

Sikh pilgrims to reach today
F.P. Report

LAHORE: Hundreds of Sikh pilgrims from India would arrive in Pakistan via Wagah border crossing on Saturday to participate in martyrdom day of the fifth Guru of Sikhism Guru Arjan Dev. Members of the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and senior officials of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) will welcome them.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 136

Regd. No. 241

ZIL-HAJJ 01 1445 -- SATURDAY, JUNE 08 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

PM, Xi agree to upgrade CPEC

Pakistan, China sign 23 accords for cooperation in industry, energy, agriculture, other sectors

BEIJING (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping Friday held a productive meeting, reaffirming the consensus to high-quality development of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and timely completion of major ongoing projects.

The two leaders also affirmed consensus on up-gradation of the CPEC and advancing the development of the mega project in the second phase. The prime minister briefed President Xi on Pakistan's policies for economic reforms and sustained growth, industrial development, agricultural modernization and regional connectivity, and the critical role played by the CPEC in the country's development.

He asserted Pakistan's commitment to high-quality development of the CPEC and to foster synergy between the development strategies of the two countries through close coordination. The meeting between the two leaders was held at the historic Great Hall of the People. The two leaders were accompanied by the federal ministers and senior officials.

This was the first meeting of PM Shehbaz with the President of China since assuming office in 2024. The meeting was marked by traditional warmth reflective of the ironclad friendship and close strategic ties between the two countries. The prime minister thanked President Xi Jinping for the warm and gracious welcome accorded to him and his delegation in China. He recalled the historic visit of the President Xi Jinping to Pakistan in 2015 when the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was formally operationalized marking a new chapter in the bilateral relationship.

The two leaders reaffirmed the time-honoured 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' and expressed the resolve to further deepen cooperation across diverse domains ranging from political and security to economic, trade, and people-to-people exchanges. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments, including Afghanistan, Palestine and South Asia, besides the serious human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The two sides reiterated their longstanding support on each other's issues of core interest. Commending President Xi's visionary Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Global Development Initiative (GDI), the prime minister underscored that as the flagship project of BRI, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor had signifi-

cantly contributed to Pakistan's socio-economic development.

He underlined Pakistan's commitment and full support for safety and security of the Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in Pakistan. He underlined that the government's agenda for people centric, socio-economic development resonates with the concept of 'shared prosperity' embraced by China. President Xi Jinping also hosted a banquet in honour of the prime minister, where another round of discussion on different matters of mutual interests was held.

Meanwhile, Pakistan and China on Friday signed 23 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements to deepen bilateral cooperation in multiple areas including transport infrastructure, industry, energy, agriculture, media, health, water, socioeconomic development, and other areas of mutual interest.

The documents were signed after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang held delegation-level talks wherein they reaffirmed that the Pakistan-China Strategic Cooperative Partnership was characterized by mutual trust, shared principles, and strategic governance.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang witnessed the ceremony as representatives from both sides signed the documents. Pakistan and China signed agreements for the co-production of films, and news exchange and cooperation. The MoUs were signed between Pakistan Television Corporation and China Media Group; on the feasibility studies of DI Khan-Zhob National Highway 50, Muzaffarabad-Mirpur-Mangla Expressway and Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway 9; and construction of a tunnel at Babusar on Mansehra-Chilas National Highway.

Both sides signed a document on modalities for third party participation in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; MoUs on re-alignment of KKH, agricultural cooperation, and anti-monopoly cooperation; an action plan on implementation of 2022 Industrial Cooperation Framework; a protocol on surveying, mapping and geo-information in scientific and technical fields; and a study on the establishment of an effective energy management system.

Two countries signed Letters of Intent for workshops on capacity building on governance, and industrial park development; and handing over certificate for Pak-China Friendship

Hospital in Gwadar and Desalination Plant in Gwadar.

Both sides also signed Letters of Exchange for the reconstruction of primary schools in Sindh; the Lady Health Workers Workstations project; and Junaco Cultivation Demonstration and Projection project; besides an endorsement of the agreement reached in the 7th Joint Working Group to enhance cooperation under CPEC. Since his arrival in China on a five-day visit, the prime minister has met with Chinese investors and businesspersons to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan." In the meeting and events including a Business Forum in Shenzhen, he encouraged the Chinese companies to invest and develop joint ventures.

Several MoUs have also been signed with Chinese companies in economy, green energy, textiles, and manufacturing. Before, he departed for a five-day visit to China, the prime minister had told the Chinese media in an interview that he would engage 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," he remarked.

Pakistan, China resolve to protect CPEC from detractors; ensure projects' timely completion: Pakistan and China on Friday expressed their firm commitment to protect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) from its detractors and adversaries, besides ensuring high-quality development and timely completion of its all ongoing projects.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in the delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People. The prime minister was accompanied by key members of his cabinet. A welcome ceremony was arranged in honour of the prime minister on his arrival at the Great Hall of the People. During the talks, the two leaders discussed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, and regional and global developments of mutual interest. They noted that the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership was characterized by mutual trust, shared principles and strategic convergence.



BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif shaking hands with President of China Xi Jinping.

Zilhajj moon sighted, Eidul Azha on 17th

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Zilhajj moon in Pakistan has been sighted, marking the beginning of the last Islamic month.

It means people in Pakistan will celebrate Eidul Azha on June 17 (Monday). The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, headed by chairman Maulana Syed Abdul Khabir Azad, presided over the meeting. The committee sat for a couple of hours and after gathering evidence, announced the onset of the new month.

The Zilhajj moon was sighted in Saudi Arabia a day earlier and the Muslim country will celebrate Eidul Azha on June 16. According to Saudi authorities, the first day of Zilhajj falls on June 7 (Friday). In keeping with the tradition, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) predicted a few days earlier that Eidul Azha was likely to be celebrated on June 17 (Monday).

According to the Climate Data Processing Centre, the moon of Zilhajj is most likely to be sighted on June 7 (Friday) and

Eidul Azha will be on June 17 (Monday). According to the centre, the moon will rise at 5:38pm on June 6, while the sunset is likely to be at 7:20pm. The moon is likely to be visible for 72 minutes after sunset.

The moon must be 19 hours old to be visible while at the time of sunset, the age of the moon in Karachi will be 26 hours and 8 minutes. On Eidul Azha or the day of sacrifice, Muslims follow the Sunnah of Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S) and demonstrate their obedience to Allah by sacrificing an animal.

NEPRA raises Rs10.1 per unit power tariff for Karachiites

KARACHI (INP): Electricity for Karachiites has been increased by 10 rupees and one paise per unit. According to the report, electricity increased from July 2023 to March 2024 due to the monthly fuel adjustment.

The National Electric Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has issued a notification to increase the price of electricity for K-Electric consumers. Per the notification, additional collections from Karachi residents will be made from June to September 2024.

In June, Rs2.68 per unit will be charged extra from the customers of K-Electric while Rs3.11 per unit will be charged extra in July. In August, the consumers of K-Electric will pay an extra Rs3.22 per unit and one rupee per unit will be charged to them in September this year.

The notification explained that the increase would not be applicable at the K-Electric's Lifeline and Vehicle Charging stations. Last month on May 24, the channel also reported that the electricity supply company K-Electric has proposed an increase of 10.69 rupees per unit in the base tariff under the seven-year Multi-Year Tariff (MYT) plan. The current average base tariff is Rs34 per unit, and K-Electric has proposed raising it to Rs44.69 per unit.

As per the report, K-Electric has submitted its Multi-Year Tariff (MYT) proposal for the period from 2023 to 2030 to National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). The request includes setting the electricity price's Energy Purchase Price (EPP) component at 18.88 rupees per unit and the Capacity Purchase Price (CPP) component at Rs12.54 per unit. The proposal also included the Transmission Charges Rs3.48 per unit, Distribution Charges Rs3.84 per unit, Operation & Maintenance charges 0.42 rupees per unit, Retail Margin Rs0.59 per unit, Recovery Loss Allowance Rs2.88 per unit, and Working Capital Rs2.07 per unit.

Don't make a mockery of House, Shibli told Palwasha

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate witnessed squabbling between the treasury and opposition benches on Friday as the PTI called out PPP Senator Palwasha Khan for chairing the session in the presence of Senate Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan Nasir.

Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani presided over the proceedings but went away 40 minutes into the session, upon which Senator Palwasha began chairing the session. Soon after, PTI Senator Fauzia Arshad said it was regrettable that Palwasha was presiding over the session while the deputy chairman was present. Palwasha replied it was the chairman's prerogative to make that decision, adding that the deputy chairman arrived after she had already begun chairing the session.

