioner Malakand Division, Saqib Raza Aslam, chaired a meeting of the Divisional Forest Fire Management Team at his office in Saidu Sharif. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, DFOs, District Emergency Officers, and other officials from the Malakand Division and Swat district via video link.

The officials briefed the commissioner on the forest situation in the divi-

sion and stated that 1,043,691 acres of protected and 671,664 acres of private forest land area. Forest fires are common during the summer season. A forest fire occurred in the Lower Dir district but was brought under control.

A rapid response team has been formed, comprising 16 SDFOs, 11 RFOs, 112 foresters, 208 forest guards, 552 watchers, and 359 chowkidars. 85 hotspots have been identified in the division. Districts Buner, Lower

Dir, Malakand, and Upper Swat have been declared vulnerable to forest fire.

Geo-mapping of water resources in the division's forests has also been carried out. The commissioner directed officials to impose a ban on lighting fires within 500 meters of forests under Section 144 and form separate committees to investigate forest fire incidents also monitor temperature levels in each district. Identify locations for setting up camps near hotspots to ensure timely response to forest fires.



HYDERABAD: Workers are packing and marking best quality mangoes into crates at fruits market in the city for export.

Saira directs officials to perform duty with passion

Hafiz M. Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Former Federal Minister and Chairperson District Coordination Committee Hafizabad Saira Afzal has directed the officers of Municipal Committee Hafizabad to perform their duties with the passion of serving the people and improve Municipal Services.

She was presiding over a meeting held to review performance of Municipal Committee Hafizabad. ADCG/Administrator MC Hamadullah, Municipal Officers and Members of DCC including Muhammad Zaman Bhoon, Khalid Butt attended the meeting.

Saira Afzal said that elimination of corruption and improvement in service delivery was top priority of the present government of PMLN and Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif was committed to provide maximum relief to the people at their doorsteps.

She said that corruption in Municipal Committee would not be tolerated and due to corruption and mismanagement Municipal Committee Hafizabad was facing Rs. 50 million deficits while official who was handling POL affairs has been transferred to stop theft of POL.

She directed the MC Officers to inspect development schemes or purchase items physically before issuing cheques and all payments above five lakh rupees would not be made before seeking approval from

ADCG/Administrator Municipal Committee.

She also directed the officers to install trackers at all machinery to stop misuse of machinery and to check actual consumption of POL.

She said that solid steps would be taken to contain corruption from MC and directed the officers to remove encroachments from city without creating problems for citizens.

She further directed the Municipal Officer to make special arrangements to remove offal of sacrificial animals on the eve of Eid as well as a telephone number also be given to people getting register their complaints and ensure positive response of phone calls of citizens.

Meanwhile, unknown armed accused looted one million cash, precious mobile and other items from general store situated at Jinnah Chowk some yards away from DPO Office Hafizabad. Increasing robbery and dacoities incidents prevailed sense of insecurity among people of the district.

According to details, Faisal Saeed was present at his general store/bakery, last night, meanwhile three unknown masked dacoits came on motorcycle.

They entered the shop and looted one million rupees cash, mobile phone worth one lakh and fifty thousand rupees and other items from the store/bakery to make hostage to Faisal Saeed on gun point. The accused sped away after committing crime.



KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education and Libraries Meena Khan Afridi *inaugurating AQ Khan block at FATA University.*

Meena asks Center to pay Rs2 thousand bn arrears to KP

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education and Libraries Meena Khan Afridi while expressing his extreme concern over the news of the closure of funds for the provincial universities by the Prime Minister, who imposed an educational emergency in the country.

The Provincial Minister demanded that instead of closing the funds of the universities, it should be enhanced. Despite this, as per vision of party leader Imran Khan, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will give full support to the universities and will not let his new generation be deprived of higher education. He said that even if the fake mandate holders don't give us funds, at least they should give us the arrears of more than Rs.2 thousand billion. He announced that we will make full use of every forum for our rights.

He expressed these views while addressing the opening ceremony of AQ Khan and Hamza Baba academic blocks at FATA University Darra Adam Khel as a special guest on Tuesday. On this occasion, Provincial Finance Minister Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate, Sher Ali Khan Afridi MPA, University Vice Chancellor Dr. Maqsood Haider, faculty members, elites of the area and a large number of students were present.

The provincial minister said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government will invest on the youth as per vision of its leader Imran Khan and Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gundapur is working for implementing the vision of the party leader. He said, he was very happy that in this FATA which was earlier known only for explosions, terrorism, militancy and anarchy, today its boys and girls are getting education in the universities. He said that the children of FATA have a lot of

potential and they can compete with any nation in any field. The only need is to explore their hidden strengths.

Meena Khan Afridi asked the youth of FATA that they should not consider themselves inferior to anyone, but if they bring out their hidden talent and perform, no one can compete with them. He added that Party Chairman is enduring to raise the country and in this important goal the biggest capital of our country is to make positive use of 65% of the youth. All the focus of the PTI government is the better future of its youth for which it is working day and night.

Earlier, Provincial Minister Meena Khan Afridi formally inaugurated the academic blocks along with Law Minister Aftab Alam Afridi and Sher Ali Khan MPA while they were also given a detailed briefing about the university. They also planted saplings in the premises of the university.

Kidnapped boy recovered

MULTAN (INP): Local police claimed to have recovered a kidnapped boy from Muzaffargarh district.

Official source said it had received complaint that a 19-year-old boy named Mohammad Shahzad was abducted here in the limits of Gulghust police station.

Following the complaint, the case number 1607/24 was registered with police.

It started searching the victim by using all all-out resources and technical means what it was said.

Finally the boy was found from Muzaffargarh after couple of days.

Parents expressed content and offered thanks to the police for recovery of their child.

Social Welfare Department Tank takes lead in KP

TANK (APP): The Social Welfare Department, Tank has taken lead across the province by registering disabled persons in a very short time and also completed their formalities of medical board within 15 days. This was stated by District Social Welfare Officer Tank Waqas Khan during his visit to Women embroidery center where he inspected the embroidery clothes prepared by the women. He said the district social welfare department has also launched a campaign against the menace of drugs and sent the drug addicts to the rehabilitation center, adding, the district police also extended their full cooperation in this regard. He informed that the Social Welfare Department registered 6,000 senior citizens and 3,000 disabled persons in the district in a very short period under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Tank.

He issued the directives while presiding over a meeting held in the committee room of his office.

On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur City Dr. Sana Ramchand, Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur Sadar Ahmad Sher Gondal, Chief Executive Officer BWMC Naem Akhtar, Deputy Director Local Government, Muhammad Khursheed, Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Mian Azhar Javed, Chief Officer District Council Nasirullah,

F.P. Report

BARA: Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, accompanied by MNA Iqbal Afridi, MPA Abdul Ghani and Sohail Afridi visited the Category D Dogra Hospital in Bara Tehsil, Khyber District. During his visit, tribal elders and local leaders honoured the minister with a traditional tribal turban.

Minister Shah inaugurated a 90 KVA solarisation project at the hospital. He also opened a water filtration plant for clean drinking water, a newly constructed conference room, and a new laboratory. Additionally, the minister administered polio drops to a child at the hospital.

While inspecting the ongoing outpatient department (OPD) services, Minister Shah listened to the patients' concerns and assured them that the staffing shortages at Dogra Hospital would be addressed soon. He emphasized his commitment to prioritizing healthcare services in the tribal districts, acknowledging the hardships faced by the tribal people.

He noted that medicines were dispatched a week ago and that his visit was to ensure their proper delivery and use. Minister Shah announced plans to activate Tirah Hospital promptly by providing the necessary funds. He urged local leadership to visit hospitals,

report their needs, and promised timely fulfilment of those requirements. He highlighted the significant role of donor assistance in the activation and rehabilitation of hospitals in the tribal districts.

DHO Khyber, Zafar Ali Khan, provided the minister with an overview of the hospital's status and the operational and rehabilitation efforts in the district's health centres. Minister Shah was also briefed about the Zero Crossing Hospital located at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and the performance of the Outbreak Response Committee. He was informed about non-functional health centres, of which 12 have been reactivated in the past two years.

DC for arrangements to establish cattle markets

BAHAWALPUR (INP): Deputy Commissioner, Zaheer Anwar Jappa on Tuesday directed to establish temporary sale points for the purchase and sale of sacrificial animals and make them fully functional ten days before Eid-ul-Adha to facilitate the people.

He issued the directives while presiding over a meeting held in the committee room of his office.

On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur City Dr. Sana Ramchand, Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur Sadar Ahmad Sher Gondal, Chief Executive Officer BWMC Naem Akhtar, Deputy Director Local Government, Muhammad Khursheed, Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Mian Azhar Javed, Chief Officer District Council Nasirullah,

officers of the Punjab Cattle Market Management and Development Company, Livestock Department, Health Department, officers of municipal committees across the district and other relevant departments were present.

The deputy commissioner instructed to make arrangements for the provision of clean drinking water, excellent sanitation arrangements, and the installation of tents for shade at the sale points established for the purchase and sale of sacrificial animals, along with other necessary arrangements.

He directed to finalize effective traffic plan around the sale points and cattle markets to avoid traffic difficulties and also ensured security arrangements there.

The deputy commissioner asked the concerned depart-

ments to establish medical camps and veterinary camps at cattle markets and temporary sale points.

Deputy Director Local Government Khursheed Ahmed, while briefing the meeting, informed that temporary sale points for the purchase and sale of sacrificial animals across the district would be established at Shahmahi Canal Bahawalpur, near Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi Hospital, Bahawalpur Sadar near Flour Mills, and Tehsil Ahmedpur East on KLP Road near Rehber Petrol Pump. Temporary sale points will also be established in Tehsil Yazman at 102 DB Qainchi Mor, in Tehsil Khairpur Tamewali near the General bus stand, and Tehsil Hasilpur at the old water works behind station Rescue 1122.



QUETTA: A man, with his sacrificial animals at his roadside setting, is waiting for the customers. — INP photo



SEOUL: South Korea's Prime Minster Han Duck-soo, speaks during a cabinet meeting at the government complex.

Japan's UK state visit to go ahead despite election

LONDON (BBC): The state visit to the UK by the emperor and empress of Japan will go ahead later this month, says Buckingham Palace. There had been speculation it would be postponed because of the general election on 4 July.

The visit, from 25 to 27 June, will include traditional highlights such as a state banquet hosted by the King and a carriage parade along the Mall. It will be the first state visit in modern times to take place during an election campaign. State visits take place on the advice of the government, with the King hosting events as head of state. Such diplomatic showcases usually involve senior politicians, prompting questions about whether it would be delayed to avoid overlapping with political campaigning, but Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako's visit is going ahead.

Buckingham Palace indicated the visit would be "adapted" because of the general election, but no specific changes have been revealed. The state banquet is a centrepiece of such visits, with speeches and, in recent times, greetings from the King in the language of the visiting dignitaries. The prime minister, foreign secretary and leader of the opposition usually attend - although the visit is now in

the middle of the election campaign. The state banquet is on 25 June and the BBC's head-to-head debate between Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer is on 26 June in Nottingham. A spokeswoman for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said the attendance of ministers at state visit events was not yet confirmed. The last time there was a potential clash between an election and a state visit, in 2017, the visit by the Spanish king was rearranged. This will be the first Japanese state visit to the UK since 1998, with a visit planned for 2020 cancelled because of the Covid pandemic.

Such state visits are a "soft power" mix of pageantry and international politics. The Japanese royal couple, representing an important trade and defence partner, can expect the red-carpet treatment. There will be a ceremonial welcome at Horse Guards Parade, with a guard of honour, and then a carriage procession along the Mall to Buckingham Palace. During their time in the UK, the Japanese emperor royals will visit the Francis Crick Institute, a Young Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition about Japan and the world's largest collection of wild plant seeds at Kew Gardens. There will be a visit to St.

George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, to lay a wreath at the burial place of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

Both Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako were students at University of Oxford and they will make visits to the colleges where they studied. While the Japanese state visit goes ahead, the general election has prompted other changes to the King's diary, in case engagements were a "distraction" from the election. That included postponing a trip to a project in Crewe which supported families in poverty, including providing food and shoes. There have been questions about the timing of the King's meeting with the incoming prime minister after the election. The King would traditionally spend a week in Scotland, known as "Royal Week" or "Holyrood Week", at the end of June and the beginning of July.

If this clashes with the result of the 4 July election, it could mean the King having to travel back to Buckingham Palace or else the newly elected prime minister going to Scotland. When the new government is formed, the King will have a prominent part in the State Opening of Parliament on 17 July. It will be his biggest constitutional role since his cancer diagnosis.

Paris judge questions three men suspected of violence at Eiffel Tower

PARIS (AP): Three people were released from custody pending further investigation after they allegedly placed five coffins at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, a Paris landmark that will feature prominently in the upcoming Olympic Games.

According to officials at the Paris prosecutor's office, the three - citizens of Bulgaria, Germany and Ukraine - placed the coffins, covered with a French flag that included an inscription reading "French soldiers of Ukraine," near the Eiffel Tower.

The motive for the incident was unclear. France is on its highest alert level ahead of the July 26-Aug. 11 Summer Games in Paris and the lavish open-air ceremony on the River Seine.

The three men were questioned by an investigative judge. The prosecutor's office asked that they be charged with premeditated violence, the officials told the Associated Press. Placing coffins at the foot of the Paris landmark that millions of tourists visit every year "is considered an act of psychological violence," and caused employees of the landmark and others "an inability to work," the officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because of a pending investigation.

The investigating judge didn't file charges, however, but named the three as assisted witnesses, a special status under French law, the prosecutor's office said. They will remain free pend-

ing further investigation. Those detained in the Eiffel Tower incident include the driver of the vehicle that transported the coffins, a 39-year-old Bulgarian, as well as two people associated with him - a 25-year-old German man and a 16-year-old Ukrainian, who was arrested aboard a Paris-Berlin bound Flixbus, the officials said. French authorities raised preliminary terrorism charges against an 18-year-old accused of plotting to target spectators at soccer games at the Paris Olympics. It was the first such thwarted plot targeting the Games, which start in eight weeks.

The Olympic rings will be displayed on the Eiffel Tower. The Olympic and Paralympic medals in Paris

are being embedded with pieces from a hexagonal chunk of iron taken from the monument. The Eiffel Tower coffins appeared after other strange incidents in recent months worrying French authorities. Last month, graffiti showing red hands appeared on the Holocaust Memorial in Paris. And in October, soon after the start of the Israel-Hamas war, stencils of blue Stars of David appeared on Paris buildings. French authorities accused Russian security services of stirring up controversy around the stars. French Foreign Minister Stéphane Sejourne said both incidents involved people paid to destabilize and drive wedges in French society.

Teenage motorist filmed beating Kenyan policeman arrested

NAIROBI (BBC): Kenyan police have arrested a 19-year-old motorist who was filmed beating up a traffic policeman on a road in the capital, Nairobi. In a video that has been widely shared, the man is seen attacking the policeman with punches and kicks to the head even after the officer falls to the ground.

The motorist escaped after other people intervened to help the officer. The shocking attack has led to a rare outpouring of sympathy for the police, who have a reputation for

brutality and bribery. A police report said the man was initially stopped after he made a U-turn on a busy road, obstructing other motorists. It said that the traffic officer, Patrick Ogendo, entered the vehicle and instructed him to drive to a nearby police station.

While on the way, "the driver suddenly stopped and drew a sword under the seat". "The officer jumped out of the vehicle for his safety and the driver followed him with blows and kicks," the statement

added. It said the driver also made away with a police pocket phone battery. The policeman received first aid at a nearby health centre and was transferred to a hospital for treatment.

An alleged accomplice of the suspect was arrested at the scene and a police team was mobilised to search for the man who carried out the attack, the statement said. The attack has been widely condemned, with some describing the attack as unacceptable. "How do you

assault a uniformed police officer in this manner?" asked Robert Alai, a member of Nairobi's county assembly. "This is totally unacceptable. We shouldn't allow our police officers in uniform to be humiliated to this level," said Mike Sonko, a former Nairobi governor. The suspect was reportedly arrested at his residence in the capital later. Nairobi head of traffic Vitalis Otieno told local media that he would be charged with a number of offences including attempted murder.

In Indonesia, women ranger teams go on patrol to slow deforestation

DAMARAN BARU (AP): In a lush jungle at the foothills of a volcano in Indonesia's Aceh province, the song of gibbons in the trees mixes with the laughter of the seven forest rangers trekking below them. An hour into their patrol, the rangers spot another mammal in the forest with them.