Amidst Senator Arshad's interruption, Palwasha repeatedly told the opposition benches to decide

among themselves who they wanted to speak next. Continuing with a similar line of criticism as his fellow PTI senator, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Shibli Faraz said: "Don't make a mockery of the House and don't damage its sanctity. This is no way that you seat the deputy chairman, who has a role in the chairman's absence, and you make him a decoration piece."

The opposition leader and Palwasha had a heated exchange as the latter said the deputy chairman came in after her while Faraz maintained that Nasir was already seated in the Senate. Palwasha asked the opposition leader to mind his tone to which the senator questioned the way she was speaking to him.

"I am speaking to you the same way you're speaking to me," she retorted as she turned to the treasury benches and ordered Rana Mehmoodul Hassan to be given the mic. As clamouring continued from the opposition benches,

Palwashed chastised them, saying: "Fine, continue to create a ruckus. I choose to ignore you."

She subsequently ordered that PPP Senator Farooq Naek be given the mic to speak, saying: "I do not fall for this hooliganism, and this cannot go on." As Naik attempted to speak, Faraz interrupted and said it was "shameful" that the PML-N sent its own chairman out of the House to which Palwasha retorted: "It's alright, he doesn't have an issue with this."

Asking which rule was violated by Palwasha presiding over the session, Naek said: "The Senate chairman gives a list of presiding officers. Who presides in the absence is the prerogative of the chairman. He can tell any presiding officer to preside over the session. And the way you are presiding right now, this is within the Senate rules." He reiterated that there was no violation of any rule with her presiding over the session.

PTI plays FIA over notice in Imran's tweet case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary-General Omar Ayub Khan has launched sharp criticism of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for serving him a call-up notice in the party founder Imran Khan's controversial tweet case.

Ayub, speaking on the floor of the National Assembly on Friday, slammed the probe agency's notices to him and other PTI leaders — including the party's Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Central Information Secretary Raouf Hasan — in the controversial X post case. Ayub, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the lower house of parliament, stressed that the parliamentarians were part of the state as per the Constitution. "Parliament is superior than to any other institutions in the country."

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Ayub, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the lower house of parliament, stressed that the parliamentarians were part of the state as per the Constitution. "Parliament is superior than to any other institutions in the country." The politico questioned higher authorities about the jurisdiction of a probe agency's sub-inspector

which allowed him to issue a call-up notice to the parliamentarians.

He demanded the House summon the FIA's director general to question his jurisdiction and also about the language which was used in the call-up notice. Ayub said that he and several other PTI leaders were booked in terrorism cases in Sargodha. He alleged that "aliens" were involved in the disappearances of party workers whenever they came out of jail.

He slammed that association with the Imran-founded party was seemingly becoming a crime in the country while there was no law in place which could stop such illegal activities. He went on to say that the former prime minister, who was removed from power in April 2022, was facing "solitary confinement" which was proved from the pictures of his prison cell at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

Train service suspended after dozens hurt in clashes

CHAMAN (INP): Dozens of citizens and law personnel were injured in Chaman when they clashed on Friday as the residents continued their sit-in in the city for the last nine months. The train service was also suspended amid clashes.

The locals under the banner of All-Parties Tajar Laghri Ittehad have been protesting against the Passport Trolling Policy of the government in Chaman. There was a complete shutdown in the city on the third day and all markets and shops were closed.

The situation in the city is highly tense as the security forces bombarded with shells the protesters while the angry locals stormed the public offices. Clashes between security forces and the protesters continued in the Chaman city.

Over 30 protesters, 8 policemen and 10 Frontier Constabulary (FC) personnel have been injured in the fresh clashes. Some of the injured persons have been admitted to the hospital. The residents of Chaman are protesting against the passport system because their houses are in Pakistan but their yards are in Afghanistan.

CTD kills most wanted TTP terrorist

F.P. Report

BANNU: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on Friday killed a most wanted terrorist of the banned TTP in an overnight operation in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As per details, the CTD informed that the intelligence based anti-terror operation was carried out by the CTD in Talgai area of Wazir Tehsil of Bannu district.

During the operation, a TTP terrorist identified as Umar alias Mustafa was killed. The CTD recovered arms and hand grenades from the possession of the dead terrorist. The slain terrorist was wanted in cases including carrying out blasts, target killing and attacks on forces.

JCP proposes 3 judges' names for elevation to SC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) Friday sent the names of three high court judges to be considered for elevation to the Supreme Court for final approval by the Parliamentary Committee, sources told media.

The names, recommended for appointment to vacant SC seats, were recommended during a meeting of the Judicial Commission held under chairmanship of Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa, said the sources. During the meeting, the names of Lahore High Court Chief Justice Malik Shahzad

Ahmad, Sindh High Court Chief Justice Aqeel Abbasi, and LHC Justice Shahid Bilal have been proposed, the sources said.

CJP Isa had, last month, convened the JCP meeting for deliberations over the appointment of three judges in the SC. The JCP was constituted under the 18th Constitutional Amendment mandated to appoint judges in the superior judiciary.

It was tasked to consider names of nine judges, including LHC chief justice and SHC chief justice, for filling the three vacant posts in the apex court. Chaired by the CJP, the meeting was to be attended JCP members —Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah,

Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahaya Afridi, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice (ret'd) Manzoor Ahmed Malik, Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazir Tarar, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan and Pakistan Bar Council representative advocate Akhtar Hussain.

As per the Constitution, the actual strength of judges of the Supreme Court is 17 while at present the apex court only has 14 judges including the CJP. The three posts are to be filled after the retirement of former chief justice Umar Ata Bandial and resignations of Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Syed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi.

Fire death toll rises to six

LALAMUSA (PPI): Four more injured persons of the house fire incident of Lalamura succumbed to their injuries on Friday. Among the deceased, a man named Mohammad Naeem and his sons Tayyab, Abdul Rehman and Rahmatullah succumbed to their injuries while being treated at Aziz Bhatti Hospital Gujrat. According to doctors, 75 percent of the bodies of the people who died in Gujarat were burnt.



Govt decides to establish Punjab Kisan Bank

LAHORE (PPI): The Punjab government has decided to establish Punjab Kisan Bank for issuing easy loans to farmers, officials said on Friday.

Besides establishment of Punjab Kisan Bank, Green Tractor Scheme, harvester and agricultural equipments' manufacturing at local level and Oilseed Promotion Program have also been announced.

The meeting chaired by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif got detailed briefing on the Kisan package.

The meeting gave approval of "CM Punjab Green Tractor Scheme" for farmers. However, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif rejected the proposal of only Rs600,000 subsidy on tractors. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz directed to give 70 percent subsidy on small tractors and 50 percent on big tractors. It was briefed that on the sugges-

tion of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the number of tractors under the Punjab Green Tractor Scheme was increased to 10,000.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered to complete the first phase of Punjab Green Tractor Scheme in one year. It was decided in principle to give more tractors under Punjab Green Tractor Scheme every year. Owners of six acres to 50 acres of land will be eligible to apply for tractors, said in briefing. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also approved the high-tech mechanization program developed at the local level.

Foreign companies will manufacture harvesters and other equipment in Punjab with local collaboration. It also proposed to give concessions to foreign companies for manufacturing modern agricultural equipment in Punjab.

The meeting also gave approval to start oilseed promotion program in Punjab. Production of oil

products in different areas of the province will be encouraged. Chief Minister Maryam said that for the first time in Punjab, a farmer package of Rs400 billion is being given.

Apart from agricultural inputs, farmers will also get other incentives and facilities through Kisan Card, Maryam Nawaz said. Prosperity of every farmer and increase in agricultural production are among our top goals, Maryam Nawaz added. Solarization of tube-well and drip irrigation system were also reviewed in the meeting. It was told in the briefing that 47000 farmers have registered for Kisan Card in 48 hours.

Senior Provincial Minister Maryam Aurangzeb, Provincial Ministers Sohaib Ahmed Malik, Syed Ashiq Hussain, Special Assistant Rashid Nasrullah, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Secretary Agriculture Iftekhar Sahu and other relevant officials were also present in the meeting.

Measles outbreak worsens in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The measles outbreak in Punjab continues to escalate, with alarming increases in both suspected and confirmed cases.

Tragically, three children have succumbed to the disease in Multan during the past 24 hours, as reported by the Health Department on Friday. These recent fatalities bring the total number of measles-related deaths among children in Punjab to 30.

Yesterday alone, health authorities identified 321 suspected cases of measles across Punjab. Breakdown of the new cases includes 47 from Lahore, 6 from Gujranwala, 4 from Vehari, 26 from Jhang, 11 from Rahim Yar Khan, and 14 from Multan. The number of confirmed measles cases in the province has now surged to 3,674.

In response to the outbreak, health officials are urging parents to ensure their children receive measles vaccination and to seek immediate medical attention if symptoms appear. The provincial government is intensifying efforts to control the outbreak, with enhanced vaccination drives and public awareness campaigns aimed at curbing the spread of the disease. Authorities continue to monitor the situation closely as they work to prevent further tragedies and protect the health of children in Punjab.

Govt to audit district health authorities

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has announced a comprehensive audit of health authorities across all districts, targeting improvements in vaccination coverage and accountability in healthcare services. Sources in the health department confirmed on Friday that instructions have been issued to Secretary of Health Punjab to initiate this audit.

The decision comes in response to declining vaccination rates, which plummeted from over 90 per cent in 2017 to 68 per cent in 2023. As part of the audit, the Health Department has demanded a five-year record of vaccination coverage from all districts. The review will also focus on identifying and suspending officers from districts exhibiting the poorest performance.

Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir emphasized the government's commitment to accountability, stating, "We have decided to conduct a thorough audit and hold employees accountable for their performance. This is crucial for restoring the effectiveness of our health programs and ensuring public trust."

Additionally, lists of staff members who failed to perform their duties over the past five years have been requested to facilitate further actions against those responsible for the decline.



KARACHI: A vendor feed their sacrificial animals at cattle market for upcoming Eid ul Azha. —INP Photo

Minister chairs board meeting of Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Provincial Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah chaired the board meeting of Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company today in the committee room of Energy Department.

In the meeting, the decisions of the previous meeting were confirmed, while new important decisions were also taken. Meeting was decided that Go Energy Pvt Ltd, which wants to install a 500 MW floating solar power project on Kenjhar Lake and connect K Electric with

Dhabiji grid station through STDC's transmission line.

It will also agree to sign the MoU. It was informed in the meeting that Gul Ahmed Group Power Company Private Limited and Gul Ahmed Renewal Energy Private Limited both companies want to generate 50-50 MW electricity and supply it to Gul Ahmed Textile Mills through Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company's transmission line.

Minister Nasir Shah also approved the MoU between STDC and Gul Ahmed Group as Chairman. In the meeting, a detailed review was made regarding the

performance of STDC.

Nasir Shah emphasized to increase the performance of the company and further improve it and said that Sindh Government has established SEPRa as compared to NEPRA to provide cheap electricity to the people, so as far as possible all the initiatives should be ensured through SEPRa.

Minister Energy said that the officers and employees with good performance will be awarded with both awards and rewards because hardworking and capable employees are valuable assets of any organization.

LHC extends market hours for Eidul Azha

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday extended market operating hours for the occasion of Eidul Azha.

The court allowed markets to stay open until 12am [midnight] up to Eidul Azha and until 1am on weekends. Justice Shahid Karim issued the orders while hearing petitions, filed by Haroon Farooq and others regarding ineffective measures to control smog.

During the proceedings, the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) submitted a report about dead chickens, stating that 46,670-kg dead chickens were discarded from Tollinton Market. The report further mentioned that daily raids were being conducted to check meat quality, resulting in 94 cases registered for selling unhealthy meat. The court subsequently adjourned the hearing until next Friday.

FIA Lahore circle arrests 3 smugglers

LAHORE (APP): The FIA Lahore's anti-human smugglers circle arrested three smugglers including woman.

According to the FIA spokesperson, the accused Ayesha received huge amount to send the citizens to Dubai and Thailand, the accused was arrested from Baghbanpura Lahore.

Accused Sheikh Yusuf received Rs 400,000 from a citizen to get a Malaysian work permit. Accused Yusuf was arrested from Rawalpindi, while a human trafficker named Ashraf was arrested from Thukar Niaz Baig Lahore. Accused Ashraf received Rs 300,000 from a citizen to send to Dubai.

Director FIA Lahore Zone Sarfaraz Khan Virk said that operations against human smugglers will continue vigorously.

Commissioner for ensuring 100 percent target of anti-polio drive

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Syed Hasan Naqvi has directed all Deputy Commissioners to pay special attention to ensure 100 percent coverage of left over children during anti-polio drive and special focus should be given on the refusal cases.

The concerned officers were asked to work with a comprehensive plan to administer polio drops to children up to five years of age specially in high-risk areas. He issued these directives while chairing a meeting to review the anti-polio campaign in the high-risk areas of district of East and district Central here on Friday at his office.

The Commissioner said Karachi is currently in a

high-risk zone, and strenuous efforts were needed to eradicate polio virus from the city. He directed the deputy commissioners to include revenue staff in the anti-polio efforts to increase the number of staff and ensure proper monitoring. He also instructed them to consult with local representatives, religious leaders and senior citizens of different communities to make the efforts more effective.

The Commissioner also visited the Union Council Al-Noor Society and reviewed the situation causing due to uncleanness and bad drainage system. He said that improving the drainage and sanitation system in the area was essential for polio eradication.

The Deputy Commissioner Central, Fuad Ghaffar Soomro, briefed the Commissioner on the anti-polio efforts. The Commissioner also visited the Gadap Gajro Union Council in district East where Deputy Commissioner Shahzad Abbasi briefed him about anti polio drive.

Syed Hassan Naqvi visited the Jannat Hospital at Gajro. He also appealed the parents to secure their children's future by administering anti-polio drops to every child under five years of age in every campaign. The current anti-polio campaign will end on Sunday, and so far, more than 1.7 million children have been administered polio drops in the past four days.

Ramesh Arora orders better arrangements for Sikh pilgrims

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Minorities and Head of Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (PSGPC) Ramesh Singh Arora has ordered for making better arrangements for Sikh yatrees' accommodation, travel, and security while relevant departments have to provide services round-the-clock.

He expressed these views while charging consultative meeting in Dera Sahib after his visit on Friday. He told the members of PSGPC that in a significant gesture of religious harmony, the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi has issued

visas to Indian Sikh pilgrims in anticipation of the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth guru of Sikhs.

The minister was briefed that pilgrims are scheduled to cross into Pakistan via Wagah border crossing on June 8, marking a poignant moment of cross-border cultural and religious exchange. The primary commemorative ceremony is set to take place on June 16 at Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore, a site of deep historical and spiritual significance, where Guru Arjan Dev Ji was martyred in 1606.

The minister directed that a warm reception should be planned at the Wagah border,

underscoring the importance of this event in fostering goodwill. This year's events not only commemorate the profound legacy of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, but also reinforce the cultural and spiritual bonds between the Sikh community and Pakistan, highlighting the nation's commitment to preserving and respecting its diverse religious heritage.

TENDER NOTICE

HEADQUARTERS FRONTIER CORPS KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA (NORTH)

- Sealed bids on the basis of "Items Rate System" are hereby invited from the contractors / firms already registered with this office for project "Construction of 3 x 128 single men barracks for Special Operations Companies at Bajaur, Mohmand and Khyber Merged Districts for a total estimated cost of Rs.249.780 million
- Tender form & complete set of bidding documents can be collected from the date of appearance of the advertisement in the press from the office of undersigned on production of call deposit (original) till **25 June 2024**.
- The bidding shall be carried out on the basis of "item rate system", wherein the bidders are required to Quote in % on project cost in the BOQ, in case of non schedule item no % will be allowed.
- The bids shall be accompanied with the earnest money/Bid security @ 2% of bid cost in favour of the IGFC KP (North) in shape of call deposit from any scheduled bank of Pakistan.
- As per provincial Govt. notification no. SO (FR)/FD/9-7/2011/VOI-1-11 Dated 05-11-2014 in case of quoting bid upto 10% below on the engineer estimate, the bidder will furnish an additional security with the bid, in shape of call deposit/bank guarantee. Further, in lieu of bank guarantee/call deposit, an equivalent insurance coverage of a company having at least AA rating from PACRAMR shall also be acceptable from contractors/bidders, subject to verification by the scheduled bank. whereas bank guarantees will be obtained from the contractors/bidders quoting more than 10% below on engineer estimate. These guarantees will be discharged on expiry of the defect liability period of the contract.
- The bids must reach to the office of the undersigned up to **25 June 2024** on 1100 hrs through registered courier services. Wherein the bids will be opened on the same day at 1200hrs in the presence of bidders / their representatives, who may like to attend, in the office of the IGFC KP (North). Works Branch HQ Frontier Corps KP Peshawar. The late bids received will not be entertained.
- Bids will be valid for 90 days from the date of acceptance of tender by the competent authority.
- Any item not reflected in the bill of quantities (BOQ) and required at the site, shall be paid in accordance with MRS rates, subject to prior approval.
- Incomplete/disfiguring/over-writing/by-hand/delayed bids will be considered non-responsive.
- In case of equal bids 1st, 2nd and 3rd etc, the lowest bidder would be decided through toss/draw by the undersigned.
- The procuring entity may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposals. The procurement entity shall upon request communicate to any contractor who submitted a bid or proposal, the ground for rejection of all bids or proposals as per PPRA.
- The bidders are liberty to seek any clarification or further information from the office of undersigned, if desire on any working day during office hours.