"Where are you going? What are you doing?" they pleasantly ask a man walking past, farming tools in hand. "Remember to not cut down trees wherever you go, OK?" The friendly engagement is just one tactic

the women-led forest ranger group has been using to safeguard the forest their village relies on from deforestation and poaching. After years of patrols have accompanied a sharp decrease in deforestation, the rangers are now sharing their strategies with other women-led groups striving to protect their forests across Indonesia.

A vast tropical archipelago stretching across the equator, Indonesia is home to the world's third-largest rainforest, with a variety of endangered wildlife and plants, including orang-

utans, elephants and giant forest flowers. Some live nowhere else. Since 1950, more than 285,715 square miles (740,000 square kilometers) of Indonesian rainforest - an area twice the size of Germany - have been logged, burned or degraded for development of palm oil, paper and rubber plantations, nickel mining and other commodities, according to Global Forest Watch. In recent years deforestation has slowed, but continues.

In Damaran Baru, which borders

Four died in Germany floods

BERLIN (AP): The death toll in floods across a large part of southern Germany rose to four as three bodies were recovered from inundated basements. Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited the flooded region and officials warned that water levels could rise further in some areas.

The body of a 43-year-old woman whom rescuers had been looking, was found in a basement in the Bavarian town of Schrobenhausen, police told German news agency dpa. A firefighter was found dead in nearby Pfaffenhofen after an inflatable boat he and colleagues were using capsized. Later, police said the bodies of a man and a woman were found in a basement in Schorndorf, near Stuttgart, that had been flooded and then pumped dry.

Persistent heavy rain led to widespread flooding in the southern states of Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg over the weekend. The floods caused extensive transport disruption, with long-distance rail routes to Munich from the north and west out of action. Scholz visited Reichertshofen, north of Munich, inspecting a sandbagged river bank and meeting regional officials including Markus Söder, Bavaria's governor.

Söder said that the situation "remains critical and tense," with water receding in some places but new flooding and evacuations elsewhere. He noted that water levels are expected to rise in the city of Regensburg and further down the Danube. Scholz said that "this is not just one event like there have been for centuries," and that a succession of floods in recent times shows "we cannot neglect the task of halting man-made climate change."

Power cut across Nigeria

ABUJA (BBC): Millions of Nigerians are without electricity after the national grid was shut down as part of a general strike over the rising cost of living.

The country was plunged into darkness shortly after 02:00 local time (01:00 GMT) when union members prevented operators at the country's power control rooms from working and shut down electricity substations. Many flights have also been cancelled in the country's busiest airport in Lagos, and in the capital, Abuja, with passengers left stranded.

Unions are demanding a huge increase in the minimum wage, saying workers cannot survive on the current rate of 30,000 naira (£18; \$22) a month. The government is offering to double this but security guard Mallam Magaji Garba tells the BBC that this would not even be enough to buy a 50kg bag of rice, which he needs to feed his family each month. The bag of rice costs 75,000 naira (\$56; £44) - more than the government's proposal, even before taking other expenses into account. "I am calling on the government to consider us and increase the minimum wage so that we can live and eat decently," says Mr Magaji, who works for the education ministry in the northern city of Kano. "It's not fair that we have top government officials earning millions monthly and the smallest workers earn so little and finding it difficult to feed."

The 59-year-old said he sometimes has to walk to work as he cannot afford to pay for transport.

Nigeria's unions under the umbrella of the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress are demanding the minimum wage be increased to 494,000 naira (£290; \$369) which they say reflects the current economic realities.

Climate change made historic Brazil floods twice as likely

PORTO ALEGRE (AFP): Climate change doubled the likelihood of the historic floods in southern Brazil and amplified intense rains caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon, scientists said.

Three months' worth of rain was dumped on the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul over two weeks in an "extremely rare event, expected to occur only once every 100-250 years," according to a study published by the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group. The flooding in late April and early May submerged cities, farms and an international airport, affecting more than 90 percent of the vast state, an area equivalent to that of the United Kingdom.

The disaster left 172 people dead and displaced around 600,000. "The researchers estimated that climate change made the event more than twice as likely and around six to nine percent more intense," the WWA said in a statement. On top of that, the El Nino phenomenon made rainfall between three and 10 percent more intense, said the global network of scientists that assesses the link between extreme weather events and climate change. "The scary thing about these floods is that they show us that the world needs to be prepared for events so extreme, they are unlike

anything we've seen before," said Maja Vahlberg, climate risk consultant at Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. Regina Rodrigues, a researcher at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, said the disaster showed that even when El Nino was in a weakening phase, as it currently is, it could be extremely dangerous "Climate change is amplifying the impact of El Nino in southern Brazil by making an extremely rare event more frequent and intense," she said.

Of the four biggest floods ever seen in the regional capital Porto Alegre, "three occurred in the last nine months," Rodrigues told a press conference. "This is very rare." Rio Grande do Sul is particularly vulnerable to flooding, with a vein-like network of river systems covering the region. Porto Alegre lies on the banks of the Guaiba Lake where five rivers converge before emptying into South America's largest freshwater lagoon, the Lagoa dos Patos. However, until 2023 the city had not seen a major flood in six decades. This may have lulled residents into a false sense of security, said Maja Vahlberg, Climate risk consultant at Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. An expansive flood protection system in Porto Alegre, built after deluges in 1941 and 1967, was

designed to withstand water levels up to six meters (20 feet). However, Vahlberg said a lack of maintenance saw it start to fail at 4.5 meters. Criticized by residents as ugly and blocking their view of the lake, the system faced a push in recent years to have it dismantled entirely.

Warnings had been issued a week before the flooding, but these may not have reached everyone and "the public may not have understood the severity of the expected impact," said Vahlberg. The scientists said deforestation, to make way for agriculture, and the rapid urbanization of cities like Porto Alegre also "worsened the impacts." The study cited data showing that 22 percent of the state's native vegetation has been lost in less than four decades -- much of it converted into soybean plantations. It also highlighted that at least 240 informal settlements, 80 indigenous villages, and 40 communities that are home to descendants of enslaved Africans were severely impacted. "Implementing policies that make people less vulnerable, increasing protection against floods and restoring natural ecosystems to buffer the impact of heavy rains are some ways by which governments can avoid human deaths and limit the damage from these events," said Vahlberg.

SK suspending military deal with North Korea

SEOUL (AP): South Korea's government approved the suspension of a contentious military agreement with North Korea on Tuesday, a step that would allow it to take tougher responses to North Korean provocations.

The development came as animosities between the rival Koreas rose sharply recently after North Korea launched trash-carrying balloons across the border in reaction to previous South Korean civilian leafletting campaigns. South Korea's Cabinet Council passed a proposal aimed at suspending the 2018 inter-Korean agreement on lowering down frontline military tensions. The proposal will formally take effect when it's signed by President Yoon Suk Yeol, likely later Tuesday, according to government officials.

During the cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, South Korea's No. 2 official, said the gov-

ernment assessed that the 2018 deal has weakened South Korean military readiness at a time when repeated North Korean provocations pose real threats to the South Korean public. Han cited North Korea's balloon campaign, tests of nuclear-capable weapons targeting South Korea and alleged jamming of GPS navigation signals in the South.

The military agreement - reached during a short-lived era of reconciliation between the Koreas - requires the two countries to cease all hostile acts against each other at their border areas such as live firing drills, aerial drills and psychological warfare. The accord has invited withering conservative criticism in South Korea that mutual reductions of conventional military strength would end up weakening South's war readiness while North Korea's nuclear capability remain intact. In the past week, North Korea

used balloons to drop manure, cigarette butts, scraps of cloth and waste paper on South Korea, prompting South Korea to vow unspecified "unbearable" retaliatory steps. North Korea said it would halt its balloon campaign.

South Korean officials said the suspension of the 2018 deal would allow it to stage frontline military drills but didn't publicly elaborate on other steps. Observers say South Korea was considering restarting frontline propaganda loud-speaker broadcasts, a Cold War-style psychological campaign that experts say has previously stung in rigidly controlled North Korea as most of its 26 million people are not allowed official accesses to foreign news. The 2018 deal has already been in limbo after the two Koreas taking some steps in breach of it amid tensions over North Korea's spy satellite launch last November.

Chinese probe lifts off from far side of moon

BEIJING (Reuters): China's Chang'e-6 probe has lifted off from the far side of the moon, starting its journey back towards Earth, China's national space agency announced on Tuesday. The probe's successful departure from the moon means China is closer to becoming the first country to return samples from the far side of the moon, which permanently faces away from Earth.

The probe, which departed the moon at 7:38 am local time (2338 GMT) successfully completed its sample collection from June 2-3. China National Space Administration (CNSA) said in a statement that Chang'e-6 "withstood the test of high temperature on the far side of the moon".

Compared with its predecessor Chang'e-5, which retrieved samples from the near side of the moon,

Chang'e-6 faced an additional technical challenge of operating without direct communications with ground stations on Earth, according to CNSA. Instead, the probe relied on relay satellite Queqiao-2, put into orbit in April, for communications. The probe used a drill and robotic arm to dig up soil on and below the moon's surface, according to state news agency Xinhua.

Chang'e-6 displayed China's national flag for the first time on the far side of moon after sample acquisition, Beijing Daily said. The probe is now in lunar orbit and will join up with another spacecraft in orbit, CNSA said on Tuesday morning. The samples will then be transferred to a return module, which will fly back to Earth, with a landing in China's Inner Mongolia

region expected around June 25. The return of the lunar samples to Earth is being followed by scientists around the world, who hope the soil collected by the Chang'e-6 can help answer questions about the origins of the solar system.

The mission has also been closely followed domestically as a source of national pride. Last month, thousands of tourists flocked to different viewing spots in the southern island province of Hainan to watch Chang'e-6's launch. Pictures of a hole left on the lunar surface from the sample digging by Chang'e-6 went viral on Tuesday on Chinese social media platform Weibo after state broadcaster CCTV said the hole was shaped like the character "zhong", a nod to the Chinese word for China, "zhongguo".

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Zelensky seeks Asian support

VOLODYMYR Zelensky made an unscheduled appearance at the Shangri-La security forum which is held annually at Singapore, and the participating countries are from the Asia-Pacific region. Zelensky pleaded with the Asian leaders that they should participate in the summit to be held in Switzerland on June 15-16 to work out a peace formula for the war in Ukraine.

Russia was not invited. Russia said that there can be no peace talks if it is not present. China has said that it would not attend. Zelensky was pleading that China should attend and he regretted the fact that China has been asking other countries not to attend the summit as well. Zelensky said that 106 countries will send representatives to the summit in Switzerland and 75 heads of state will attend as well. Zelensky says that Russia should be isolated diplomatically. The Ukrainian president's strategy is understandable. The war has now been on for nearly two-and-a-half years, and Ukraine has not been able to push back Russia. Russia too has failed to achieve its goal of toppling the Zelensky government.

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It is interesting that Zelensky is turning to Asia for support despite the full backing he has from NATO members, including the United States, United Kingdom and Canada. And there is also the support from the European Union (EU) countries, despite reservations about the support for Ukraine from EU members like Hungary. Zelensky wants to build a wider support base for Ukraine, which goes beyond Europe because NATO and EU support does not seem to have much impact on Russia.

The Ukrainian president is also aware of the fact that China is close to Russia and the two are alliance partners; the United States is pitted against the two. Zelensky wants to wean away China from Russia to the maximum extent possible. China has made it clear that it would want a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The Ukrainian leader might find it difficult to convince China to move away from Russia, but he is keen that other Asian countries should not be influenced by the Chinese position.

Zelensky should not have worried because the power tussle between the United States and China has divided much of south-east and far-east Asia between the Chinese and American spheres of influence. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are in the American sphere of influence though ASEAN members like Singapore, Cambodia and Myanmar would want to be neutral because of the geo-economic compulsions of the region. South Korea, Japan, Australia are already supporting Ukraine in the war effort because these countries are part of the American alliance in the Asia-Pacific.

But it is a good diplomatic move on the part of Zelensky that he should seek support for Ukraine among the Asian countries. The general perception has been that the Ukraine-Russia conflict is a European problem, and it does not concern countries of Asia, especially in the east. Some of the West Asian and African countries have been affected by the Ukraine-Russia war because of the export of wheat from Ukraine and Russia, and they are also the largest exporters of wheat. This has created shortages in Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon and other countries, and the prices of wheat in these places have shot up. The impact on east Asia of the war in Ukraine has not been much. In some ways, both China and India benefited from the Russian oil imports at cheap prices because of the Western sanctions. Zelensky seems to be convinced that to isolate Russia diplomatically he needs the support of majority of Asian countries. It is also a good diplomatic move. The question is how far can this help in ending the war in Ukraine.

Sheinbaum, Mexican president

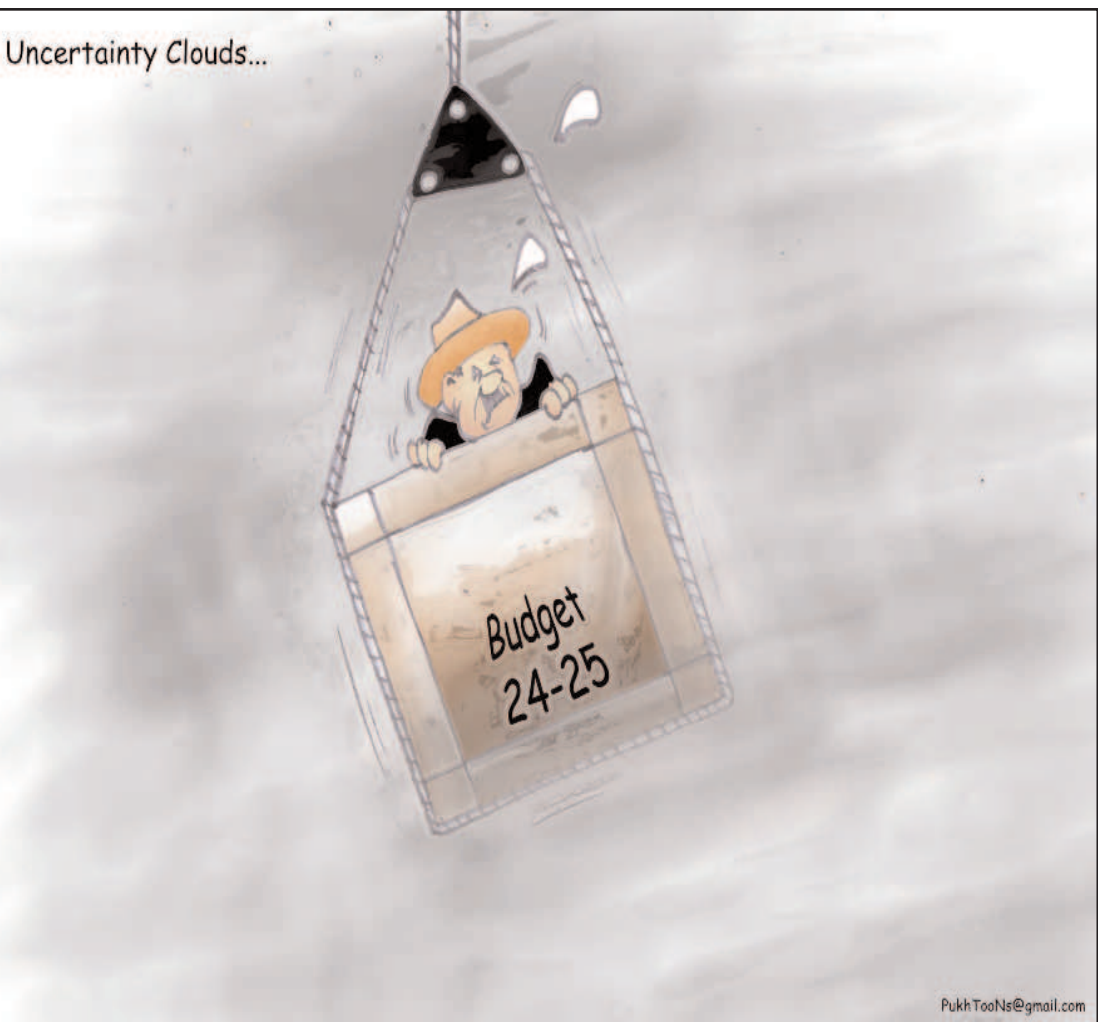
CLAUDIA Sheinbaum's election as president of Mexico is a momentous turn in the history of the country. She is the first woman to be elected as head of state, something which had happened in Latin America but not in the Anglo-Saxon democracies of North America, which include the United States and Canada.

Mexico, which is largely a Roman Catholic country, with its traditional views about the role of women has broken a traditional barrier by electing a woman. And she is also the first person of Jewish parentage to be elected to the highest political office in a conservative Christian country. And most importantly, she is an environmental scientist committed to the issues of climate change, who was a member of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2007. It is laudable that for the first time anywhere in the world when climate crisis looms large on the horizon, an environmental scientist takes over the reins of power in an emerging market economy like Mexico. These are indeed heady facts. Both Sheinbaum and Mexicans are celebrating the moment without hesitation. But there are political challenges ahead, and Sheinbaum has an uphill task facing her. She has been a trusted confidante of outgoing Mexican president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, the populist leftist leader who had led the country for a decade. Cynics feel that Sheinbaum has won this election on the basis of the widespread popularity of Obrador, and that she will have a tough time filling the shoes of the big man as it were. She has been an unabashed admirer of Obrador, and she has declared that she will continue with the policies of her political mentor. Observers and critics say that it is easier said than done because Mexico is reeling under huge deficit, a result of Obrador's welfare programmes. It appears that Sheinbaum shares many of Obrador's economic assumptions, and she is unlikely to swerve much from his economic policies. It appears that the Mexican economy cannot sustain any more of the welfareism that Obrador has spawned. But it is to be expected that Sheinbaum will walk out of Obrador's shadow once she is in office, and she will use her rational scientific approach to dealing with the problems of Mexico. Now is the time for celebration, and she and Mexico are celebrating.

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Uncertainty Clouds...



Israel's war on Gaza has weaponized future Palestinian generations

Osama Al-Sharif

AS Israel and Hamas consider US President Joe Biden's three-phase deal to reach an enduring ceasefire and end the bloody eight-month war, the wanton slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza continues unabated. The death toll has crossed a staggering 36,000, with thousands more missing and almost 80,000 injured. Most of the Gaza Strip — home to 2.2 million people — has been turned into rubble. Even if the war were to end today, the catastrophic humanitarian situation would linger for years.

And if and when the world manages to agree on a plan to rebuild the Strip — a humongous goal that would take years, if not decades, to accomplish — what of the millions of Gazans who are now displaced and have become refugees, many not for the first time in their lives? And for that to happen, with Israel's acquiescence, the most pressing question will have to be answered: Who will rule Gaza once the dust settles? As stakeholders debate the issue and negotiate, Gaza's children emerge as the most vulnerable in the worst military conflict this century. Heart-wrenching statistics indicate that more than 14,000 children were killed in the first six months of the war and hundreds of babies have lost their lives because Israel bombed hospitals or denied them the fuel needed to keep incubators going.

More than 10,000 women have been killed, among them an estimated 6,000 mothers, leaving 19,000 children orphaned, while entire families have been wiped out. Babies have survived with no living relatives to claim them. Unaccompanied children are registered as "unknown," or under the acronym "WCNSF" —

wounded child, no surviving family. An unknown number of children have died of malnutrition and famine. Worst of all, the carnage is continuing and these horrific numbers will only increase.

The reality for civilians and especially children in Gaza is terrifying. And it is getting worse by the day. The attack on a makeshift camp in Rafah last week, an area designated as safe by Israel, claimed the lives of women and children — the chilling image of a decapitated child summing it all up. Women and girls have been significantly impacted by the war. According to UN reports, more than 1 million Palestinian women and girls in Gaza have almost no access to food or safe water, with disease growing amid inhumane living conditions. One Gaza woman was quoted by a UN report as saying: "In Gaza, we (women) cannot meet our simplest and most basic needs: eating well, drinking safe water, accessing a toilet, having (sanitary) pads, taking a shower ... changing our clothes."

There are no functioning schools in Gaza today. Most UN Relief and Works Agency schools have either been bombed or turned into shelters. More than 800 schools are estimated to have been attacked or destroyed in the first five months of the war, while 17 higher education institutions lie in ruins — testimony to Israeli intentions to deny young Gazans an opportunity to study and learn.

More than 625,000 students have been deprived of teachers or safe places to learn. The war has destroyed any academic future for these children. According to the UN, Gaza's population is disproportionately young, with about 65 percent being 24

years of age or younger.

As for the 19,000 orphans in Gaza, the future is bleak and scary. There are no schools, no care centers and no working orphanages. No one has any idea how these thousands of children are surviving or if they will ever live a normal everyday life after suffering such mental and physical injuries.

Few are asking the hard questions. What will happen to future Palestinian generations, especially in war-torn Gaza? What kind of life will they have if they survive to reach adulthood? The majority are now displaced and will live the rest of their lives as refugees with no hope of a better future. What kind of society will these children grow up in? What kind of economic and social reality awaits them? How will they feel about Israel? Most will become radicalized if a political solution to the plight of the Palestinians is not found.

It is hard to imagine an optimistic scenario becoming a reality when most of Gaza has been declared a disaster area and when the most basic survival needs are now absent. The environmental impact of the war has made Gaza unlivable, another deliberate goal of Israel. The enclave's underground water is contaminated because Israel struck the only sewage treatment plant. There has been a spike in waterborne diseases, while the use of illegal weapons, like white phosphorus, will have adverse effects on water, earth and the environment for many generations.

This eight-month-old war may continue for a few more weeks or even months. And Israel may somehow find a way to defeat Hamas. Still, if there is a lesson to be learned, especially by Israelis, it is

that the Palestinian people cannot be beaten after more than seven decades of struggling to have a place among free nations.

What Israel has done so far — aside from the mass destruction, the atrocities and the targeting of civilians and all symbols of civilian life in Gaza — is weaponize future generations of Palestinians. Those thousands of orphans, the surviving families, the grieving mothers and fathers and the millions who have suffered the most horrific genocidal war in modern times will only become more hostile, more radicalized and more determined. Is this the next generation Israel wants to fight and kill? The children that Israel has left behind, motherless, fatherless and with no access to a healthy, stable and moderate environment, will never forget or forgive. The wanton destruction of Gaza was never about destroying Hamas. The bombing of hospitals, schools and universities was never about replacing the armed resistance. It was about extermination and final displacement outside Gaza.

Israel has lost all of its political assets abroad. It is now becoming a pariah state, no matter how this war ends. What eight months of genocidal war has done to Israel's image of itself is irreparable. The legacy of its killing of children and babies in Gaza will haunt it forever. But what Israel should be wary of is that those thousands of surviving orphans and their peers in the West Bank and beyond will only grow up to be radicalized so long as the occupation continues.

This is not a war to end all wars with the Palestinians, but a failed and myopic attempt to pursue a foolish plan to subjugate the Palestinians once and for all. That plan has been doomed from the very beginning.

Caution a must when setting down red lines

Kerry Boyd Anderson

AS Israeli ground forces entered central Rafah in the last few days, questions about whether the operation crosses President Joe Biden's red line have intensified. The situation highlights why leaders should always be careful when setting down red lines.

Since at least March, US officials have expressed concern about a major military operation in Rafah and the high impact on the many civilians who had fled there. They suggested that America would not support such an operation without a credible plan to protect civilians. In late April, shortly before Israel launched its ground operations in and around Rafah, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said that Washington still had not seen an Israeli plan that US officials felt would sufficiently protect civilians in the area. "We don't want to see a major ground operation in Rafah," he added.

Biden took things up a notch on May 9, in an interview with CNN, when he said that he had made it clear to Israeli leaders that, "if they go into Rafah ... I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities." He clarified that his concern was about Israel going into "the population centers." His comments were widely seen as setting out a red line — a clear threshold that Israel should not cross and, if it did, the White House would stop sending offensive weapons. The Biden administration backed it up, to some degree, by withholding a shipment of particularly large bombs, expressing concern about the level of destruction such munitions could cause in a densely populated area such as Rafah.

However, in the last month, as Israeli ground forces have pushed further into Rafah — including areas around eastern and western Rafah and more recently into the city center — the Biden administration has tried to backpedal away from its red line. US officials are arguing that Israel's operations in Rafah are more precise than earlier operations against cities in Gaza. On May 22, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that operations in Rafah were "more targeted and limited" and had "not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas."

The administration might have been able to reasonably argue that Israel had not crossed Biden's red line in Rafah when Israeli soldiers had made only limited advances to the border crossing and areas around the city of Rafah. However, more recently, US officials' comments look to be splitting hairs.

Last Thursday, State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel said that "we have not seen a major operation as it relates to Rafah." He made this statement several days after an Israeli strike sent shrapnel flying through a camp for displaced Palestinians in Rafah and

started a horrific fire, and after further strikes, fighting and civilian deaths in Rafah. Furthermore, Patel said there was no major military operation in Rafah one day before the Israeli army acknowledged that its soldiers were in central Rafah.

Faced with the growing unreasonableness of such statements, the administration has tried to blur the red line. On May 22, Sullivan said there was "no mathematical formula" to define it. He noted that US officials would consider "whether there is a lot of death and destruction from this operation or if it is more precise and proportional." At this point, one must wonder how much destruction officials would need to see before labeling it as "a lot" or disproportionate. Similarly, Patel, when repeatedly pressed by reporters to explain what would constitute a "major military operation" said, "I'm not going to categorize it into one box or another."

Beyond the immediate problem for US policy — and the consequences for Palestinian civilians — the situation highlights why leaders should take great care in setting red lines, whether or not they officially use the term itself.

One of the most famous modern red line debates comes from President Barack Obama's 2012 statement promising serious consequences if the Assad regime in Syria used chemical weapons. After regime forces attacked Ghouta with sarin, Obama was faced with the decision of whether to enforce his red line. While he seriously considered military action, he also delayed. In response, Russia proposed a diplomatic solution, Obama agreed, and large amounts of Syria's chemical weapons were destroyed under international observation.

However, the Assad regime later used chemical weapons again, prompting questions about the effectiveness of the 2013 deal. More than a decade later, there is still a debate about whether the incident is an example of a terrible failure to enforce a red line that undermined US credibility or a successful case of coercive diplomacy. Either way, at least it serves as an example of the need to be prepared before setting down a red line and think through how to enforce it if the adversary crosses the line.

There are other historical examples of leaders drawing red lines, including the frequently changing boundaries that were designed to contain Adolf Hitler's regime in the run-up to the Second World War and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's literal red line in 2012 regarding Iran's nuclear program. Some were successful, some failed and the outcome of others remains debated. At a minimum, leaders should be cautious. They should not throw out red line demands without careful forethought, which should include considering the potential consequences of enforcing a red line — and whether leaders are willing to bear those costs — before ever establishing one.

Brussels heralds chain reaction of legislation on artificial intelligence

Li Yang

The Artificial Intelligence Act, which was approved by the European Council, late last month, is a ground-breaking law that aims to harmonize rules on AI. The flagship legislation follows a "risk-based" approach, and it can set a global standard for AI regulation.

The new law aims to foster the development and uptake of safe and trustworthy AI systems across the European Union's single market by both private and public actors. At the same time, it aims to ensure respect of the fundamental rights of EU citizens and stimulate investment in artificial intelligence in Europe and spur innovation.

The new law categorizes different types of artificial intelligence according to risk. AI systems presenting only limited risk will be subject to very light transparency obligations, while high-risk AI systems will

need to be authorized and will be subject to a set of requirements and obligations to gain access to the

able. The law also prohibits the use of AI for predictive

infringements of the act are set as a percentage of the

The new law categorizes different types of artificial intelligence according to risk. AI systems presenting only limited risk will be subject to very light transparency obligations, while high-risk AI systems will need to be authorized and will be subject to a set of requirements and obligations to gain access to the EU market. AI systems such as cognitive behavioral manipulation and social scoring, for example, will be banned from the EU because their risk is deemed unacceptable. The law also prohibits the use of AI for predictive policing based on profiling and systems that use biometric data to categorize people according to specific categories such as race, religion or sexual orientation.

EU market.

AI systems such as cognitive behavioral manipulation and social scoring, for example, will be banned from the EU because their risk is deemed unacceptable.

policing based on profiling and systems that use biometric data to categorize people according to specific categories such as race, religion or sexual orientation. Notably, the fines for

offending company's global annual turnover in the previous financial year or a predetermined amount, whichever is higher. Small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups are sub-

ject to proportional administrative fines.

Considering that AI companies are mainly large

also lead to losses in their turnover in other markets and other industries, which has further increased the deterrent effect of the act on these large companies, most of which are US companies.

That might prompt the United States to follow suit by passing its own AI act to protect US companies' interests in the EU. Meanwhile, some US policy consultants suggest the EU act still has considerable space for improvement, and the US' AI act should not only focus on risk prevention and control, but also pay more attention to providing support for AI innovation.

That being said, the EU's AI act will surely prompt more countries to accelerate their legislative work on AI, which can draw on the experience of the EU in the field and make their own AI acts more flexible and adaptable to their respective national conditions.

South Africa elections: ‘Tintswalo’ sends a message to the ANC

IN the lead-up to the May 29 elections in South Africa, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) went to great lengths to draw attention to the socio-economic advancements the country made in the past 30 years in a desperate attempt to win favour with an electorate increasingly disillusioned with its governing capabilities.

Most famously, in his State of the Nation address in February, President and ANC leader Cyril Ramaphosa tried to highlight the long-term achievements of his party through the tale of “Tintswalo” – a fictional Black woman born in 1994, within months of the fall of apartheid and the ANC’s rise to power.

“Tintswalo – democracy’s child – grew up in a society that was worlds apart from the South Africa of her parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,” Ramaphosa said. “She grew up in a society governed by a constitution rooted in equality, the rule of law, and affirmation of the inherent dignity of every citizen.”

He went on to explain that this imaginary young woman grew up in a public mass-housing scheme for poor South Africans, received state-funded education and healthcare, graduated into a well-paying job, and is now living in a nice house with plenty of reason to look forward to the future.

According to the president, the inspiring, uplifting story of Tintswalo was the story of most young South Africans and an allegory for the massive progress made under the ANC.

This is not wrong. There are many South Africans whose living conditions and future prospects improved significantly under ANC governments over the past 30 years.

Despite this, however, the tale of Tintswalo failed to convince many South Africans to vote in another ANC government on May 29.

The ANC party received just 40.18 percent of the votes, well short of the majority it had held since the all-race vote of 1994 that ended apartheid and brought the party to power under Nelson Mandela. It now has to find a coalition partner to form a government.

So what was behind the ANC’s election setback?

In short, it seems that many “Tintswalos” across the country had enough of the high levels of crime, unemployment, poor service delivery, and corruption that came to define South Africa today. They had enough of being told that they should be grateful just for being (at times marginally) better off than their parents, who suffered for years under apartheid. They had enough of struggling to make ends meet as ANC’s many corruption scandals were swept under the carpet. They had enough, and

sent a message to the governing party by voting for the opposition.

This rebuke by voters did not come as a surprise to the ruling party. The ANC had long been aware that many of the party’s long-term supporters were unhappy with its recent performance. It had already promised to correct course, end corruption, improve public services, and fix the economy many times over in the past few years.

Over six years ago, in January 2018, then-President Jacob Zuma initiated the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State

Tafi Mhaka

captain of the country and the ANC, accusing him of corruption.

The investigation laid out in great detail how the friends and family of the deputy president have consistently secured profitable government tenders and benefitted greatly from their proximity to a powerful ANC figure.

Mashatile refuted the accusations levelled at him, claiming the “potentially damaging, yet unsubstantiated allegations” are false and “he is committed to his oath of office and the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South

Ramaphosa himself has faced allegations of corruption, too.

In 2022, he was accused of attempting to conceal the 2020 theft of \$4m in cash from his game farm, raising questions about how he acquired the money and whether he declared it. A probe carried out by the Public Protector, South Africa’s anti-corruption watchdog, cleared him of any misconduct in March 2023, yet the police said they will continue to investigate. The left-wing opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party described the watchdog’s findings as “nonsensical”, and many

cited as a global leader in the provision of water supply and sanitation.

However, lack of proper maintenance, neglect and frequent power interruptions caused the water infrastructure to degrade and many urban and peri-urban areas in the country to turn to systematic water rationing. As a result, many South Africans, who grew up with reliable access to safe water thanks to the ANC, are now uncertain when they will have water in their taps next.

There are similar issues with energy and transport networks.

Inadequate upkeep of power plants and insufficient development of new energy sources amid high-level corruption have led to severe electricity shortages and frequent power cuts.

The railway system too is crumbling from underinvestment, lack of maintenance, criminal activity, and corruption at all levels. The sorry state of the railways is also adversely affecting other sectors, such as agriculture and retail, and impeding critical economic activity.

With a paltry 0.6 percent economic growth in 2023, South Africa has also struggled to address unemployment and create new jobs.

Since the 2019 election, Ramaphosa and other ANC officials have consistently listed unemployment, poverty, crime and corruption as the key issues affecting South Africans.

Still, the party did not remove the high-ranking officials implicated in the State Capture Report from its 2024 parliamentary list, supposedly because they had not been charged. In the eyes of many voters, the decision to stand by and further promote officials accused of corruption demonstrated the ANC’s indifference to the issue.