LEUTENANT COLONEL (GSO-1) WORKS



**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
MARWAT CANAL DIVISION BANNU**
PHONE & FAX. 0928-9270093

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

Irrigation Department Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa intends to invite electronic bids on the basis of single stage single envelope system for the Government Firms/ Contractors enlisted with Irrigation Department having renewed their enlistment and valid PEC license for the following work:-

S#	Name of Scheme	E/Cost (Rs. in Million)	Earnest Money @ 2% +Stamp Duty in shape of CD.	PEC relevant Code.
ADP No. 2206/210455-Construction of Flood Protection Works, Irrigation Channels and Ponds and installation of Solar Irrigation TWells in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.				
1.	S/Work- Installation of Solar based Irrigation TWells for Agriculture lands at village Tari Khel District Lakki Marwat	7.358	156500	CE-09, CE-10, EE-11 (Solar), ME 05

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR E-BIDDING

- Bids shall be submitted electronically through e-bidding. All the documents are available on the website of the department www.irrigation.gkp.pk as well as "KPPRA" website for the convenience of the bidders.
- Bids solicitation documents being mandatory requirements be fulfilled to enable the bidder to participate in the tendering process, otherwise their bids will be rejected.
- Venue of the bids opening as Marwat Canal Division Bannu.
- The bidders are required to quote their rates on above/below system on engineer's estimates for MRS and non-MRS item of works.
- The additional security will be deposited by the successful bidder strictly following the KPPRA rules notified vide **No. SRO(14) Vol:1-24/2021-22, Dated 10-05-2022**.
- If the evaluated electroc bid costs of two or more than two bidders are equal, then the successful bidders will be declared through toss or best evaluated value of bidders, as deem fit by the procuring entity.
- The competent authority reserves the right to accept/ reject any or all bids any time prior to acceptance of a bid as per Para 47(i) of KPPRA Rules 2014, quoting cogent reasons.
- Bid security of the first, second and third lowest electronic bidders for the specific work will be retained by the department for at least one week after issuance of letter of acceptance to the successful bidder.
- All the bidders/firms must be registered with KPRA.
- All the prevailing KPPRA Acts/ Rules and other Governemt Notifications will also be applicable issued from time to time.
- Funds release depends upon the policy of Provincial Government; hence payment will be made accordingly. Bidder/ Contractor agreeing with Financial constraints in respect of payments etc are at liberty to participate in instant E-bidding as no claim whatsoever will be entertained in this regard.
- Bids will received on **24-06-2024** up to **12:00 P.M.** and will be **opened on same date i.e, 24-06-2024 at 12:30 P.M.**

Executive Engineer
Marwat Canal Division Bannu

INF(P)1197/24



Environmental Impact Assessment Report
PRIME Tower, Warsak Road (Canal Road),
Near Marbella Wedding Hall, Peshawar



NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING

All public stakeholders and interested persons are hereby informed that Environmental Protection Agency Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has received the request for Environmental Approval to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of PRIME Tower, Warsak Road (Canal Road), Near Marbella Wedding Hall, Peshawar that is required under section-13 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Environmental Protection Act, 2014, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

- All stakeholders, the public, and interested persons are invited to give their views for or against environmental approval. These views should be received within 15 (fifteen) days of the publication of the advertisement to the Director General (EPA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the address below.
- Detailed EIA documents are available for public viewing at the Environmental Protection Agency, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
- The public hearing will be held at the following date, venue, and time. All stakeholders and the general public are invited.

Date	Time	Venue
28-06-2024	11:00 AM	PRIME Tower, Warsak Road (Canal Road), Near Marbella Wedding Hall, Peshawar.

Muhammad Jahangir
(Authorized/Focal Person)
PRIME Tower, Warsak Road
(Canal Road), Near Marbella
Wedding Hall, Peshawar
Phone Number: 0300-5852265

Director General
Environmental Protection Agency
Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,
3rd Floor, Old Court Building, Khyber
Road, Peshawar
Phone Number: 091-9210263

Dragon Boat Festival ceremony at China Window Pak-China friendship is higher than Himalayas, deeper than seas: Swati

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati, emphasized the immense importance of the friendship between Pakistan and China in light of the current economic situation. He highlighted that this bond is crucial for the economic development and prosperity of both nations and stressed the need to learn from and benefit in various fields from our brotherly neighbor, China.

Swati expressed these views during his visit to China Window, a Chinese cultural center in Peshawar, where he also addressed the Dragon Boat Festival ceremony. The event was graced by the presence of Engineer Said Mehmood, Vice Chairman of the KP Board of Investment, and Arshad Aziz Malik, President of the Peshawar Press Club.

During his visit, Speaker Babar Saleem Swati toured the state-of-the-art cultural center, exploring its various galleries, signing the friendship wall, and leaving his comments in the visitor's book. In his address at the Dragon Boat Festival, he remarked, "The friendship between Pakistan and China is higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the seas, and sweeter than honey."

Today, we proudly call ourselves Iron Brothers." He attributed the strength of this friendship to the mutual protection of each other's interests and unwavering support during difficult times. Swati underscored that while China has always stood by Pakistan, it is imperative for Pakistan to learn from China's development and leverage its experiences for Pakistan's economic growth and the well-being of its people.

Welcoming the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Swati commended China's investment of \$26 billion in CPEC projects and the anticipated additional \$40 billion investment. He highlighted that these projects, including hydropower and the Rashakai Economic Zone, will create millions of jobs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Speaker Swati also emphasized the significance of learning the Chinese language, particularly for youth aspiring to take advantage of the opportunities arising from CPEC projects.

He praised the China Window administration for organizing free Chinese language courses and lauded the initiative to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival, marking it as a gesture of solidarity with our Chinese brothers and sisters.

Expressing his delight at visiting the China Window, Swati noted that the center not only fosters a positive and constructive role in strengthening Pakistan-China friendship but also enriches the people of Peshawar and the entire province with Chinese cultural awareness.

Earlier in the event, Engineer Syed Mehmood and Arshad Aziz Malik acknowledged the Chinese people's enthusiasm for their festivals, including the Dragon Boat Festival. They conveyed that the celebrations in Peshawar would send a clear message to China of our shared joy and solidarity.

They expressed confidence that such events would further solidify the Pak-China friendship.

The guests were also treated to documentaries showcasing the Dragon Boat Festival.



PESHAWAR: Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati addressing a ceremony at China Center.

PHC rejects plea seeking removal from ECL in fraud case

Humayun Khan

PEHSAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Waqar Ahmed has rejected the petition filed by Professor Dr. Hameedullah Jan, challenging the decision of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to place his name on the Exit Control List (ECL), on Friday.

The counsel for petitioner argued that Dr. Hameed Ullah Jan had returned the money to the affected persons and had also allotted plots to them, therefore, his name should be removed from the ECL.

However, NAB's counsel, Salman Fayyaz, argued that the petitioner had committed fraud and embezzled billions of rupees, and his name could not be removed from the ECL.

The court's decision means that Dr. Jan will not be able to travel abroad until the case is decided. The case revolves around allegations of fraud and embezzlement of billions of rupees by the petitioner, who is accused of selling plots to people and not delivering them.

NAB had initiated an investigation into the matter and had placed Dr. Jan's name on the ECL to prevent him from fleeing the country.

PHC divisional bench comprising of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Waqar Ahmad rejected, the petitioner's pleas seeking removal from ECL after conclusion of arguments.

PPP asks CM to tender apology for derogatory remarks

PESHAWAR (APP): PPP Peshawar city chapter has asked KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur to tender apology for his derogatory remarks against PPP leadership and Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi.

Addressing a press conference at press club here on Friday, president PPP Peshawar City, Zulfikar Afghani warned the chief minister of derogatory language against their party leadership. Otherwise, he said that they take streets against them including holding a demo in front of the Chief Minister's House.

Other PPP leaders present on the occasion were included Khawaja Yawar Naseer, Mohammad Adnan Jalil, Abidullah Khan Yousafzai, Malik Zulfikar Awan, Tahir Abbas, Munir Camrade, Riaz Khan and Junaid Khan.

The PPP stalwart criticized the PTI led provincial government for its poor governance for last 12 years, which has pushed the province to backwardness and lawlessness.

He said that the PPP leadership had rendered unprecedented sacrifices for the restoration and strengthening of democracy, supremacy of law and constitution.

Rejecting the tirade of the Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur against PPP chairman, Bilawal

Extension of Dept of Operative Dentistry inaugurated at KTH

PESHAWAR (APP): KCD faculty, residents, and staff of the Department of Operative Dentistry. During the event, the Chairman BoG and other guests were given a comprehensive tour of both the original department and its new extension by the Chairperson of Operative Dentistry, Prof Dr. Shafqat Ali Shah.

They were briefed on the expansion process and the department's plans for patient care, as well as its teaching programs for both under- and post-graduates.

The original department, located on the ground floor of the old KCD building, housed a total of 25 dental units.

However, due to limited space and heavy patient load, the need for an extension became apparent.

The new extension now features 9 operational dental units in the postgraduate section, 5 units in the new OPD dedicated to emergency cases, 2 units specifically allocated for hepatitis B and C positive patients, and 1 unit at the Faculty Office.

This expansion has increased the total number of units in the department to 42, significantly enhancing patient care and reducing appointment waiting times.

Dr. Umar Ayub Khan, the Chairman of the BOG, expressed his deep appreciation for the hard work put in by the KCD team and assured them of his unwavering support. Furthermore, he generously presented a copy of the book "The Clash of Civilizations" to the respected Dean of KCD, and later participated in a group picture with the faculty.

ICRC Art Competition concludes with enthusiasm at UOP



F.P. Report

P E S H A W A R : International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) organized the "ICRC Art Competition 2024" "keeping the Humanity Alive" for the students of the University of Peshawar's Arts and Design Department.

The aim of the competition was to provide a platform for students to express their thoughts and imagination through Their Art Work, and highlighting the impact of Conflict and other violence on human lives, voices and climate change.

On the Occasion the Edithe Joseph, the Head of the ICRC Peshawar Sub-Delegation Office, attended the event and said "Art carries the unique ability to transcend border, translate human emotions and communicate powerful messages about human conditions through language of expression and creativity. The ICRC Arts Competition aims to raise awareness about humanitarian issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and reflect on the lived and observed experiences of the people in the region."

She Further Added to her statement, The ICRC is an impartial, neutral, and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

Through Art, the ICRC aims to raise awareness about humanitarian issues, by engaging diverse audiences through powerful visual expressions, encouraging empathy, and developing a deeper understanding of the impact of conflict and crises. ICRC also provides a platform for artists to reflect on human rights and dignity, encouraging innovative perspectives and broader discussions.

Dr. Imrana Seemi, Chairperson of the Fine Arts Department, University of Peshawar, thanked the ICRC for organizing the competition, saying that such events are essential for nurturing the talent of students, who will shape the future of society through their work. The winners of the competition were awarded trophies, cash prizes, and certificates."

KPBC condemns evaluation of judge to Supreme court

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) has expressed strong reservations over the appointment of judges in the Supreme Court, terming the appointment of junior judges as regrettable, on Friday.

KPBC Vice Chairman Sadiq Ali Mohmand and Chairman Executive Committee Syed Taimour Ali Shah stated in a joint statement that the appointment of judges in the Supreme Court is against seniority and principles.

They criticized the Supreme Court for appointing a junior judge from the Lahore High Court, contrary to its own verdict.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council strongly condemns this appointment and will protest against it in the next meeting of the Inter-Provincial Bar Councils, where they will finalize a future course of action.

Governor visits Edwardes College Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Faisal Karim Kundi of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province undertook a visit to Edwardes College in Peshawar, where he planted a sapling in the college's green campus.

During his visit, the Governor inspected the facilities of the college, including the International Language Courses Center, Central Library, and various classrooms. He also reviewed the arrangements for the ongoing annual examinations being conducted at the college.

Principal Professor Shujaat Ali Khan briefed Governor Kundi about various aspects of Edwardes College, including its historical significance, academic and extracurricular activities, scholarships, and academic performance.

The briefing also covered the structure and functioning of the college's Board of Governors, Executive Committee, and Finance Committee.

"Edwardes College is a premier educational institution in the province," remarked Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. "It is our collective responsibility to uphold the standard of education and the esteemed reputation of Edwardes College."

Edwardes College holds a distinguished reputation for providing quality education, remarked Governor Kundi, emphasizing the importance of maintaining this legacy.

The visit of Governor Faisal Karim Kundi underscores the government's commitment to promoting education and ensuring the development of educational institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Edwardes College, located in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is one of the oldest and most prestigious educational institutions in Pakistan. Founded in 1900, the college offers a wide range of academic programs and has a rich tradition of academic excellence and extracurricular activities.



PESHAWAR: A vendor preparing and displaying a traditional summer drink Shikanjabeen to attract customers at Ghanta Ghar Chowk. — APP photo

A two-day training workshop on climate change studies held

PESHAWAR (APP): University of Agriculture, Peshawar organized a successful two-day workshop on climate smart agriculture to mitigate drought in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with Climate, Energy and Water Research Institute, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Islamabad here on Friday. Important officials of various departments including Department of Agriculture Extension, Department of Agriculture Research, Department of On Farm Water Management, Department of Soil and Water Conservation and Department of Livestock and Dairy Development Extension Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in the workshop.

These departments play an important role in implementing sustainable agricultural practices to address the challenges posed by climate change, particularly drought. Vice Chancellor Emeritus Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht attended as a special guest. Professor Dr. Humayun Khan, Deputy Director Dr. Haroon Khan, Dr. Bashir Ahmad, Dr. Akhtar Abbas, and Engineer Ali Kamran gave lectures in the workshop. Their presentations covered various topics that are essential to advance climate smart agricultural practices, increase drought resilience and ensure sustainable water management in the region. Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht emphasized the urgent need to adopt climate smart agricultural practices to reduce the negative effects of drought. He said, "Collaboration between academic institutions and research institutes is critical to develop innovative solutions that can protect our agricultural sector from the growing threat of climate change. This workshop will create a resilient and sustainable agricultural framework in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It's a step towards building a work." Participants participated in interactive sessions and discussions focusing on practical strategies and technologies to enhance farmers' adaptive capacity. The workshop also provided a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration among various stakeholders, promoting a collective approach to tackling environmental challenges.



In brief

Dist emergency officer assumes charge in Jamrud
F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Engineer Shareq Riaz Khattak assumed charge as new emergency officer, Khyber here in district headquarter office, Jamrud last day. In this connection a simple gathering was in the Rescue 1122 district headquarter office, Jamrud that was attended by newly appointed and outgoing emergency officers Engineer Shareq Riaz Khatak and Syed Shoab Mansoor besides officials of rescue 1122. The newly posted emergency officer was received warmly by presenting him with bouquets and a smart contingent of the Rescue 1122 officials saluted him. Rescue 1122 staff was introduced to him and the officer inspected control rooms and examined various sections of the Rescue 1122 headquarter. Speaking on the occasion the posted district emergency officer urged the Rescue 1122 officials to adopt all necessary initiatives to provide on time relief to the residents of Khyber during natural or man-made calamities. It is to be mentioned here that Engineer Shareq Riaz Khattak earlier has served in Peshawar, Haripur and Battagram.

TB free society: MoU signed
F.P. Report

BANNU: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between KGN Hospital Bannu and PPM-ACD Peshawar which was graced by prominent figures from the healthcare sector, on Friday. The Focal Person TB Control Programme Bannu Dr. Syed Faiz Ur Rehman, Hospital Director of KGN Hospital Bannu Prof. Dr. Muhammad Akram, Dean of Bannu Medical College, Dr. Naveed Pervaz TB MDR Site Focal Person at KGN Hospital Bannu, Dr. Attaulah from KGN Hospital, Dr. Akram Khan Naveed Director PPM-ACD Peshawar, Dr. Faisal Younis Program Manager TB MDR PPM-ACD Peshawar. The establishment of the TB MDR site at KGN Hospital Bannu marks a pivotal advancement in the fight against tuberculosis in the region. This collaboration aims to improve the diagnosis, treatment, and management of TB MDR, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes for affected populations. Free-of-cost treatment to TB MDR patients. The total cost to treat a single TBMDR patient is approximately Eight Hundred Thousand (8 lakh). The ceremony concluded with the formal signing of the MOU, symbolizing the commitment of both parties to work together towards a tuberculosis-free future. We appreciate and extend our heartfelt thanks to both parties the KGN MTI Management and PPM-ACD for their commitment to providing the necessary resources and support for the successful operation of the TB MDR site.

5 cattle markets established
F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: District Administration has setup five sales points for buying and selling of sacrificial animals in the district while district administration, Municipal Committees, Livestock, District Council, health, Rescue 1122 and other department were made necessary arrangements for providing basic facilities to visitors of sales points. Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad warned the people that animal traders will not be allowed to carry sacrificial animals in the city.