Like many other liberation movements turned political parties in the region – such as Zimbabwe’s ruling Zanu-PF – the ANC is confronted with the challenge of being led by men who were legendary freedom fighters but are now struggling to reinvent themselves as capable and principled public servants.

Seemingly unable to satisfy the growing demands of a populace that fully acknowledges the achievements made after 1994, but prioritises the immediate delivery of effective services and transparent governance, the ANC finds itself in political free fall.

Coddled in the expansive trappings of wealth, privilege, and state power for 30 years, ANC’s leaders have gradually lost touch with everyday South Africans who are struggling and desperate for socioeconomic change.

So the decrease in electoral support for the ANC should not come as a surprise to anyone.

It is simple: “Tintswalo” had enough, and she demands more from her government.

Saudi Arabia a good bet to meet its defense production goals

Jason Greenblatt

ing nation and that, the more home-grown strategic deterrence they can develop, the better.

That brings us to the second reason: Saudi Arabia is openly and thoroughly dedicated to responding to its sometimes-hostile environs, as demonstrated by the primacy it is placing on this effort. In Vision 2030, the crown prince championed the benefits of stimulating an entire economic sector by localizing the defense industry. Since then, Saudi Arabian Military Industries has been entrusted with the mandate of bringing this mission into reality. It has drawn significant foreign investment and has begun strategically partnering with leading American defense

the globe.

I have spent a lot of time in the Kingdom since 2017, observing and researching the cultural and economic changes already in motion. Thus far, the passion I hear from Saudis, foreign-born residents and visitors suggests that, even though 2030 is just a few years away, the odds of achieving the goals of Vision 2030 are high. The idea is not to necessarily achieve every single item on the list, but to create the mindset, infrastructure and attitude of a dynamic, modern, prosperous and cohesive nation. Vision 2030 is not just a checklist, in other words, but also an expression of dedication to encourage Saudis to think big, embrace rapid growth and play a leading role in the world.

One prominent Vision 2030 goal is to double household spending on cultural and entertainment activities; another is to triple the rate of Saudis who exercise once a week. There are myriad benchmarks that are part and parcel of the effort to reorient the Kingdom, all of which are designed to work hand in hand to bring the country to center stage in relation to the world economy, tourism, technology, investment, foreign policy, defense production and major infrastructure projects, to name just some of the Kingdom’s goals. The goals set by Vision 2030 reflect a larger dedication to reimagining Saudi Arabia in a way that remains true to its ways of life in terms of religion, culture and tradition, all while incorporating new behaviors and norms that will help it sustainably compete in all areas around the globe.

titans. It has also begun developing strategic technologies, such as software-defined multiband radio systems, helicopter engines and infrastructure for naval defense systems.

The Saudis are clearly focused on inaugurating a new era of primacy on the world stage. One recurring theme in all discussions of Vision 2030 is that the Kingdom takes seriously both the honor and the responsibility that comes with it being the center of both the Islamic and Arab worlds. Vision 2030 also aims to reshape norms around physical, economic and cultural health in ways that reflect Saudi readiness to compete among the top-tier countries in the world.

One prominent Vision 2030 goal is to double household spending on cultural and entertainment activities; another is to triple the rate of Saudis who exercise once a week. There are myriad benchmarks that are part and parcel of the effort to reorient the Kingdom, all of which are designed to work hand in hand to bring the country to center stage in relation to the world economy, tourism, technology, investment, foreign policy, defense production and major infrastructure projects, to name just some of the Kingdom’s goals. The goals set by Vision 2030 reflect a larger dedication to reimagining Saudi Arabia in a way that remains true to its ways of life in terms of religion, culture and tradition, all while incorporating new behaviors and norms that will help it sustainably compete in all areas around

Saudi military readiness and the concept of a “Made in Saudi” mantra for the defense industry are important parts of this evolution. The Made in Saudi effort is not just for the benefit of use, to protect the Kingdom, but to enable it to help others protect themselves as well. If Vision 2030 is about playing a role on the world stage, the defense production effort shows dedication to using that role to help generate peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

While not essential to the plan, one additional possibility could take Saudi ambitions to the next level. If, down the road, Saudi Arabia and Israel achieve normalized relations, the combination of their goals and talent would further help spring the Kingdom to the status of defense production powerhouse. Imagine the possibilities if the Kingdom, Israel and other pathbreaking countries such as the UAE could work together to share best practices and production technologies, thereby changing the complexion of the region for the better. Further cooperation would represent a major step toward achieving a united front for peace in the region.

Realigning the Middle East around shared interests and the possibility of world-changing cooperation requires courage and leadership. But those virtues seem to be in high supply in the Kingdom — and that is why I would bet on Saudi Arabia achieving its ambitious defense production goals to meet the urgency of the moment.

There is a measure of desperation in Biden’s ceasefire plan

ON Friday, US President Joe Biden outlined a ceasefire proposal for the war in Gaza. The plan is comprised of three stages in which Israel and Hamas would negotiate an exchange of captives, an eventual permanent cessation of hostilities and rebuilding of homes and public facilities.

He called on Israel and Hamas to immediately accept the deal, and quickly move towards a full resolution of the conflict. He now seeks an immediate long-term ceasefire, and links his name and reputation to achieving it.

What are we to make of this? For starters, Biden described the proposal as an Israeli offer to Hamas, but it may well be an American initiative crediting Israel, or even a refurbished Hamas proposal from months ago dressed in American clothing to make it palatable to warmongers.

The plan is intriguing because it includes all the key drivers of the conflict, and also of its resolution: end of fighting, release of all detainees, eviction of Israel from Gaza, removal of the underlying motivation for Hamas to attack Israel, and reconstruction of the strip.

Hamas almost immediately responded that it viewed the proposal positively. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government responded with its usual combination of bravado and ambiguity – saying it would stop its attacks and leave Gaza only after a total victory over Hamas, even if the captives are freed. Yet Biden said that Hamas’s military power has been diminished to the point where it could not repeat its October 7 assault, suggesting that Israel has achieved its goal and can now leave Gaza.

Why have both Biden

and Netanyahu, the brothers-in-genocide, who until recently scoffed at longer-term ceasefire proposals, suddenly changed their minds? I have no doubt it is their common desperation. Their reputations have been dragged through the mud, and their political incumbency is threatened. Desperation is a mighty driver of political innovation.

Biden fears losing the November election, while Netanyahu fears being thrown into jail for corruption by an Israeli court or for overseeing a genocide by the International Criminal Court.

Biden will try to claim credit for spurring peace-making. But it is impossible to reconcile any peace-making efforts with his eight months of nonstop funding, arming, and diplomatically shielding the Israeli genocide in Gaza – openly, gleefully, proudly, and at every opportunity.

Rami G Khouri

He revealed his true nature, and it earned him the nickname, “Genocide Joe”.

Netanyahu is caught in the grip of irreconcilable pressures of his own making, intended to keep him in power and out of the reach of the courts. Biden’s proposal is totally incompatible with the war-making frenzy of the extreme right-wing Israelis in his government. Like all politicians, but especially genocidal apartheid practitioners, he has made contradictory pledges to different audiences whom he needs to remain in power. Biden’s proposal has given him a soft exit from his dilemma.

Whatever dance Biden and Netanyahu may be performing for the cameras, the pull of moving forward with a plan to “end this war and for the day after to begin” – as the US president put it – will quickly run into serious obstacles

on the path to a permanent peace. Ending the Israel-Palestine conflict involves many players who must negotiate along multiple axes, involving forces in several countries – all driven by unpredictable motives and contradictory needs.

The tensions between the following main players have to be resolved: the US and Israeli governments; Biden and Netanyahu; Netanyahu and several far-right Jewish ultranationalists in his government; the Israeli government and Israeli citizens who reject its ideology from well before October 7; the Israeli government and many Israeli citizens who support the demands of captives’ families to end the war and free them; Biden and a large swath of his Democratic Party base who demand that he reverse his support for the

Israeli genocide in Gaza, or they will not vote for him in November; Biden and the many Democrats and Republicans who want to continue the Israeli genocide; the US leadership, and most of the world’s people and governments who support equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis and oppose the US-backed genocide; the Israeli government and Hamas whose respective core goals are nearly, but not fully, met in the Biden proposal; and the US government and Hamas who now negotiate indirectly, but remain antagonistic on most issues related to Palestine-Israel and US hegemony in the region.

If the first of the plan’s three stages happens, hard negotiations will then have to tackle the toughest issues, like what form of Palestinian governance ultimately takes charge in Gaza, what security guarantees regional and global

powers give Israelis and Palestinians, and how they permanently resolve the most contentious underlying issues – like ending Palestinian refugeehood, containing Zionist settler-colonialism, and peacefully coexisting as separate sovereign entities in one land or adjacent states.

On the issue of Palestinian governance, Biden made an intriguing point in his Friday speech when he said that “at this point, Hamas is no longer capable of carrying out another October 7th”, meaning Israel has achieved a key goal of seriously degrading Hamas and it could now stop the war and leave Gaza.

Israel may or may not agree, but the US president may be laying the groundwork for engaging a different Hamas in a post-war era, as he did with the Taliban and his predecessors did with the Viet Cong after decades of fighting

them as “terrorists”. When wars end, amazing things happen.

Hamas, or an entity that mirrors its nationalistic and militant determination to exercise self-determination in Palestine, will have to be part of the new governance system in Palestine, alongside the other Palestinian factions that agree to live peacefully alongside Israel. But that will happen only if – and this is the biggest if in this entire equation – Israel and its American backers explicitly, openly, and sincerely agree to full freedom and self-determination for Palestinians, and peacefully coexistence of equal sovereign Israelis and Palestinians in historical Palestine.

Now that would be a really bold move for lasting peace – if an American president one day decides to walk down that path, powered by sincerity, which is hard to discern in the current offering.



SCCI asks govt to conduct forensic audit of IPPs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq called the IPPs as cancer for the country's economy and urged the government to conduct a forensic audit of the IPPs to pull the country from the hovering net of circular debts.

The SCCI chief said hydel and solar energy is the best solution to the rising electricity cost and crisis. He called upon the government to pay serious attention to the uplift of the solar energy sector.

Fuad Ishaq demanded the disbursement of loans under KP government interest-free Youth loan scheme worth Rs 10 Billion through the Bank of Khyber and demanded the revival of IDBP.

The SCCI chief said the country's economy can be put on the right track by framing sustainable and durable policies and low tax rates.

Fuad Ishaq was addressing as chief guest at the concluding ceremony of two-day International Solar Energy Expo – ISE 2024 organised by GreenWend Energy/SunSaviour here at the local hotel, said a statement here on Tuesday.

The event was attended by SCCI vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, former presidents Haji Muhammad Afzal, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, and Nadeem Rauf, Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Fazl e Wahid and others.

Patron in chief of the GreenWend Energy Prof Subhan Qureshi, Chief Technical Officer Saad Rashid, Dr Ahmad Khattak, Haider Ali, Prof Amanullah, researchers, experts, universities faculty members, business community attached with solar energy sector, universities students, members of business community were present in a large number on the occasion.

More than 28 solar energy companies participated in the exhibition.

Various stalls were set up wherein the organisers briefed president of the SCCI Fuad Ishaq about various gadgets of solar energy, machines, its efficiency and significance, and alternate solution to the current energy crisis.

Fuad Ishaq addressing the participants said that proposals today presented by GreenWend Energy, were mostly as per SCCI vision and thoughts. He assured the chamber will take initiatives in light of these recommendations for promotion of solar energy sector and other relevant hurdles/issues.

The SCCI president said KP is producing 6500 megawatt electricity in which 2700 megawatt is utilized in summer and only 1100 megawatt in winter season, rest of the produced electricity exported to the national grid, despite this surplus production, electricity tariff is being charged equal to major provinces.

Talking about hydel,

nuclear and thermal power, Fuad said all these resources expenditure is only Rs11 per unit but due to inefficiency of power distribution companies, thieves and growing line losses, Rs23 per unit has been increased in it, calling for steps for its eradication at government level.

Fuad Ishaq appreciated organisers for arranging such a mega event in Peshawar and it is a good effort to gather stakeholders/people from industry, academia and companies under one roof that would help to take benefit from each other's experiences and also provide employment opportunities for youth.

The SCCI chief mentioned that from 30 to 32 billion dollars through human resources were official and the same figure amount was unofficial in the shape of foreign exchange. He said Pakistan export is currently \$35billion which needs to be enhanced at an optimal level.



PESHAWAR: Patron in Chief of GreenWend Energy Prof Subhan Qureshi presenting a shield to President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq. V.P SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi also present.

PSX witnessed bearish trend

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 908.60 points, a negative change of 1.20%, closing at 74,666.66 points against 75,575.26 points the previous day.

A total of 414,479,234 shares valuing Rs 18.311 billion were traded during the day as compared to 441,261,756 shares valuing Rs 18.364 billion the previous day.

As many as 451 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 99 of them recorded gains and 279 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 73 companies remained unchanged.

The top three trading companies were Fauji Cement with 36,618,571 shares at Rs 22.51 per share, K-Electric Limited with 35,198,695 shares at Rs 4.87 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 21,707,630 shares at Rs 1.34 per share.

Sapphire Fibers Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 31.51 per share price, closing at Rs 1,438.94 whereas the runner-up was Philip Morris Pakistan Limited with a Rs 10.39 rise in its per share price to Rs 600.00.

NGIAP achieves important milestone

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Flight Calibration and Flight Procedure Design milestone for the New Gwadar International Airport has been successfully achieved on Tuesday with the successful test landing of the Calibration Aircraft on the newly constructed runway.

The Calibration Aircraft was welcomed to the airport with a customary water cannon salute by the Rescue and Fire Fighting Services department of PCAA. This significant accomplishment is the result of the collaborative efforts of both the Chinese and Pakistani Project Teams. The airport is projected to be completed and operational in the fourth quarter of this year.

The progress made in bringing this project from its initial stages to this point would not have been possible without the dedicated work of the Chinese Project



Team, led by Mr. Ding Kan PD-CACC, Mr. Zhu Zheng Chief Supervisor-CACC, Mr. Liao Jianxin, Project Coordinator-CACC, Mr. Hu Xiaohu PM-BUGG, and Mr. Dai Chunzhuang-PM-CRBE.

The Pakistani project team, under the leadership of Mr. Sadiq Ur Rehman, Dy. DG Airport Services/Ex-PD NGIAP, Engr. Faiz Ullah Khattak, Project Director, PCAA, Engr. Ghulam Mujtaba, Dy. Project Director PCAA, and Mr. Aamir Ali Hashmi, Project Coordinator,

PCAA, also deserves recognition for their efforts.

Additionally, the Technical Directorates of PCAA and the Flight Inspection Unit (FIU) have played a crucial role in achieving this milestone within a short timeframe.

The completion of the New Gwadar International Airport is expected to have a transformative impact on the development of Gwadar and its surrounding areas, as well as improve the lives of the people of Balochistan Province and the Coastal Region.

Bird Hazard Control Committee meeting held at PAF Base Masroor



F.P. Report

KARACHI: A meeting of the Bird Hazard Control Committee was held at Pakistan Air Force Base Masroor on Tuesday. Additional Deputy Commissioner Kemari Peeral Chandio, Press Information Officer Ashfaq Ahmed Chandio, Deputy Director Sindh Solid Waste Management Board Wahidur Rehman, Municipal Corporation Officer Ahmed Sheikh, SP Ali Anwar Somer and others attended the meeting. Officer Commanding Flying Wing Group Captain Waqas Amjad,

Officer Commanding Administrative Wing Group Captain Junaid Afzal, Officer Commanding Security Wing Imran Ayub on behalf of PAF Base Masroor also attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed the destruction caused by the collision of the birds attracted to the sacrificial offerings during the low-level flight of the aircraft. Therefore, if the sacrificial remains of animals are not disposed properly, birds like sparrows and jackals will be attracted to it, which can cause great destruction for the pilot and the aircraft alike. Peeral Chandio,

Additional Deputy Commissioner District Kemari assured timely disposal of the sacrificial remains and issued instructions to the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and Tehsil Corporation to fully cooperate with the Pakistan Air Force.

The public is informed that orders have been issued by the District Administration to throw the sacrificial items only at designated places otherwise legal action will be taken by the police. During the briefing, attention was paid to the possible damage caused by pigeons and kites

during the flight of the aircraft. The losses were highlighted on which orders for strict legal action have already been issued by the Chief Secretary Sindh.

Further, Peeral Chandio, Additional Deputy Commissioner District Kemari said that orders have been issued by the Deputy Commissioner Kemari to take legal action against those who fired in the air under Section 144 and Aircraft Safety Act, 1965, on which SP Ali Anwar Soomro assured strict measures.

During the meeting, the organization of cleanliness in the vicinity of PAF Base Masroor was reviewed and instructions were issued for the organization of a large-scale cleaning campaign in the municipality and site areas. Air Commodore Mohammad Umar Base Commander PAF Base Masroor appreciated the efforts and cooperation of Kemari Karachi administration for the national duty.

U Bank opens its first Islamic Banking Window



F.P. Report

KARACHI: U Microfinance Bank (U Bank) has inaugurated its first Islamic Banking Window in its branch in Karachi. This will be followed by the availability of Islamic Banking Windows across all 28 of its branches in the metropolitan city. The launch marks a significant milestone in U Bank's mission to provide accessible and Shari'ah-compliant banking services to its customers.

The inaugural ceremony of the first Islamic Banking Window was held at U Bank's Clifton branch and was graced with the presence of Mr. Mohamed Essa Al Taheri, President & CEO - U Bank, Mr. Syed Irfan Ali, Executive Director Financial Inclusion Group - State Bank of Pakistan as the Chief Guest, and other members of the SBP and management committee of U Bank.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Mohamed Essa Al Taheri, President & CEO - U Bank stated, "Today is a significant milestone in U Bank's journey toward inclusive banking. By introducing Islamic Banking Windows, we are expanding our service offerings and fulfilling our commitment to providing accessible banking services to all segments of society. This initiative underscores our dedication to the national agenda of financial inclusion and will contribute to the growth of Islamic banking in Pakistan."

ional agenda of financial inclusion and will contribute to the growth of Islamic banking in Pakistan."

Syed Irfan Ali, Executive Director Financial Inclusion Group - SBP commented, "I commend U Bank for taking this initiative towards expansion of Islamic Banking Window outreach, as it has the potential to bring a positive difference to Pakistan's economy and make Islamic microfinance banking functional in more geographic areas. Customers who do not want to avail conventional banking services will now be able to get services through Islamic Banking. I appreciate it that U Bank has invested in the capacity building of its staff by providing training in Islamic Banking services. This is a great step towards enhancing accessibility of Shari'ah-compliant financial services and we expect this move to significantly contribute to the growth of the Islamic Banking industry in Pakistan."

The inauguration of Islamic Banking Windows is a testament to U Bank's dedication to innovation and excellence in banking services. This is the first step in U Bank's strategic plan to roll out these services across its network of 375+ branches throughout Pakistan. This initiative is part of U Bank's commitment to promoting Islamic

Banking in the country and enhancing financial inclusion by offering a diverse range of products and services, while adhering to Islamic principles.

Rupee gains 07 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Tuesday gained 07 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.29 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.36.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.9 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.17 to close at Rs 302.84 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.67, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen went up by 02 paise to close at Rs 1.79, whereas an increase of Rs 1.75 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 355.60 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 353.85.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 paise each to close at Rs 75.77 and Rs 74.20.

121 gas connections disconnected by SNGPL

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnected another 121 connections; Rs 1 million fine imposed.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 14 connections on illegal use of gas and imposed a fine of Rs 0.15 million against gas theft cases. The team also lodged 1 FIR against gas pilfer.

In Multan the team disconnected 10 connections on illegal use of gas while another 03 on use of compressor.

In Karak the company disconnected 02 connections on account of direct use and illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 0.27 million have been booked against gas theft cases. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas pilfers.

The regional team of Shiekhupura disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.2 million against gas theft cases.

In Faisalabad the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.05 million against gas theft cases.

In Peshawar the team disconnected 79 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.22 million against gas theft cases.

In Bahawalpur the team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas.

The regional team of Mardan disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.15 million against gas theft cases.

In Sahiwal the team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas.

HABIBMETRO exchange services inaugurates its first branch in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: HABIBMETRO entered the currency exchange market with the launch of its new subsidiary, HABIBMETRO Exchange Services (HMES). HABIBMETRO has established HMES with a license from State Bank of Pakistan and a paid up capital of PKR 1 billion. This strategic move will provide seamless and secure currency exchange solutions.

The inauguration ceremony of the first HMES branch was held on June 4, 2024 at its main branch in the Al-Manzoor Building, I.I. Chundrigar Road, Karachi. This launch underscores the Bank's dedication to expanding its service offerings and addressing varying customer needs. HMES offers competitive exchange rates and

efficient services, for customers to meet their currency exchange needs effortlessly.

During the ceremony, Mr. Yawer Ali Gulani, CEO of HMES stated, "Our goal is to provide our customers with reliable and seamless currency exchange solutions, backed by the trusted reputation of HABIBMETRO. With our commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction, we are confident that HMES will set a new standard in the currency exchange industry."

The ceremony was attended by senior leadership, including Mr. Mohamedali R. Habib, Chairman of HABIBMETRO, Mr. Mohsin Ali Nathani, Regional CEO of Habib Bank AG Zurich, Mr. Khurram Shahzad Khan, President & CEO of HABIBMETRO, Syed



Ather Ahmed, Chairman of HMES and Mr. Yawer Ali Gulani, CEO of HMES.

The launch marks a significant milestone in the Bank's expansion effort, broadening its reach in the

financial market.

H A B I B M E T R O Exchange Services is a subsidiary of HABIBMETRO. As a trusted institution in Pakistan's financial landscape, HABIBMETRO

serves millions of customers through a nationwide network of over 540 branches, including 217 dedicated Islamic Banking branches in more than 200 cities.



In brief

KBBA lauds basketball tournament

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Karachi Basketball Association (KBBA) Muhammad Yaqoob has expressed his gratitude and excitement over the successful organization of the Muhammad Majid and Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball Tournament, held in Karachi after a gap of twenty years. He emphasized that this tournament will significantly contribute to the development of basketball in the region, said a press release. "By the grace of Almighty, the tournament was organized with excellent and high-quality arrangements. I am pleased to say that we all made efforts to contribute to the success of this memorial tournament," he said. He extended his appreciation to the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF), participating teams, technical officials, local associations, basketball enthusiasts, sponsors, and especially the media for their tremendous cooperation and excellent reporting, which kept the public informed about the results. Yaqoob assured that the next phase, involving the scrutiny of Karachi clubs and impartial elections, will be completed soon with the support of the Pakistan Basketball Federation. "We will strive to organize the event even better next time," he said.

World Pool c'ship kicks off in Jeddah

JEDDAH (APP): The inaugural World Pool Championship (9-ball) began on Monday evening in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and will run for six days. The championship is organized by the Saudi Billiards and Snooker Federation under the supervision of the Ministry of Sports and in collaboration with the World Nine-Ball Tour. Held at the sports hall of Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal Sports City, this edition witnesses the competition of 128 players from 45 countries. Among them are the top 100 players from the World Nine-Ball Tour, along with 28 players who qualified from the preliminary rounds. The players will compete in 223 matches on 16 tables in the most prestigious and widely attended event in the world of billiards.

McGregor apologizes to UFC fans

DUBLIN (Agencies): The UFC has "postponed until further notice" Monday's news conference featuring Conor McGregor and Michael Chandler in Dublin. McGregor, 35, is scheduled to fight American Chandler at UFC 303 on 29 June in Las Vegas. The Irishman was due to face the media alongside 38-year-old Chandler at the 3Arena. No explanation was given, but McGregor did make a statement on X apologising to fans. "In consultation with the UFC, today's press conference was cancelled due to a series of obstacles outside of our control," he said. "I apologise to my Irish fans, and fans around the world, for the inconvenience and appreciate all your passion and support. "I can't wait to put on the greatest all-time show in the octagon." McGregor had been due to conduct several interviews on Sunday but they were also cancelled at short notice. Chandler and UFC president Dana White were both scheduled to travel from the US to attend the news conference. The UFC announced the fight on 24 May and tickets sold out in fewer than 10 minutes.

Afghanistan rout debutants Uganda in T20 WC opener

GUYANA (AFP) Afghanistan produced a dominant bowling and batting performance to thrash debutants Uganda by 125 runs in the T20 World Cup in Guyana on Monday. Afghanistan opens Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran laid the foundations for the win with an opening stand of 154 in Afghanistan's 183-5. Left-arm seamer Fazalhaq Farooqi dazzled with five wickets for just nine runs as Uganda were skittled for 58 in 16 overs. "It was the kind of start we wanted as a team," Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan said. "It does not matter who we play, it is about the mindset. "The hard work we have done in the last few weeks, the way the openers started and the way our bowlers bowled -- it was a great overall team effort."

Zalmi Football Club Franchise for Pakistan Football League

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The owner of Pakistan's leading cricket franchise Peshawar Zalmi, and Zalmi Ventures, Javed Afridi makes a grand entry into football. "Announcing the inclusion of a Zalmi Football Club franchise in Pakistan's first football league makes me immensely happy," said Javed Afridi, Chairman of Zalmi Football Club. "Zalmi Ventures will continue to be at the forefront of promoting sports in Pakistan," stated Javed Afridi. The owner of Pakistan's leading cricket franchise Peshawar Zalmi, and Zalmi Ventures, Javed Afridi make a grand entry into football with the inclusion

including nine fours and a six. Gurbaz and Zadran's opening partnership was the second highest in men's T20 World Cup history, beaten only by the 170 by England's Jos Buttler and Alex Hales in 2022. But when Gurbaz and Zadran fell in the space of four balls, Uganda were able to peg back Afghanistan. Masaba claimed a piece of cricket history for the East African nation after taking his country's first ever World Cup wicket, bowling Zadran in the 15th over to leave the score at 154-1. Alpesh Ramjani then removed Gurbaz, who was caught by Riazat Ali Shah at deep square leg for 76. Masaba claimed his second wicket, getting rid of Najibullah Zadran, who was caught at deep square leg by Dinesh Nakrani. Cosmas Kyewuta took the other two wickets. Any hopes that Uganda's bowling fightback would spill into their innings were snuffed out by Fazalhaq in the first over. After Uganda opener Ronak Patel creamed a four off Fazalhaq's first

ball, the Afghan bowler hit back with two wickets with his next two deliveries, removing Patel and Roger Mukasa, to leave the Africans reeling at 4-2. Mujeeb Ur Rahman then had Simon Ssesazi caught by Fazalhaq off a top edge for four as Uganda slumped to 8-3. The wickets continued to tumble and Uganda were soon 18-5 in the fifth over. Fazalhaq took the wickets of Masaba and Robinson Obuya, both caught behind, to complete his five-wicket haul before skipper Khan mopped up the tail by dismissing Bilal Hassan lbw and bowling Hendry Ssenyondo. Uganda skipper Masaba took positives from his team's T20 World Cup debut, despite the heavy defeat. "Pretty special moment for us, hearing our national anthem and seeing our flag at the World Cup," Masaba said. "Something I will cherish for the rest of my life. "First game at the World Cup, lot of nerves. Good to get that out of the way. We will look to come out and play better next game."



PROVIDENCE: The Afghanistan players congratulate Naveen-ul-Haq for dismissing Dinesh Nakrani.

Afridi wants Babar lead fearlessly to lift WC trophy

LAHORE (APP): Former swashbuckling all-rounder Shahid Khan Afridi has said that Pakistan skipper Babar Azam should lead the team fearlessly and take bold decisions for victory in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the West Indies and USA 2024. In a podcast by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Digital Team with the T20 World Cup 2009 winning team members released here on Tuesday, he said all seniors players should back skipper Babar Azam, adding that he was confident current Pakistan squad could make to the final of the marquee event, the conditions in the West Indies and the United States will suit our players a lot, adding that Pakistan have the services of excellent fast bowlers and spinners. The PCB podcast celebrates 15 years of team's victory in June 2009 and the ICC T20 WC 2024 also happens to be played in the month of June. Younis Khan-inspired Pakistan peaked at the right time to win four straight matches to win the title on June 21, 2009. Reminiscing on his exploits in the ICC men's T20 World Cup final in 2009 Shahid Afridi, known as Boom Boom Afridi to cricket fans, said the bold decisions of the captain helped Pakistan team win the ICC Men's T20 WC 2009. "Captain Younis Khan

called me one evening during the 2009 World Cup in England and asked me to bat up the order as the team needed it. I submitted to his wish," Afridi said, adding that the decision of captain paid dividends as I won back to back 'Player of the Match' awards in the semi-final and final of 2009 T20 WC. The Men in Green won the ICC Men's T20 WC 2009 under the captaincy of Younis Khan. Shahid Khan Afridi, Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Amir, Umer Gull, Kamran Akmal, Saeed Ajmal, Misbah ul Haq and Abdul Razzaq were the stars for Pakistan in the tournament. On individual goals, the former captain said a good player looks for opportunities to make a mark on the big occasions and comes out as hero, adding that "I took the opportunity for myself and availed it." Shahid Khan Afridi won back to back player of the match in the semi-final against South Africa and, later, Sri Lanka in the 2009 final. He further said attitude and focus count a lot on the international arena, stressing the need of small contributions to achieve big goals. 'Small extraordinary contributions from an individual player on the given day are vital to the success,' Afridi said. Misbah ul Haq said that the team carried the scar of losing a close final

of the inaugural ICC T20 WC to India in 2007 and the year 2009 whetted the team and the individuals to do well on the bigger stage. He said the team trained at Bhuban in preparation for the marquee event in England, adding that the beginning to the tournament was not good but the team gelled very well and achieved the goal. "It was an emotional final for me as well as i could not finish well in the 2007 final against India. Demoting himself, Younis Bhai sent me up the order to hit winning runs in 2009," Misbah recalled fondly. Misbah ul Haq was upbeat that Pakistan team has edge over many team as the conditions in the West Indies suit us more than other, adding if Pakistan could make to the final in Australia in 2022 in quite foreign conditions, why not here as well. Shoaib Malik, who captained Pakistan side in 2007 T20 World Cup, recalled how Younis Khan handed him the trophy soon after receiving it in 2009 as he knew that I could not lift the trophy in 2007. The heroes of the 2009 T20 WC winning team Shoaib Malik, Saeed Ajmal, Abdul Razzaq and Mohammad Amir, speaking to the PCB podcast, said expressed the hope that Pakistan team was capable of winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

PFF names final squad for FIFA WC Qualifier matches

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has named the final national men's squad for the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier Round 2 matches against Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan. Pakistan will face Saudi Arabia here at the Jinnah Stadium on June 6 followed by an away fixture against Tajikistan on June 11 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with Diaspora (D) players already joined the team. Squad- Goalkeepers: Yousef Butt (D), Saqib Hanif and Hassan Ali. Defenders: Abdullah Iqbal (D), Mohammad Fazal (D), Haseeb Khan, Rao Omer Hayat, Mamoon Moosa, Mohammad Saddam, Waqar Ihtisham, Moin Ahmed and Abdul Rehman. Midfielders: Rahis Nabi (D), Otis Khan (D), Ali Uzair, Umair Ali, Toqeer ul Hassan, Alamgir Ghazi and Ali Zafar. Forwards: Imran Kayani (D), McKeal Abdulah, Fareedulah, Adeel Younas and Shayak Dost. Pakistan are placed in Group G with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Tajikistan.

Djokovic out of French Open with knee injury

PARIS (AFP): Novak Djokovic pulled out of the French Open ahead of his quarter-final against Casper Ruud due to a knee injury suffered in the previous round, tournament organisers announced on Tuesday. "Due to a torn medial meniscus in his right knee (discovered during an MRI scan performed today), Novak Djokovic... has been forced to withdraw from the Roland Garros tournament," organisers said in a statement. World number one and 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic was due to play Ruud on Wednesday for a place in the last four. Djokovic defeated Ruud in last year's final at Roland Garros. As a result Ruud will go on to face fourth seed Alexander Zverev or 11th seed Alex de Minaur in the semi-finals on Friday. The 37-year-old Djokovic had cast doubt over his fitness following Monday's five-set win over Francisco Cerundolo, admitting he needed anti-inflammatory drugs to get through the match. Djokovic blamed the "slippery" Philippe Chatrier court for the injury he sustained early in the second set of his 6-1, 5-7, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 victory over Cerundolo.

"I don't know what will happen tomorrow or after tomorrow if I'll be able to step out on the court and play. You know, I hope so. Let's see what happens," Djokovic said after the match. "For the last couple weeks I have had, I would say, slight discomfort, I would call it that way, in the right knee, but I haven't had an injury that would be concerning me at all. "I was playing a few tournaments with it, and no issues until today." Djokovic's withdrawal from the French Open means that Jannik Sinner will become Italy's first men's world number one next week. The Serbian star arrived at the tournament with his status at the top under threat from Sinner, who was guaranteed to supplant Djokovic if the latter failed to reach the final in Paris. Djokovic has spent a record 428 weeks at the top of the rankings. His injury extends his worst start to a season since 2018, when he didn't win an event until claiming the Wimbledon title. Adding to his problems, he was accidentally hit on the head by a metal water bottle in Rome last month before suffering stomach problems in Geneva.