Students sit-in continues at Malakand's varsity

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Talks between the elders of the Adenzai Qaumi Jirga and Students' Jirga, a representative body of different students' organizations of the University of Malakand (UoM) held at Chakdara ended without any result as the students boycotted their annual examinations. The protesting students staged a sit-in at the varsity premises, locked all the departments and offered Fateha for the departed soul of Musa Khan.

The Students Jirga led by Maaz Khan repeated its demands of dismissal of the varsity vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, Pro-vice chancellor Dr Attaur Rehman, Provost Dr Janis Khan, Chief Proctor Dr Aziz and hostel warden Habib Khan. They put the demands before the Adenzai Qaumi Jirga that met it at Chakdara before meeting with the university's administration.

The students continued to protest the death of Musa Khan, a student of the journalism and mass communication department, who was killed in a road accident on May 30 due to his alleged expulsion from his hostel at night. All the students boycotted their examinations and announced to continue it till acceptance

of their demands. The elders of Adenzai Qaumi Jirga including Khurshid Ali of PPP, Syed Sultanat Yar Bukhari of JI, Haji Javed Iqbal of JUI-F, Aman Khan of PPP, Fakhruz Zaman of PTI and others first met the UoM administration at the Chakdara Fishing hut and informed it about the students' demands.

The talks continued for three hours during which the varsity administration agreed to accept all of the students' demands falling under its jurisdiction. Talking to media reporters in the presence of vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, AAC Adenzai and teachers' representatives the jirga elders Syed Sultanat Yar and Khurshid Ali said the varsity administration had agreed to accept the students' demands. They said that some of the demands which were related to the provincial government and KP Governor would be discussed with the concerned high ups.

Later the jirga members met the Students Jirga in order to seek a peaceful and sustainable solution to the issue. The protesting students again demanded the dismissal of the varsity pro-vice chancellor, Provost, chief proctor and hostel warden and said that they would not withdraw its

protest call. The Adenzai elders asked the Students' jirga to end its protest and sit in the varsity examinations commencing from Friday. However, the jirga rejected the offer and said the students would boycott the examinations.

Meanwhile a delegation of the varsity teachers' association led by Dr Samiur Rehman also met the Students' Jirga and discussed the emerging situation. The teachers, according to the students, also agreed to their demands.

The lawyers affiliated with different bar councils in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have already announced to fully support the legal battle regarding the death of Musa Khan. The lawyers from Peshawar, Mardan, Dargai, Charsadda, Lower Dir, Upper Dir and Malakand visited the University of Malakand and met with the Students' jirga at Chakdara here the other day.

They condoled on the death of Musa Khan and announced to fully support the victim's family and the varsity students. A meeting in this regard was addressed by Alam Khan Adenzai of the Peshawar High Court Bar, Asadullah of the Chakdara Bar and Chairman Students' Jirga Maaz Khan.

JUI-F stand for integrity of country: Maulana Darvish

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHER: Jammiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F) provincial chief for intra-party election Maulana Ahmad Ali Darvish urged the workers to participate actively in the membership drive, ensuring transparency and fairness. He said that the drive aims to renew the membership of old workers and include new members in the party, on Friday.

This argued while addressing a press conference along with Qari Akhtar Shed, Sheikh ul Hadith Hafiz Saeed-ur-

Rehman, former Amir Qari Muhammad Aslam, former General Secretary Mufti Hakim Ali Haqqani, Jammiat Business Forum president Al Haj Pervaiz Khattak, Qari Umar Ali, Dr. Gohar Ali, Pervaiz Ahmad Khan and others also addressed the gathering. He emphasized the party leaders should work selflessly, following the footsteps of the party's founders, Sheikhul Hind and Mufti Mahmood, and the current leader, Maulana Fazalur Rehman.

Maulana Ahmad Ali Darvish said that JUI-F is not a party formed

overnight but has a history of sacrifices spanning over a century. He highlighted the party's role in protecting the country's freedom and religious institutions, citing the example of the previous government's attempts to sabotage religious seminaries.

He emphasized the need to take the party's message to every household and invite people to join JUI. He assured that the membership drive would be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, ensuring the party's strength and stability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

IPC certificate course at BKMC-MTI completed

F.P. Report

SWABI: The second phase of a comprehensive one-month Infection Prevention and Control (IPC&C) certificate course for nurses concluded at Bacha Khan Medical Complex (BKMC-MTI). This initiative aims to address the spread of infectious diseases and standardize IPC practices across healthcare facilities in District Swabi.

A total of 21 nurses participated in the training, including 3 from DHQ Swabi, 2 each from THQ Topi and THQ Chota Lohor, and 14 from BKMC. The course pro-

vided both theoretical knowledge and hands-on practice in IPC protocols.

Dr. Shahid Younus, Additional Director General (ADG) Health Services KP, attended the certificates distribution ceremony as a chief guest. He congratulated all the participants on completing the one-month course and emphasized the importance of implementing the WHO training in their respective healthcare institutions.

Dr. Babar Alam from WHO, Dean/CEO, GKMC/BKMC, and HD BKMC, also spoke at the event and highlighted the critical importance of IPC

training. The course was led by Dr. Shagufta Hussain, Professor of Microbiology and WHO IPC consultant, who served as the master trainer. She was facilitated by Dr. Asim, Microbiologist from BKMC-MTI.

The course, which ran from May 13 to June 7, 2024, aimed to equip nurses with the knowledge, skills, and best practices necessary to control the spread of infectious diseases within healthcare facilities. At the end of the event, course completion certificates were awarded to all participants.



HYDERABAD: Injured person of gas cylinder blast at Bhiishah being provided medical treatment at hospital.

Traders terms FBR *Tajir Dost* policy an attempt to cheat

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Provincial General Secretary Markazi Tajiran organization and the President of the Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zahir Shah termed the Tajir Dost scheme as a scheme against traders and said that through this scheme, the FBR does not want to trap the traders in an unfair tax system. There is an attempt to cheat in the name of paying tax of twelve hundred rupees annually. We will not allow a noose to be put around the neck of the businessmen, we will take all possible measures for the rights of the businessmen, consultation with the stakeholders is necessary to increase the tax net.

He expressed these views while talking to the media representatives. He said that he had expressed reservations about the Trader Friend Scheme even a month ago and informed the other concerned authorities including Chairman FBR about these reservations. He said that we understand that the tax net should be increased but the blood of the existing tax payers should not be squeezed, bureaucracy always misleads the governments, fake and incorrect data is brought out which does not increase the national income.

However, fraud and corruption will definitely increase. This is a business-killing scheme. We reject this scheme based on fraud, dishonesty and bias. Though through this FBR want to trap businessmen in an unfair tax system. This is an attempt to cheat the traders in the name of paying tax of twelve hundred rupees annually.

If a trader has a high income, then that trader is ready to pay more tax, we want tax to be levied on income, if the system is not established and under this scheme FBR comes to the markets and starts actions against the traders, we know how to protect our traders.

IGP inaugurates command & control center in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: Inspector General (IG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police Akhtar Hayat Khan inaugurated Command and Control Center at Police Line while district police officer Buner Shah Hasan Khan along with staff accompanied him, on Friday.

IG visited the Yadgar e Shuhda and decorated a bouquet of flowers and offered pray for their high ranks in Jannat ul Firdous. He planted a sapling in the lawn of the police line

Daggar too. He was greeted by a well-dressed contingent of police on his arrival at the police line.

IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan got briefed from district police officer and in-charge command and control center on the communication of the cameras installed at the intersections across the district with the command and control center. He talked to media on the command and control center and also briefed media persons about peace situation in the province especially

in Buner.

IG while talking media persons said that there are some problems in some new merged districts but overall there is peace in the province. He claimed the popular Elum Ghar opening for tourists itself a good gesture of peace in the area. He also confirmed that the scenic and historical Elum Ghar will be made a tourist destination in near future as providing black top roads facilities from Buner and Swat districts are in progress.

Traditional *Jashan-e-Kaag* festival begins in Haripur

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: The traditional culture Festival "Jashan-e-Kaag", at village Kaag Jatti, District Haripur, got under way with national and international Tent-pegging enthusiastically participating. Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jihan inaugurated the festival with hundreds and thousands of spectators turned up and enjoyed the thrilling event.

Kaag Jatti is a place organizing such a wonderful Tent-pegging event under the aegis Regional Sports Officer Hazara with horse riders from all across the country participating. District Sports Officers Tauseef and Aqib and the whole staff engaged the players for this week-long activities.

Speaking on this occasion, Syed Fakhar Jihan appreciated RSO Haripur and District Sports Officers Abbottabad, Haripur for their hard work. He also announced construction of the ground for the said festival.