Djokovic last pulled out of a Grand Slam during the 2019 US Open, when a shoulder problem forced him to quit against Stan Wawrinka in the last 16. Sinner reaches first French Open semi-final, to become world No.1: Jannik Sinner powered past Grigor Dimitrov in straight sets Tuesday to reach his first French Open semi-final, where he could face rival Carlos Alcaraz, on the day he secured the world number one ranking. The Australian Open champion, who will move top of the rankings next week after Novak Djokovic's withdrawal from the tournament, eased to a 6-2, 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) victory and will take on either Alcaraz or Stefanos Tsitsipas in the last four. Sinner's achievement of becoming Italy's first number one in the sport was confirmed during his match, as the injury-enforced withdrawal of Djokovic was announced. "What can I say?" said the 22-year-old. "It's every player's dream to become number one in the world. On the other hand, seeing Novak retiring (from the tournament) is disappointing, so I wish him a speedy recovery."

Dravid to bow out as India coach after T20 WC

NEW YORK (AFP) : Rahul Dravid said Monday that he will leave his post as India coach at the end of the T20 World Cup after almost three years in charge. Dravid's contract runs out at the end of the month and he will not re-apply for the job, which has been advertised by India's governing cricket body, the BCCI, since last month. "It is going to be the last one that I am in charge of," the 51-year-old told reporters ahead of India's opening match against Ireland in New York on Wednesday. "Unfortunately, the kind of schedules and where I find myself at this stage in my life, I don't think I'll be able to re-apply. "I love doing the job. I've really enjoyed coaching India and I think it's a truly special job to do." The former India captain took over the team from Ravi Shastri after the 2021 T20 World Cup. This year's edition in the United States and West Indies is his last chance to



end the country's global trophy drought, which stretches back to the 2013 Champions Trophy. Dravid oversaw India's runs to the finals of both the World Test Championship and their home 50-over World Cup last year, but they came up short against Australia each time. "I enjoyed working with this team and it's a great bunch of boys to work with," Dravid said. "To be very honest, I think we've actually played really well in these tournaments. "The World Test Championship is slightly different in terms of it's not

one tournament but a whole cycle, but playing extremely well in the cycle to get to the final there again. "The 50-over World Cup we had a great run and went into the final. I think we've been right up there with some of the best teams." India have not won the T20 World Cup since its inaugural edition in 2007 and they have not lifted the one-day World Cup since 2011. India face Pakistan on June 9 and tournament hosts USA three days later in New York, before concluding their group fixtures against Canada in Lauderhill, Florida, on June 15.

Pakistan Football League starts with global stars in attendance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Top football stars from around the world have arrived in Pakistan for the official launch of the Pakistan Football League (PFL) on Tuesday (June 4) in Lahore. Football stars and executives from the UK, Italy, Spain, USA, and Portugal have already confirmed their participation in the launch event. The Pakistan High Commission in London announced that it had issued over a dozen visas for the occasion. The high-powered delegation is led by renowned figures such as Michael Owen, a retired English footballer famed for his goal-scoring abilities and stints with Liverpool, Real Madrid, and the English national team; Emile Heskey, a former English

footballer who played for Leicester City, Liverpool, and Aston Villa; Pascal Chimbonda, a French national team player who also competed in the English Premier League with Tottenham Hotspur, Wigan Athletic, and Sunderland; and Raúl Rodríguez, a former central defender for Espanyol in Spain's La Liga in 2010. Shortly after arriving in Pakistan on Monday, the footballers visited Red Oak High, ISSC Campus, and Roots Millennium Group of Colleges. They also attended meetings with ministers. Michael Owen even played football with the children at a local school. The delegation also includes Steve Wood, who oversees Michael Owen's global commer-

cial activities; Adrian Bevington, a highly experienced senior executive in English football; Michael Knighton, a well-regarded English businessman and former Manchester United board member; Carlo Mastellone, a former Italian footballer; Adolfo Guerrero Gunther, Club Atletico de Madrid's International Expansion Manager since 2016; Amando Moreno, a Spanish football director who has worked with Rafa Benitez; Davide Gomes, former head coach of Benfica B, Benfica's reserve team; Luis Miguel De Sousa Santos Reis, a retired Brazilian footballer; Gustavo Amador Moure, a seasoned legal professional; Adrián Varela, President of International

Relations at CA River Plate; Wilson Lotutala, Marketing Director at FC Basel; Chris Kaufmann, CEO of FC Basel 1893; Paul-David Matthias Erne, head of recruitment at FC Lous Club in Major League Soccer, USA; Michael John Farnan, a British entrepreneur and co-founder of Redstrike; Simon Bythway, a senior executive at Redstrike; and Glen Morgan and Ait-Ali Rabah. Sports journalists Alison Jane Bender, renowned for her work with Sky Sports, Chelsea TV, and Real Madrid TV; Jim White, a veteran sports writer for The Telegraph; and Gary Stonehouse, an experienced sports journalist for The Sun, are also part of the delegation. The three-day visit began on

Monday in Islamabad, followed by a journey to Lahore for the official unveiling on June 4, and will conclude in Karachi, known as The City of Lights. The itinerary includes a lineup of important meetings with senior officials and a football carnival at Kakri Football Stadium in Lyari, aimed at honoring Pakistan's unsung football heroes. Farhan Junejo, Chairman of PFL, UK Holdings overseeing the event, mentioned that the launch will feature the largest gathering of high-profile football delegates ever seen in Pakistan. Farhan Junejo remarked, "Pakistan has warmly embraced football professionals, underscoring the sport's potential and

global interest in Pakistani football. The inaugural kick-off in this league will significantly impact the lives of numerous young aspirants. My initiative to distribute 100,000 footballs across Pakistan aims to provide every child who wishes to play football with a ball. PFL aims to rejuvenate the next generation of football stars." "We have secured agreements with a club in Portugal to send 100 children to Lisbon annually for training alongside top professionals. My vision is for Pakistani youth to travel abroad on private jets rather than through perilous routes." Farhan Junejo mentioned that football professionals will engage with the senior military and political leadership.



In brief

ANF recovers 49 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing operations against drug trafficking conducted five raids across the country and managed to recover 49 kg drugs and arrest three accused, said an ANF H e a d q u a r t e r s spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 4.4 kg ice was recovered from a parcel booked for Australia at a courier office in Islamabad. 424 grams of ice was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Islamabad Airport while 35 kg hashish was recovered from Panjur. 6 kg hashish was recovered from an accused in Sialkot and 4 kg opium was recovered from a drug smuggler arrested near Qasim Chowk Road, Hyderabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

298,800 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 298,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 262,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1464.40 feet and was 66.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. The water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 96,600 cusecs and 130,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1188.60 feet, which was 138.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 52,500 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 183,800, 138,700, 158,000 and 90,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 77,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 7,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

CPWB stresses collective efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of Child Protection and Welfare Bureau Punjab Sara Ahmed emphasized the collective responsibility of society on the occasion of International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression to be aware of the effects of all forms of abuse against children. Talking to a private news channel, she said that the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression is celebrated every year on June 4 to provide an opportunity to recognize and honor these innumerable children around the world including Pakistan. She said that the day creates awareness about serious violations of children's rights and calls for action to protect their welfare. Expressing deep concern over the increasing number of violence against children in the country, she said that children are the most vulnerable members of our society and the impact of violence on their lives is devastating. She calls on governments, citizens, policy-makers, communities, and individuals to prioritize the well-being and rights of children and take concrete steps to prevent and combat aggression against them. Society urged us to stand in solidarity with those who have suffered and commit ourselves to actions that protect and support children affected by aggression, she added. The Child Protection Bureau in Punjab (CPBP) successfully rescues, providing shelter to more than 10,000 children every year, she highlighted.

All communities enjoying religious freedom: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday said that all religions were enjoying complete religious freedom in Pakistan.

Addressing a ceremony, he welcomed all the people of the Sikh community who arrived in Pakistan.

The minister said that the people of this country respected the traditions of

Sikh community as there was a strong connection between the two sides. The Sikh community has vibrant role in the development of the country.

He further said that promotion of interfaith harmony was need of the hour.

Azam Nazeer Tarar said that teaching of "Guru Nanak" negate the materialism, adding that

no religion permits for hate and violence.

Service to the humanity should be our mission, he said, adding that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has sent his greetings to the Sikh community.

The law minister said that the government was taking measures to further facilitate the Sikh people who arrived here Pakistan.

Nationwide anti-polio campaign underway

ISLAMABAD (APP): A varied duration anti-Polio vaccination campaign is underway in full swing across the country where polio workers are visiting door to door to administer anti-polio drops to the children below the age of five.

According to details, transit camps have also been set up at bus stops, hospitals and railway stations to administer polio drops to maximum children.

During the drive, more

than 16.2 million children would be administered anti-polio drops.

Provincial Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah talking to a private news channel said that polio was crippling diseases and it was the responsibility of all segments of the society to support the government's efforts to defeat the ailment.

He said great responsibilities lied on the shoulders of parents to vaccinate their children in case polio

teams did not come to their homes. Citizens should cooperate with polio workers who will visit their homes to administer vaccines, he added.

The vaccine is completely safe, and it is essential to immunize our children to keep them protected against polio. For the complete eradication of polio, it is of utmost importance that all children up to the age of five are administered with the polio drops, he said.

Action taken against illegal excise office agents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has initiated a crackdown against unauthorized agents operating outside the excise office, responding to numerous citizen complaints.

In line with the directives of Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Pothohar, Aneeq Nawaz spearheaded the operation, resulting in the arrest of 11 agents.

These individuals were reportedly soliciting fees from citizens for services that should be free or handled directly through the excise office. The agents, accused of demanding commissions from the

public.

The deputy commissioner has instructed officers to conduct surprise visits outside the excise office to deter the presence of these agents. He also emphasized that the agent mafia would not be allowed to operate in the area, aiming to ensure a hassle-free experience for the public.

Additionally, the DC advised residents to report any contact with these agents to the district administration immediately. This step was crucial to maintaining the crackdown's momentum and preventing further exploitation of citizens, he added.

For those seeking to register their vehicles, the DC highlighted alternative options available to avoid dealing with unauthorized agents. The citizens could order vehicle registration services to their homes by contacting the excise office's helpline.

Furthermore, mobile excise vans provide services at various locations throughout the city, offering convenient and legitimate alternatives. This initiative by the district administration aimed to protect citizens from being exploited by unauthorized agents and to streamline the registration process.

537 train accidents reported in last five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 537 train accidents of different classifications have been reported during the last five years including 313 leading to loss of life or serious injury.

"A decline has been witnessed in train accidents during the past four years and all railway accidents were probed to avoid recurrence at various competent tiers of management including the highest level of Federal Government Inspector of Railways," an official told APP.

He said that Pakistan Railways during the past five years has operated approximately 2,03,717 trains with average of about 40,750 trains/year and with an average of 107 accidents/year.

The official said that Pakistan Railways has an elaborate system of accident mitigation, relief mechanisms, and inquiries.

He said that a total of 159 accidents occurred in 2019 followed by 145 in 2020, 87 in 2021, and 62 in 2022 while a surge was

witnessed in 2023 and 84 accidents were reported.

The official said the factorial analysis suggests that 32 percent of accidents are at the unmanned level crossing for which the road users are mainly responsible.

During the five years of reporting, a total number of 259 employees were held responsible in various degrees and were taken up and punished under the Efficiency and Discipline Rules of the government of Pakistan, he added.

IESCO installs over 30,000 AMI meters

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under digitization and up-gradation plan, the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has expedited a process for switching to advance metering infrastructure (AMI) meters and installed over 30,000 meters in various areas of Rawalpindi so far.

At domestic consumer level, these meters were installed in areas of Gulzar Quaid, Dr Abdul Qadir Road, Gangal and Khana, the Chief Engineer Operation Director IESCO Muhammad Aslam Khan said this while talking to APP here Tuesday.

He said that AMI meters have also been installed at various transformers in areas of Korang Town, Westridge etc.

Under the plan, the company would install over 900,000 AMI meters, initially in Rawalpindi City Circle, Rawalpindi Cantonment Circle and Taxila (Division), he said.

Aslam Khan said the task would be completed

by June 2026 for which initially two contractors have been hired to install around 2000 AMI daily in the said circles.

He said the Asian Development Bank has provided financial assistance to complete the project under second power distribution enhancement investment programme.

The contract for the project was signed on September, 3, 2022 while its effectiveness date was January 2023, he added.

Khan said that main data and back data centres which were part of the project had already been set up at the IESCO's head office and Gujjar Khan respectively.

The Operation Director said AMI system would bring about a permanent elimination of power pilferage with systematic control of transmission through round-the-clock monitoring of the electricity meters.

This technology would help reduce power sector losses, enhance the quality of billing and recover-

ies, control power load-shedding and also address the consumers' complaints of wrong or over-billing, he said.

Aslam Khan said the AMI system would end human interventions in meter reading, enhance customer support, better measurements, more accurate billing, a degree of control of consumption and help improve IESCO's ability to reduce non-technical losses.

He said automated 100 per cent accurate and timely meter readings would reduce costs incurred on meter readings significantly. In case of any power theft, tripping, power failure, or defective meters, automated intimation would be received in the data centre with instructions to the concerned SDO for rectification in a short time.

The consumers will also be able to control their electricity bills by monitoring their electricity consumption daily through a mobile application, he remarked.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi calls on Federal Minister Science and Technology Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui in Islamabad.

Fire breaks out in Murree forest

ISLAMABAD (APP): A fire broke out on Tuesday in the forest of Kotli Sattian, Lehtar road area of Murree. According to a private news channel, dozens of trees and wild animals were burnt by the fire. According to Rescue officials, the cause of the fire remained unknown and investigations were underway in that. The officials of forest department and rescue teams were busy in extinguishing the fire.

Dengue cases surge in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): There has been a significant increase in dengue cases, with 2,795 fresh cases reported in the past week across the country.

According to National Institute of Health (NIH) the surge in cases is attributed to the rising temperatures in the country, a private news channel on Tuesday said. Balochistan has been the most affected province, with 1,728 dengue cases reported in the past week. Punjab follows closely with 916 cases, while Sindh reported 116 cases. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa logged 34 cases, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir reported a single case. No cases were reported in Gilgit Baltistan and Islamabad.

Dengue virus, a mosquito-borne viral disease, has been spreading rapidly around the world in recent years. The virus is primarily transmitted by female mosquitoes of the species Aedes aegypti and, to a lesser extent, Ae. albopictus.

Salman visits HFH

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Health, Punjab Khawaja Salman Rafiq on Tuesday visited the Holy Family Hospital (HFH) to review the ongoing development work of the hospital.

During his visit, he interacted with the patients and their attendants and asked about the medical facilities and availability of medicines provided to them.

On the occasion, the Building department briefed the Minister that 84 per cent of work on the basement, 97 per cent of the first floor and 89 per cent of the second-floor work had been completed.

He directed the concerned to complete the remaining work of the Operation Theatre and Emergency Department by June 10. The minister visited various hospital wards and directed them to install air conditioners in those places that had missed, adding he said that the provision of modern and quality health facilities to the people was the priority of the government and no compromise would be made on it.

He said that efforts were also being made to control the spread of Measles and required funds were also being provided to the hospitals across the province to upgrade the existing health-care facilities. Salman also directed the officials concerned to finish the beautification and maintenance work of the Benazir Bhutto Hospital at the earliest.

Earlier the minister visited the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Trauma Center Kallar Kahar and reviewed the arrangements at the centre. He said the shortfall of Consultants, Nurses and Paramedic staff would be resolved on priority while talks were underway for the upgradation of the centre.

UNICEF country representative calls on Chairperson BISP

ISLAMABAD, Jun 04 (APP): A delegation from United Nations' Children Fund (UNICEF), led by Country Representative Abdullah Fadil, called on Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Mrs. Rubina Khalid, at the BISP headquarters. The meeting centered on strengthening collaboration between the BISP and UNICEF, with a particular focus on enhancing the health and nutrition of women and children in Pakistan.

Rubina Khalid emphasized her commitment to increasing awareness of the Nashonuma Programme, which aims to address malnutrition among women and children. She highlighted the critical role that awareness plays in resolving various issues related to health and nutrition, particularly for

vulnerable populations.

"My focus will be on raising awareness of the Nashonuma Programme," stated Mrs. Khalid. "By doing so, we can address many issues, especially those affecting women and children. BISP and UNICEF need to collaborate closely on this front to ensure the well-being of our communities."

Mr. Abdullah Fadil praised Benazir Income Support Programme's initiatives and commended the program's effectiveness in shock responsiveness, targeted assistance, and financial literacy among its beneficiaries. He underscored the importance of Benazir Income Support Programme's role in uplifting the socio-economic status of the most vulnerable segments of society.

"We need to work together to find practical

solutions for the malnourished community, especially women and children," Mr. Fadil remarked. "BISP's efforts in better targeting and financial literacy are commendable, and I look forward to our continued collaboration to further these goals."

The UNICEF delegation included key representatives: Anteneh Girma Minas, Chief of Nutrition; Sadaf Zulfiqar, Social Policy Specialist; Dr. Noreen Arshad, Nutrition Officer; Dr. Wisal Khan, Nutrition Specialist; Larissa Bruun, Chief of Resource Mobilization; and Xinyi Ge, Program Specialist. The delegation met with BISP Secretary Amer Ali Ahmad and DG NSER/CCT Mr. Naveed Akbar, discussing the strategic direction and operational aspects of their collaborative efforts.

DC leads operation against Margalla fires

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon Tuesday highlighted the ongoing efforts to tackle the fire incidents, with 500 people hired by the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) environment wing this season to act as watchdogs and manual fire control operatives.

In recent days, fire incidents have been reported across the Margalla Hills, prompting swift action from the district administration, said the ICT's Administration spokesman.

"Our goal is to keep a vigilant eye on potential fire outbreaks," the DC said, adding the individuals were crucial in manually extinguishing fires, as it was challenging to bring fire-fighting vehicles or water pipes to the mountains. The DC confirmed the arrest of three suspects believed to have started some of the fires.

Meanwhile, a main accused also arrested by the district administration and environment wing CDA. Nawaz also engaged residents of villages near the hills, holding meetings and making announcements in mosques to seek their cooperation. "We have reminded them that these forests belong to all of us, and we must protect them together," he said. The community has

been urged to report any suspicious activities to the authorities concerned.

The DC emphasized the difficulty of extinguishing fires on pine leaves, underscoring the efforts of rescuers and firefighters.

"I have seen the situation firsthand. It is a challenging task," he remarked, paying tributes to the dedication of the forest's fire response team. Nawaz noted, "The intensity of heat and the dry leaves can naturally spark a fire." The combined efforts of the district administration and the community were crucial in addressing the fire incidents and ensuring the protection of the Margalla Hills.

Efforts underway to control spread of dengue

RAWALPINDI (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Islamabad, Zaneera Aftab on Tuesday said efforts were underway to control the spread of dengue larvae and no negligence would be tolerated.

Chairing a meeting to review anti-dengue arrangements, she directed the health officials to expedite anti-dengue surveillance activities for tracing larvae, adding better results could be achieved if surveillance was carried out under an effective strategy. Zaneera further directed

the surveillance teams to keep a strict eye on junkyards, tyre shops, and vacant plots that were vulnerable places for larvae breeding.

She asked the officials to create awareness among people to keep their houses clean, adding a vigorous awareness campaign was essential for effective community participation in this regard.

On the occasion, the health officials briefed the meeting that anti-dengue teams checked 1,888,690 houses and found dengue larvae during indoor sur-

veillance at 5,557 homes.

Similarly, he added that during outdoor surveillance, the teams inspected 489,000 spots and detected larvae at 1,551 places while the required activity was carried out there.

Giving details of the penalty actions, the health officer briefed that the health authority, in collaboration with allied departments, had lodged 113 FIRs, sealed 107 premises, issued tickets to 443 and a fine of Rs 527,000 was imposed on violations of dengue SOPs from January 1 to date.



RAWALPINDI: People filling their bottles with water from a water tanker at Bhatta Chowk Livestock market. —APP Photo

UN Security Council to review UNAMA's performance in Afghanistan
KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Security Council has announced that it will hold a session regarding the performance of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). This council stated in a declaration that the session is expected to occur this month, but it did not specify the exact date. According to the council's statement, Roza Otunbayeva, the head of UNAMA, and a civil society representative are scheduled to speak at this session.

City Medical Complex Kabul Premier League 2024 gets underway
KABUL (TOLOnews): City Medical Complex Kabul Premier League 2024, the second season of the exciting T20 tournament, got underway on Tuesday in Kabul. Six teams are taking part in the 11-day 20-over format tournament which is being held at the Ayoubi Sports Complex in Kabul. Officials from Ayoubi Sports Complex said senior players have been included in the tournament so as to share their experience with junior players.

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

Afghan trucks enter with temporary permits

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce criticized the slow distribution of the newly enlisted permits and stated that more facilitation should be provided for drivers in obtaining these permits. Khanjan Alokozay, head of the Joint Chamber, said: "Our first shipment has passed through Dand Patan towards Pakistan. We hope this process becomes simpler so that the problems of our traders are resolved. However, because many trucks are going, the process is very slow."

Meanwhile, some traders say they face various challenges in trading with Pakistan and emphasize the implementation of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). Zalmai Azimi, a trader, told TOLOnews: "The Pakistani side has not mentioned in the contract that cleaners and drivers must have visas. Therefore, I request that both sides exchange tokens at crossings such as Torkham, Spin Boldak, and Ghulam Khan to facilitate proper trade."

Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an economist, told TOLOnews: "We need to have an agreement with them because most of the time, the ports are closed for various reasons, and our traders suffer losses."

According to the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, due to the closure of crossings to Afghan freight trucks in the year 1402, Afghanistan's trade with this country significantly decreased.

‘Risk of radicalism from Afghanistan increasing’



KABUL (Ariana News): The risk of penetration of radical ideology from Afghanistan into the member countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is increasing, said Rustam Emomali, chairman of Tajikistan's upper chamber of parliament. Addressing the Council of the Parliament Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in Almaty, Emomali said that more than 1,000 religious madrassas have been established in Afghanistan, most of which are located in provinces bordering CSTO countries, Russia's TASS news agency reported.

He claimed that these centers also train suicide bombers. "The continuation of this situation in Afghanistan could have long-term negative consequences for the CSTO region," Emomali explained.

He also emphasized that the situation in Afghanistan remains difficult and no real progress has been observed. "Afghanistan has once again become a breeding ground for terrorism," he said.

According to him, dozens of extremist and terrorist groups are strengthening their positions on the territory of Afghanistan, and the level of cultivation and illegal production of Afghan drugs, including synthetic ones, is growing.

The Islamic Emirate has previously denied the presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan and stressed that it does not allow the use of Afghanistan's soil to be used against the security of any other country.

The Islamic Emirate has also said that it has reduced the cultivation and production of drugs to almost zero.

Tens of thousands of children affected by floods

KABUL (Ariana News): Tens of thousands of children in Afghanistan remain affected by ongoing flash floods, especially in the north and west, the UN children's agency, UNICEF, said. Unusually heavy seasonal rains have been wreaking havoc on multiple parts of the country, killing hundreds of people and destroying property and crops.

The UN food agency, WFP, has warned that many survivors are unable to make a living. UNICEF said the extreme weather has all of the hallmarks of an intensifying climate crisis, with some of the affected areas having experienced drought last year.

The World Food Program said the exceptionally heavy rains in Afghanistan killed more than 300 people and destroyed thousands of houses in May, mostly in the northern province of Baghlan.

Survivors have been left with no homes, no land, and no source of livelihood, WFP said.

UNICEF said in a statement Monday that tens of thousands of children remain affected by ongoing floods. "The international community must redouble efforts and investments to support communities to alleviate and adapt to the impact of climate change on children," said Dr. Tajudeen Oyewale, the UNICEF representative in Afghanistan.

At the same time, "UNICEF and the humanitarian community must prepare ourselves for a new reality of climate-related disasters," Oyewale said.

Afghanistan ranks 15th out of 163 nations in the Children's Climate Risk Index. This means that not only are climate and environmental shocks and stresses prominent in the country, but children are particularly vulnerable to their effects compared with elsewhere in the world.

Last week, the private group Save the Children said about 6.5 million children in Afghanistan are forecast to experience crisis levels of hunger in 2024.

Nearly three out of 10 Afghan children will face crisis or emergency levels of hunger this year as the country feels the immediate impact of floods, the long-term effects of drought, and the return of Afghans from neighboring Pakistan and Iran, the group said in a report.

More than 557,000 Afghans have returned from Pakistan since September 2023, after Pakistan began cracking down on foreigners it alleges are in the country illegally, including 1.7 million Afghans.

Ministry reports rescue of kidnapped child



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Interior has announced the successful rescue of a child kidnapped a week ago in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province. According to Mufti Abdul Mateen Qani, the ministry's spokesperson, the child was rescued by the 888th National Battalion of Balkh under the General Command of Special Forces, following a special and tactical operation. The kidnappers had demanded a ransom of \$300,000 for the child's release.

Qani added that yesterday, June 3rd, was the final deadline set by the kidnappers for the payment, threatening to kill the child if the ransom was not paid.

During the operation, one kidnapper was killed in a clash with security forces, and five others were arrested. The arrested individuals will be handed over to judicial authorities for further investigation.

3,000 Afghan migrants deported

KABUL (Ariana News): Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of the caretaker government announced the expulsion of nearly three thousand Afghan migrants from Pakistan and Iran. The ministry announced on Tuesday that 2,477 individuals were deported from Iran and 599 from Pakistan. Returnees arrived in the country on June 3 through Islam Qala, Torgundi, and Spin Boldak borders.

Afghan migrants are being expelled from Pakistan at a time when the deportation of Afghan migrants from neighboring countries, especially Iran and Pakistan, has significantly increased in recent months.

This comes amid a dire humanitarian situation in the country and the recent deadly floods, which exacerbate the dire situation.

Moreover, Afghanistan has been grappling with the aftermath of recent natural disasters, including floods and landslides, which have caused widespread destruction and displacement.

The lack of adequate infrastructure and resources to respond to these emergencies has further compounded the humanitarian crisis in the country, leaving thousands of families homeless and in urgent need of assistance.

Repairing of Bala Hissar site 80% completed

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Minister of Information and Culture announced that the reconstruction of Bala Hissar has been 80% completed and that the work on this ancient site will be finished by the end of the year. Bala Hissar, in Kuh-e-Sher Darwaza, consists of 22 towers, made during the empire of Hephthalites, according to local experts.

Khabib Ghuffran, the spokesperson for the ministry, said that "where those places need rebuilding it is underway, including various elements, parts of doors and cobblestones."

Ketab Khan Faizi, head of the Kushani International Research Center, said: "Kabul's Bala Hissar has been located in the heart of Kabul since the empire of Hephthalites. This ancient place has 22 structures of which some parts have been damaged in the last wars. Around this castle, there were some ditches and now there is no sign of that. Historically it is unique in the region."

Some archaeologists and cultural experts in the country consider the restoration and protection of the country's ancient sites important.

"Bala Hissar and other historical castles that were used for military purpose, the government should care about them," said Sher Mohammad Noori, a cultural activist.

Abdul Raman, another cultural activist, said: "Historical places are the life history of our country, the government should pay attention to them."

New Directorate established in Kabul — to improve journalists' access to information

PARWAN (TOLOnews): Hayatullah Mahajer Farahi, Deputy of the Ministry of Information and Culture, stated that a specific directorate has been established within the ministry to address journalists' challenges, particularly the right to access information.

In a meeting with journalists in Parwan, Hayatullah Mohajer Farahi added that they are striving to provide timely information to journalists.

"In the area of information access, the Information Access Directorate has been activated in Kabul, and its duty is to hold seminars in ministries, independent agencies, and provinces," he said.

Shams Rahman Sediqi, the head of Information and Culture in Parwan, said: "Based on the guidance of the respected ministry, if there are any continuous directives, they should be communicated to the media, and we should hold meetings with both private and governmental media outlets."

Some journalists and media officials at this meeting urged the Islamic Emirate to address the economic challenges faced by journalists and media in this province.

Mubariz Mohammadi, the head of a private radio station in Parwan, said: "The media community in Parwan province as a whole is facing economic problems and is unable to pay taxes and electricity bills."

Yamin Rasteen, a journalist, said: "The working environment for journalism in Parwan province is satisfactory, but we demand more attention from government institutions regarding the right to access information."

Hayatullah Mahajer Farahi has traveled to several northern provinces to address the challenges faced by journalists and media, meeting media officials and journalists in person.



IEA hails removal from Kazakhstan's list of banned groups

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has welcomed its removal from Kazakhstan's list of banned organizations and said it is a significant development in its understanding of the IEA.

Abdul Qahar Balkhi, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said in a statement that the move removes obstacles in upgrading bilateral relations. "Kazakhstan is an important trade and transit partner of Afghanistan in the region and this decision will lead to enhanced bilateral relations and further economic cooperation, which is in the interest of both countries," the statement said.

The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said Monday that his country has removed the IEA from its terrorist list in order to develop economic ties with Afghanistan.

Speaking at a meeting with parliament speakers from countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Tokayev said: "Kazakhstan has removed the Taliban (IEA) from the list of terrorists proceeding from the importance of developing trade and economic cooperation with present-day Afghanistan taking into account that this regime is here to stay."



Afghan minister held a productive meeting with head of UNDP

KABUL (BNA): In a significant move towards fostering international cooperation, Acting Minister of Economy Qari Din Mohammad Hanif held a productive meeting with Stephen Rodrigues, the Head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Afghanistan, at his office.

In this meeting, the parties discussed the establishment of a joint working committee aimed at transforming humanitarian aid into development aid.

The Acting Minister of Economy affirmed the Ministry's readiness to effectively cooperate and coordinate with UN agencies, ministries, and independent agencies of the Islamic Emirate, highlighting the importance of collaboration in advancing sustainable development and enhancing the quality of life for Afghan citizens.

Additionally, the Head of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Afghanistan assured support for small and medium enterprises, commercial and banking activities, water management, and alternatives to poppy cultivation. He also expressed readiness to implement development projects across various sectors in Afghanistan.



Female entrepreneurs' strength reaches above 750 in Herat province

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Officials say the number of female entrepreneurs has surged in western Herat province of Afghanistan, but these women ask the government to build exclusive markets for them.

Women doing small businesses in Herat say they are happy with their businesses and daily life and their presence in the market encouraged women to feel better and comfortable while shopping.

Fatima Anwari, who sells medicines in Marmar market, told Pajhwok that the presence of women sellers in shops had made women feel comfortable while buying goods they needed.

"I also feel comfortable selling things to a woman and I ask the government to consider more such specific places for women in this province," she added.

Ziba Akrami, another seller, also corroborated

Fatima's account. "We are very comfortable and also feel good when shopping."

Ziba Sediqi, a customer, told Pajhwok: "I'm really happy and we should also thank the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan for providing such space for women. It is very comfortable for a woman to purchase things from another woman."

Samira, another customer at Herat's marble market, told Pajhwok that women proved better sellers than men.

"If lady sellers work in some other markets, it would make female customers to shop in such locations."

She asked the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to facilitate women working in such markets across the country.

Local officials said more facilities were considered for ladies and two special markets for them had been created and they could do their business

there. The spokesman for the governor Maulvi Nisar Ahmad Ilyas told Pajhwok that a large number of women had found work opportunities in Herat and the relevant authorities were trying to establish more such working locations for women.

Provincial Industry and Trade director Maulvi Mohammad Bashir Serat said before the IEA takeover, only 70 women were registered as mem-

bers of the Women Chambers of Commerce and Investment (WACCI) in Herat, but now their strength reached over 750. He said supporting female entrepreneurs was a priority of WACCI and the administration was trying to provide them more facilities within the framework of Islamic governance.

It is worth mentioning that right now two special markets for businesswomen exist in Herat.

ment, and alternatives to poppy cultivation. He also expressed readiness to implement development projects across various sectors in Afghanistan.





VATICAN CITY: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi shaking hands with Pope Francis.

Netanyahu prolonging war for political gain

WASHINGTON (AP): US President Joe Biden swiped at Benjamin Netanyahu in an interview with Time magazine published Tuesday, saying there was “every reason” to conclude the Israeli prime minister was dragging out the Gaza war to save himself politically.

Biden added that he had a “major disagreement” with Netanyahu over the post-conflict future of Gaza, and said Israel had engaged in “inappropriate” conduct during the war sparked by Hamas’s October 7 attack. More broadly, the 81-year-old pitched his case in the interview as better placed than election rival Donald Trump to secure the United States as “the world power” on issues ranging from Ukraine to Taiwan and Gaza.

Speaking to Time days before his announcement of an Israeli proposal for a Gaza ceasefire deal that Netanyahu greeted coolly, Biden was asked if he believed the Israeli was dragging out the war for political self-preservation. “There is every reason for people to draw that conclusion,” Biden replied.