Member Provincial Assembly Adil Khan, DG Sports Abdul Nasir, Deputy Commissioner Haripur Muhammad Khan, and Director Sports Merged Areas Raziullah Khan Betni, other officials and

people participated in the festival. In the Kaag festival, traditional sports including javelin, horse riding, stone picking, gymnastic, poetic gathering, wrestling and Bulls Race are part of the overall festival. Cultural Festivity is the main means of keeping our traditions alive, said Advisor Fakhar Jahan. He also announced construction of a volleyball court in Haripur in the same village wherein the youngsters used to play.

These festivals, he said, are very important to keep our identity alive in the world. Each part of the province is a combination of a strong culture with respect to its unique characteristics, Syed Fakhar Jihan said. "We will try to preserve our culture for future generations," he added.

Syed Fakhar Jihan also observed horse riding and javelin competitions in the fair and welcomed the organization of this event to highlight the local culture. He also announced Rs. 50,000 for first position, Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 20,000 for the second and third place players, while in the double team event, Rs. 100,000 for the first place team, 60,000 for the second place team and 30,000 for the third place team.

He said that such festivals will be organized in

the future and such activities will be strongly encouraged. In his welcome address, RSO Hazara Ahmad Zaman thanked the people and players taking part in different events of the traditional festival. He said like every year, Kaag Festival in Jatti village is the annual feature wherein national and international Tent-Pegging players are taking part.

He thanked the Adviser to the Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhre Jahan for announcing construction of a separate land for the Kaag Festival and volleyball court in the same Kaag Jatti village. Ahmad Zaman also appreciated Deputy Commissioner Haripur Muhammad Khan, Assistant Commissioner Hamza and thanked all the district sports officers of various districts of Hazara Region for their joint efforts in the success of the annual Kaag Festival.

Earlier, soon after arrival to the festival, Malik Ijaz Khan presented traditional turbans to the guests, followed by recitation from Holy Quran by hafiz Aqib Khan, and National Anthem. There was a release of pigeons, balloons, followed by fireworks when announcing the start of the Kaag Festival-2024 by the chief guest.

World Ocean Day 2024: Awakening depts

Gul Hameed

ON 8th June 2024, the world celebrates the World Ocean Day under the theme of "Awakening New Depths" which makes it imperative for us to consider the significance of our oceans in supporting life on earth. It invites us to broaden our understanding of our life-sustaining oceans and calls for urgent and transformative actions for preservation of oceans and critically important ecosystems.

It is to be remembered that oceans and life on earth are inseparably tied together with one affecting the other. Half of oxygen in our atmosphere and protein for billions of people come from our oceans. Besides, maritime commerce rivets the world together providing jobs to millions of people worldwide and opportunities to transport commodities to every corner of the world. However, overpopulation and unsustainable practices have wreaked havoc and oceans are under a critical threat from harmful human activities. If we failed to restore our practices to sustainability, we cannot hope for any pros-

perous future for ourselves.

As human population is now 8.2 billion, the need for resources has also accelerated. With advancement in technology, we have become more efficient in extracting resources to cater for our increasing needs.

There is, however, an inverse relation between human progress and environment. Rapid exploitation of oceanic resources has led to marine pollution, overconsumption, habitat destruction and species loss. In the quest to cater for food and commodities for more than 8 billion people, humanity now faces three grave challenges: marine pollution, resource depletion and the critical need to diversify ocean economy through promotion of blue economy initiatives. Without taking tangible measures to address these issues, situation seems to be strained, rather hopeless.

As of marine pollution, once again, mounting pressure for resource exploration as well as mindless consumerism have pushed us to the verge of a dangerous precipice. Nearly 55000 cargo ships, about four thousand ports worldwide and over 1.5 million seafarers active on

any given day constitute modern day globalization. While they transport commodities from one corner of the world to another, this staggering seaborne activity also has a downside to it in the form of harmful emissions, ship generated waste and oil spills in the year 2022 alone, globally 858 million tons of CO2 emissions were recorded from shipping sector. Oil spills merit special mention here as these cause harm not only to ocean health itself, but also result in enormous loss of ocean life including seabirds etc.

The famous Deepwater Horizon accident in 2010 spilled about 205.8 million gallons of oil as well as 225,000 tons of methane gas into the Gulf of Mexico. Investigations estimated that this enormous oil spill resulted in killing of about 82000 birds of different species, 25900 marine mammals over 6000 turtles and an alarming number of fish.

Speaking further of marine pollution, dumping of plastics into the oceans has also been a mounting concern for ocean ecosystems and biodiversity. About eight million pieces of plastics enter our oceans every

day and about 1 to 2 million tons of plastics enter our oceans annually. It is pertinent to mention here that plastics are not bio-degradable material which means that they can survive up to a thousand years before nature can decompose them. This menace results in killing of fish, turtles and other small and large aquatic species including birds and mammals.

Other sources of marine pollution include discharge of industrial and domestic waste into the seas. Chemical pollutants from industries and sewage from homes enter into the sea and cause harm to sea water as well as to marine biodiversity and environment. Many may find it surprising to know that there is a garbage island in the Pacific Ocean speaking volumes about our unjust treatment of mother nature.

Overconsumption of aquatic resources, largely in the form of illegal fishing and overfishing using harmful fishing gear is another big concern of our times. Again it might be a surprise for many that nearly 80 percent of world fisheries have already been fully exploited and 90 percent of large fish includ-

ing sharks are now dead. Estimates show that without sustainable fishing practices, we may lose all the fish in the future.

Climate Change, similarly is another sword of Damocles hanging above our heads. Climate change is leading to rising sea levels, changes in water chemistry and weather patterns. These shifts in environment due to climate change have profound implications for our oceans. There is a dire need to minimize harmful anthropogenic activities including carbon emission and excessive use of fossil fuels in order to minimize global carbon imprint.

All this comes down very heavily on our oceans. These new limes demand new measures to safeguard our future. Survival necessitates sustainability and restraint and we still have a choice. In order to address the problems mentioned above, there is a need to strike a sound balance between consumption and resource replenishment, we need to diversify maritime economy through promotion of blue economy to feed 8.2 billion people on earth. Derived from UN's 14 Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) Blue Economy emphasizes sustainable use of oceanic resources. Some of blue economy initiatives include mariculture, aquaculture and environment friendly shipping, shipbuilding and shipbreaking practices.

There are many international protocols to prevent harm to environment and world oceans. We may say that they have made a substantial impact too, however, to reverse the damage done, more efforts are needed to save the world from an imminent catastrophe. COP26 and COP28 have concluded that still the state of political will across the world is lacking to do enough to minimize harm to our oceans and adopt sustainable practices for preservation of our environment.

As the world celebrates World Ocean Day-24, let us try our best to awaken new depths of oceans for a diversified and sustainable maritime economy; however, it first requires to awaken new depths of understanding and commitment in ourselves. By taking remedial actions on time, we can save our future generations from having to look back on us with disapproval and dissent.



US weapons parts used in Israeli attack on Gaza school

GAZA: Among the rubble of the United Nations-run al-Sardi school in central Gaza's Nuseirat refugee camp were the remnants of the weapons that killed at least 40 Palestinians. The Israeli attack gave the displaced people sheltering in the school no prior warning. Fourteen children were killed, as well as nine women and at least 74 other people were wounded.

The weapons used to carry out the attack - according to an Al Jazeera analysis of the fragments left behind - were US-made. An inertial measurement unit from the missile, used to aid with precision targeting, was manufactured by Honeywell, an American conglomerate that specialises in the design and delivery of sensors and guidance devices that are used in a variety of military weapons.

Al Jazeera's Sanad verification unit discovered that one of the fragments found in Nuseirat bore the manufacturer and category number HG1930BA06, tracing it back to Honeywell. HG1930 refers to the specific sensor manufactured by the company. The same part was found after the Israeli bombing of a Palestinian home in Shujayea, Gaza in 2014. The two pieces, in the most recent and the 2014 bombing, have the same manufacturer part number inscribed on them. "We see also other numbers like the MFR, HG 1930 and then BA 06.

This is the manufacturer part number that provides more specific details about the component of the missiles," Elijah Magnier, an independent military and political analyst, told Al Jazeera. "Now, if you look at the manufacturer identification ... it is a format

used by the aerospace and defence sector in the United States connected to Honeywell."

"Honeywell is known for the supply of IMU in the various military applications, and particularly the guided missiles that it has been providing to the Israeli Air Force since the year 2000." Al Jazeera has reached out to Honeywell for comment, but has yet to receive a response. Israeli attacks on UN spaces have become commonplace during Israel's war on Gaza, which has now killed more than 36,000 Palestinians.