Biden admitted that he and Netanyahu, who have had tense relations as the death toll in Gaza has soared, were particularly at odds over the need to create a Palestinian state. “My major disagreement with Netanyahu is, what happens after... Gaza’s over? What, what does it go back to? Do Israeli forces go back in?” said the Democrat. “The answer is, if that’s the case, it can’t work.”

The defense of Ukraine against Russia’s invasion has been a cornerstone of

Biden’s foreign policy, and he argued he was better placed than Trump to continue that in a second term. Biden said the Russian military had been “freaking decimated” and added: “Peace looks like making sure Russia never, never, never, never occupies Ukraine.”

He also lashed out at his Republican predecessor, who threatened to tear up longstanding US alliances and reached out to a number of authoritarian leaders while in power. “All the bad guys are rooting for Trump, man,” Biden said.

“Name me a world leader other than Orban and Putin who think that Trump should be the world leader in the United States of America.” As tensions remain high with China, Biden also reiterated that the United States would stand behind self-ruled Taiwan while saying Washington was not trying to change the status quo.

“We are not seeking independence for Taiwan nor will we in fact, not defend Taiwan if they if, if China unilaterally tries to change the status,” Biden said. With polls showing US voters are concerned about Biden’s age, despite the fact that — at 77 — Trump is only four years younger, Biden said he was still the better candidate. “I can do it better than anybody you know,” Biden said when asked if he was fit to serve through a second term that would end when he was 86.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s biggest coalition partner said on Tuesday it would support a prospective deal to free hostages from Hamas captivity even if it entails an

overhaul of Israel’s Gaza war strategy.

The statement by Shas, an ultra-Orthodox Jewish party that holds 11 of parliament’s 120 seats, followed similar remarks on Monday by Yitzhak Goldknopf, leader of the second such party in the coalition, United Torah Judaism, which has seven seats. “Our position is that there is nothing greater than the value of life and the commandment to redeem captives, because their lives face a real and present danger,” Goldknopf, Israel’s housing minister, said in a statement.

Similarly citing a religious obligation, Shas pledged “full support” to the proposal. It encouraged Netanyahu and his war cabinet to “withstand all pressures for the end of returning the hostages.” The combined support of the two parties — which hold 18 of the 72 seats controlled by Netanyahu’s expanded emergency government — could help offset opposition by far-right partners to a US-backed proposal for winding down the Gaza war.

The deal’s opponents — the Jewish Power party of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and the Religious Zionism party of Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich — control 13 seats and have threatened to quit the government over the deal. They worry that the proposal would halt efforts to defeat the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. Netanyahu has said Israel would not stop the war without toppling and disarming Hamas — while Hamas insists that any deal must end the Israeli offensive against it in Gaza.

Federal budget likely to be presented on 12th

ISLAMABAD (INP): The presentation of the federal budget 2024-25 is likely to be rescheduled. Interestingly, it is also unusual that the budget strategy paper (BSP) for the next fiscal year has not yet been ‘shared’ with parliament, though it is more because of political uncertainties emanating from the legal status of reserved seats and because of the absence of standing committees of the Senate and the National Assembly, particularly those related to finance.

The budget 2024-25 which was earlier scheduled to be presented on June 10 is now likely to be presented on June 12. The Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-24 will be presented on June 11 after a meeting of the council on June 10, the sources said.

The federal budget 2024-25 will likely get approval from the Senate by June 26. The Pakistani government is likely to end tax exemptions in the FY2024-25 budget on IMF’s demand. According to budget proposals for the budget 2024-25, Pakistan is likely to end exemption on sales and income tax, phase-wise. The government is also considering imposing a sales tax on tractors and pesticides, potentially leading to price hikes for these essential agricultural products.

Hyderabad blast death toll rises to 16

HYDERABAD (INP): The death toll from a blast at a liquid petroleum gas cylinder filling shop in Hyderabad’s Preetabad area rose to 16 on Tuesday, after two more injured succumb to their wounds.

The blast took place in the LPG cylinder filling shop located on the ground floor of Zacha Bacha Hospital area along Mir Nabi Bux Town Road in UC-8 of Neerunkot town. The death toll rose to 16 after two injured succumbed to their burns wounds at Karachi’s Civil Hospital. The deceased were identified as Umair, 15, and Abbas 14-year-old. Currently, 7 injured including seven critically injured, are under treatment at the Karachi Civil Hospital.

At least 60 people, mostly children, received serious burn injuries and had to be shifted to Karachi after being provided emergency treatment at the Liaquat University Hospital (LUH). Some 18-22 injured persons with 80pc to 90pc burns were referred to a major hospital in Karachi. Those who were shifted to Karachi, according to LUH record, are Azam, 7, son of Rais, Bilal, 11, son of Asif, Azam, 9, son of Shakir, Hasnain, 7, son of Rasheed, Ali Raza, 2, son of Bilal, Abdul Hadi, 14, son of Asghar, Zulfiqar, son of Mohammad Umer, Akram Shah, 38, son of Qurban Shah, Raeesudin, 35, son of Alamuddin, Ali, son of Zeeshan, Akram, 50, son of Waseem, Abbas, Dodo 25, and Faizan, 40, son of Ishaq, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali along with ministers visited Burns Ward and inquired about the health of injured persons.

that PTI has consistently engaged in digital terrorism against national institutions, leveled baseless accusations against them, and perpetuated a malicious campaign aimed at discrediting these institutions. Furthermore, they have resorted to calling honorable judges “touts” in an attempt to pressure them.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the decision in the cipher case is akin to giving a license to play with national secrets and interests. A person waves the cipher in Jalsa, audio emerges indicating a plan to exploit it, yet he is also exonerated. Why is this so?

about breaking the country. They deviate from the national narrative when they do not gain power. Describing Shaikh Mujeeb as a hero is a deviation from Pakistan’s historical national narrative.

He emphasized that portraying the tragedy of East Pakistan as a dagger on the state’s aorta is a grave act. Imran Khan’s declaration of Shaikh Mujeeb as a hero and Arif Alvi’s endorsement is akin to rubbing salt on the nation’s old wounds.

Sharjeel Inam Memon remarked that PTI has been jeopardizing the country’s institutions and national interests since day one in its pursuit of power. He added

Imran wants to divide country, says Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Senior Minister of Sindh and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that the PTI is penetrating a dangerous narrative of chaos, division, and hatred against institutions into the minds. Imran Khan’s narrative regarding Shaikh Mujeeb makes it clear that he intends to divide the country.

In a statement, Senior Minister of Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has stated that PTI leaders sometimes threaten to attack the capital city, sometimes they talk

Cop on anti-polio duty killed in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A policeman guarding polio workers in Peshawar was shot dead on Tuesday. The police said that cop, identified as Shahnawaz, was killed in Suleman Khel area of Peshawar as he was going to perform his duty. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the assault. A search is underway to arrest the culprits, police said.

At least 12 police have

died this year while on security duty for vaccination campaigns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Anti-polio campaigns in Pakistan are regularly marred by violence. Militants target vaccination teams and police assigned to protect them. A five-day anti-polio campaign started Monday in nine high-risk districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Health workers are tasked with administering vaccines to some 3.28 mil-

lion children under age 5. More than 26,000 police are protecting the teams. Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan are the only countries where the spread of polio has never been stopped. Pakistan on Saturday reported the fourth poliovirus case of the current year, sources within the Ministry of National Health said. A 2-year-old boy from Bharkan union council in Sindh’s Shikarpur district became the latest victim.

KP CM decides special package for pregnant women in backward areas

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As an important step towards maternal and child health care as well as preventing stunted growth of infants, the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has decided in principle to provide special package to women with pregnancy in the backward areas of the province. Under the package, women would be provided with nutrients/food supplements for a specific time period during and after pregnancy.

The Chief Minister has underlined the need for pragmatic steps to reduce the prevailing infant mortality rate in the province, and decided that midwifery sector in the province, would be further strengthened by aligning it with the contemporary needs and requirements, in addition to ensuring strict implementation of Child Marriage Act of the provincial government.

He was chairing the 4th meeting of the Provincial Population Task Force, held here at Chief Minister’s House Peshawar on Tuesday. Provincial cabinet members Arshad Aiyub, Meena Khan Afridi, Faisal Tarakai, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Mishal Yousufzai, Liaquat Ali Khan, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, concerned administrative secretaries and officials of Population Welfare and partner departments attended the meeting.

The participants on the occasion, unanimously emphasized the need for implementing the law related to make

blood test mandatory in “Nikah Nama” directing the authorities concerned to take steps for providing blood test facilities at local level for this purpose. The meeting further urged upon authorities to ensure easy access of people to the services and facilities of family planning, and decided that the services and facilities relating to family planning, would be provided at all healthcare centers across the province.

It was also decided to launch special awareness campaign for the general public to this effect. Besides other initiatives, seminars would be arranged for the awareness of the students of colleges and universities for this purpose. Briefing the participants about demographic aspects of the province, it was informed that the population growth rate in the province is at lowest side, as compared to other provinces.

Addressing the participants, the chief minister said that rapidly growing population is a big challenge not only for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but the entire country, we need to have an integrated strategy to deal with this challenge in an efficient and meaningful manner. He said that it is much needed to balance the available resources and population; the government, partner organizations and private sector would have to have an integrated approach for this purpose. He directed the concerned authorities to devise viable plan for addressing the issues related to maternal and infant mortality and stunting growth, further directing that the population welfare centers should be established in the areas, where healthcare centers

are not available.

Later, the chief minister also chaired a meeting regarding financial issues of the public sector universities and thoroughly discussed the factors causing financial constraints for universities and avenues for making universities self-sufficient by effective management and utilization of their properties.

Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi, Advisor on Finance Muzzamil Aslam, Secretary Higher Education Arshad Khan and Vice Chancellors of Different public Sector universities attended the meeting.

The chief minister constituted a committee comprising Minister Higher Education, advisor Finance, Secretary Higher Education, and representatives from public sector universities of different regions, the said committee will minutely examine the issues of public sector universities and submit detail report to the chief minister. The committee will also submit recommendations for the self sufficiency of universities.

The chief minister, directed the quarters concerned to ensure payment of salaries for the months of May and June to the employees of universities further directing the high ups of universities to submit realistic demands along with necessary details to finance department. He also directed the universities heads to work out needs and plans for the solarization of universities to cut down the exorbitant electricity bills adding that the provincial government will extend all out support to universities for solarization on public private partnership.

PHC directs de-freezing of assets except BRT accounts

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmad ordered National Accountability Bureau (NAB) de-freeze accounts of a construction company’s assets, with the exception of those related to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, on Tuesday.

BRT operating company’s lawyer Shumail Ahmed Butt advocate argued that the freezing of petitioner’s assets causing financial hardship and hindering the company’s operations. He contended to unfreeze the company’s remaining assets for running operations as well as provision of salaries to staff with exception from BRT Peshawar related assets.

However, NAB Deputy Prosecutor General Muhammad Ali objected that interim relief will create hurdles for differentiating flow finances in this regard. PHC directed NAB, to unfreeze the assets,

allowing the company to access its funds and resume normal business operations, except for those related to the BRT project, which remain frozen till conclusion of the plea.

Court directs PCB to submit reply: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a notice to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) seeking response against the dismissal of chairman scrutiny committee Arbab Altaf, on Tuesday.

The two-member bench, comprising Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmed, heard the petition and was informed that the petitioner, Arbab Altaf, was removed from his position as chairman of the scrutiny committee by PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi.

PCB’s chairman Mohsin Naqvi was appointed illegally by the caretaker prime minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, PHC informed. The court was told that the caretaker prime minister did not have the authority to appoint a permanent chair-

man of the PCB. PHC’s divisional bench comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmad sought a response from the PCB and adjourned further hearing till date to be fixed.

AJK court rejects poet’s bail petition

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): An anti-terrorism court in Muzaffarabad rejected on Tuesday the bail petition of poet Ahmed Farhad.

The court announced its verdict reserved on Monday after hearing arguments from both sides. Zulqarnain Naqvi Advocate had filed the bail petition in Muzaffarabad court. “The case against Ahmed Farhad, has been registered under seven clauses including terrorism,” Zulqarnain Naqvi Advocate talking to media last week.

We are coming

(Continued from Page 1)

He will also inaugurate the Pakistan-China Business Conference in line with his vision to support, promote and lead collaboration between the businessmen of the two countries. A business delegation of leading Pakistani business persons will attend the conference for collaboration with the influential Chinese counterparts.

Shenzhen is the hub of China’s innovation, technology and research led companies and enterprises. The visit to Shenzhen aims to bolster economic cooperation in export-oriented innovation led, advanced technologies, high-tech development and ICT. Pakistan’s delegation comprises prominent business figures, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Petroleum Minister Dr Musaddik Malik, Information and Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar, Food Security Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, Privatisation Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

After landing here, the prime minister took to X saying, “Impressed by the city’s skyline and development that symbolizes modern day China. Looking forward to my engagements with the provincial authorities, business community and industry giants here before proceeding to Beijing for official talks

with President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and other Chinese leaders and high officials.”

My China visit to take bilateral ties to a new height: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed the hope that his five-day visit to China, commencing Tuesday, would take the bilateral relationship to a new height as it would mark discussions on the CPEC second phase, business-to-business cooperation and government-to-government projects.

The prime minister, in a televised statement before departing for his first official visit to China after assuming the office, said that with the support from the ministers, government officers and experts, they would hold talks with the Chinese leadership on multiple subjects with tireless efforts and sincerity of purpose.

He said both sides would discuss cooperation in multiple sectors like agriculture, information technology, infrastructure, youth skill training, vocational training, industrialisation, Special Economic Zones, expansion and commercialisation of Gwadar Port, mining, and minerals, and sign accords. The discussion on the expansion of the Silk Route through road and sea linkages is also on the agenda.

He said that undoubtedly, China-Pakistan ties were time-tested as both countries trusted each other and held consultations on all matters of mutual interest. He also appreciated the Chinese unconditional support for Pakistan through all testing times like disasters, wars, quakes and others.

Prime Minister Shehbaz recalled that during the previous tenure of Nawaz Sharif, bilateral relations entered a new phase as a \$45 billion investment was arranged under the CPEC which brought in prosperity and rid the country of load-shedding that had led to the closure of industries and adversely impacted the agriculture sector. Pakistan’s adversaries could not digest this cooperation but one should not worry about this, he commented.

The prime minister spoke high of the dynamic and visionary leadership of Chinese President Xi Jinping which developed China into the second biggest economic and military power besides leading the efforts to end wars and pave the way for peace. “This is the vision and leadership which I am inspired by and which took China-Pakistan ties to the height of the Himalayas, made it deeper than the oceans, sweeter than the honey, and stronger than steel.

The prime minister also thanked China for continuously raising the voice for Kashmir freedom and supporting Kashmiris without any confusion. Similarly, Pakistan also supported Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity like the principle of one-country two systems, Hong Kong, Taiwan which Pakistan calls an integral part of China, the South China Sea, Global Development Initiative (GDI), and the Global Security Initiative (GSI). He also requested the countrymen to pray for the success of his visit to make it helpful for Pakistan’s progress and prosperity.

FO receives all declassified copies of cipher

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: With the verdict of the cipher case announced, the foreign office has received all the declassified copies of cipher. The FO has received declassified copies from the Senate and National Assembly as the documents had been provided to these institutions during the PTI government.

In 2023, the FO had written a letter to the NA speaker and Senate chairman where they asked for the return of declassified copies. Sources said the FO’s step to get the declassified copies back was crucial to stop the use of cipher for political reasons.

The PTI government had sent the declassified copies of cipher to NA and Senate after the approval of cabinet to bring the matter before the parliament. In this regard, a parliamentary committee had also been formed in which the representatives of all political parties were invited, however no PDM member participated in the meeting.

Iran vows response

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran threatened to respond Tuesday if the UN nuclear watchdog approves a new censure resolution proposed by three European governments despite the opposition of the United States, Iranian media reported.

“In case of issuing a resolution against Iran in the board of governors and political pressure from the parties, Iran will respond according to the announcement it made to them,” the Fars news agency quoted Iran’s atomic energy chief Mohammad Eslami as saying. Britain, France and Germany submitted a draft resolution to the International Atomic Energy Agency’s board on Monday, condemning Iran for its failure to fully cooperate with the watchdog and demanding more accountability.

At the last IAEA board meeting in March, European powers shelved their plans to confront Iran due to a lack of US support. The United States denies it is hampering European efforts to hold Iran accountable but fears a censure could aggravate Middle East tensions ahead of a US presidential election in November, diplomats say.

Tensions have soared since Iran-backed Palestinian militant group Hamas attacked Israel last October triggering war in Gaza. In April, an Israeli air strike on Iran’s Damascus consulate killed seven Revolutionary Guards, prompting Iran to carry out its first ever direct attack on Israel, a barrage of rockets and missiles most of which were intercepted.