The United States has been criticised for its role in supporting Israel, and particularly its continued supply of weapons. Major rights groups have repeatedly accused Israel of violating international law, and Israel is currently facing a genocide case at the International Court of Justice.

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor has also sought arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for their actions in Gaza. In May, a US government report found possible Israeli violations of international law in Gaza, but stopped short of identifying the violations that would end its continuing military aid. US President Joe Biden has threatened to stop the supply of some offensive weapons to Israel if it continues its Rafah operation, but has not carried out the threat, despite Israel pressing on in the area, which lies in southern Gaza. Central Gaza has most recently come under severe Israeli bombardment, which Palestinians have described as similar to the early days of the war. The attack on al-Sardi

school in Nuseirat is part of that assault. "The bombardment came from here," said Naim al-Dadah, a survivor of the attack. "We were sleeping. The flying metal reached the roof on the other side and all these nets landed over there, on the other side. What happened to us is beyond anyone's imagination." Other witnesses say the attack tore people to pieces. Survivors collected body parts, including those of many children, until the early hours of the morning. Weapon debris was scattered throughout shattered rooms and the blood-stained mattresses. Multiple rooms were targeted, though the building's structure remained intact. Israel's Arabic language spokesperson Avichay Adraee, claimed the UN school was targeted because it housed a Hamas command post and fighters involved in the Palestinian group's October 7 attack on Israel, which killed 1,139 people. He also claimed Israel took several steps to minimise the possibility of civilian casualties. The director of Hamas's government media office, Ismail al-Thawabta, rejected Israel's claims.

In April, the media outlet +972 Magazine reported that Israel uses an artificial intelligence-targeting system called Lavender in its Gaza-bombing campaign. The report quoted Israeli military officials who said that the system generates targets to kill. For low-level Hamas targets, the report said, the army was permitted to kill 15 to 20 civilians. An attack on a more senior Hamas official with the rank of battalion or brigade commander was used to justify the killing of more than 100 civilians. — Aljazeera

Fire at camp in Congo leaves dozens of families without shelter

GOMA, Congo (AP): A fire at a displacement camp in eastern Congo destroyed around 50 makeshift tents, leaving dozens of families without shelter, according to the United Nations, which said the fire is believed to have started during cooking at a camp.

The Muganga displaced people camp near the provincial capital Goma was hit by fire. It had already endured bomb attacks in early May, which killed at least 18 people and injured 32 others, a UN spokesman said. It wasn't clear what type of explosives were used in those attacks. Most of the victims were women and children. "While I was trying to empty the house of my valuables, I couldn't save my most precious items: my tokens to receive various humanitarian assistance," Anne Marie Nikuze, 60, a displaced person living in the camp with her children and grandchildren told The Associated Press. "The little we had has also gone up in flames," she said.

"We escaped the recent bomb attacks and now, it's the fire that has struck us," Furaha Mulema Mariam, 42, a mother of four, said. "The only luck is that it happened during the day, if it had been at night we would all be dead." The decades-long conflict in eastern Congo has produced one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with over 100 armed groups fighting in the region, most for land and control of mines with valuable minerals. Some are fighting to try to protect their communities. Many groups are accused of carrying out mass killings, rapes and other human rights violations. The violence has displaced about 7 million people, including thousands living in temporary camps like the one that was attacked last month. Many others are beyond the reach of aid.

Russia holds Frenchman accused of military spying

MOSCOW (BBC): Moscow says it has detained a French citizen accused of gathering information about Russia's military activities and failing to register as a "foreign agent". "Such information, if obtained by foreign sources, may be used against the security of the state," said Russia's Investigative Committee (SK).

It also posted footage purportedly showing the arrest of the unnamed male suspect in a Moscow cafe. French President Emmanuel Macron said the man was not working for France. A Switzerland-based NGO later said its adviser Laurent Vinatier was held in the Russian capital.

"We are aware that Laurent Vinatier, an adviser at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), has been detained in Russia," a spokesman for the non-government organisation told the AFP news agency. "We are working to get more details of the circumstances and to secure Laurent's release," he added. The NGO states its main activity is "to prevent and resolve armed conflicts around the world through mediation and discreet diplomacy".

President Macron said the detained man was "in no way someone who was working for France". Relations between Paris and Moscow are strained over Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In a statement, the SK said a criminal case had been opened, and the suspect would be charged in the "nearest future".

The Frenchman, it said, had repeatedly visited Russia for several years, holding meetings with Russian nationals. The 19-second video released by the SK shows a man, whose face is blurred, being detained by Russian law enforcement officers, before being led away to an SK van. The Frenchman is also accused of failing to submit documents needed for "inclusion in the register of foreign agents". Russia requires anyone who gets foreign support or is under influence from abroad to declare themselves such an agent.



PARIS: France's President Emmanuel Macron presenting an award to British World War II veteran, Christian Lamb, who helped to plan the D-Day landings.

US seeks to block Houthi revenues in possible threat to Yemen truce

WASHINGTON: The United States and its allies are increasingly seeking to block funds from reaching Yemen's Houthi group, a push that could jeopardise United Nations-led efforts to end the civil war in the country, Bloomberg News has reported.

According to the report published, Washington is looking to block major parts of a UN peace plan that the warring parties in Yemen adopted in December unless the Houthis cease their attacks on international shipping lanes. That includes \$1.5bn to be paid by Saudi Arabia to civil servants in Houthi-controlled areas, as per the UN roadmap, Bloomberg reported, citing an unidentified source.

An anonymous State Department official told Bloomberg that agreements tied to the UN plan can only proceed if the Houthis stop their attacks, while adding that the US still supports peace in Yemen. The Houthis have been attacking ships in the Red Sea and firing missiles and drones at Israeli targets in a show of support for Palestinians in Gaza, drawing anger from US President Joe Biden's administration. The US and its allies have been bombing Houthi targets in Yemen since January, but the military campaign has not deterred Houthi attacks. The Houthis pledged to continue targeting Israel-linked ships as long as the war on Gaza, which has killed at least 36,654 Palestinians, goes on. Most recently, the group said it targeted two vessels at Israel's Haifa port.

In March 2015, a Saudi-led military coalition launched what would become a years-long offensive in support of Yemen's internationally recognised government against the Iran-allied Houthis who had taken over the Yemeni capital, Sanaa. The fighting, which set off a major humanitarian crisis, turned into a protracted conflict, with the Houthis staying in control in Sanaa and other major population centres, and the Saudi-backed government remaining in the southern city of Aden. The warring parties in April 2022 agreed to a ceasefire, which expired in October of that year. But the fighting has largely been paused amid diplomatic efforts to find a lasting resolution to the conflict. The December UN roadmap included the "implementation of a nationwide ceasefire, payment of public sector salaries, resuming oil exports, opening of roads in Taiz and other parts of Yemen" and the easing of remaining restrictions on Sanaa Airport and Hodeidah Port.

Still, tensions between the Houthis and the internationally recognised government have remained high, especially over economic issues. The US push to squeeze the Houthis' finances risks exacerbating them further. In January, the Biden administration designated the Houthis as "global terrorists" over their Red Sea attacks, a move that enabled sweeping financial sanctions against the group. According to Bloomberg's report, the latest US effort comes as the Central Bank of Yemen,

which remains under the Saudi-backed government's control, moved to suspend operations at banks in Houthi-controlled areas, including Sanaa. The central bank's governor cited a failure to comply with orders for all financial institutions to move their headquarters to Aden.

The action is expected to stifle Houthi access to foreign currency and dry up the liquidity of the group. It was done with the support of the US and Western allies, Bloomberg reported, citing four people with direct knowledge of the situation. Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi had called the move against Sanaa-based banks an "American effort for the benefit of Israel", adding that the US is trying to drag Saudi Arabia into that initiative. "It's a dangerous game - a game of adding fuel to the fire," Al-Houthi said last month. The office of the UN's special office to Yemen, led by Hans Grundberg, has repeatedly said the Houthi Red Sea attacks and "related international military responses in Yemen" threaten the fragile truce in Yemen. After years of war, Yemen continues to face one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, according to the UN, with more than 18 million people in need of aid and more than 17 million food insecure. About 4.5 million people in the country remain displaced. Meanwhile, stop-start payments of public sector salaries have hastened the collapse of healthcare, sanitation, water and education services, according to the UN. — Aljazeera

S Africa's ANC will seek to form govt of national unity

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters): South Africa's African National Congress will invite other political parties to form a national unity government, its leader President Cyril Ramaphosa said, after it lost its majority for the first time in the democratic era.

The former liberation movement once led by Nelson Mandela has run South Africa since it swept to power in a 1994 election that marked the end of white minority rule. But it was punished for its chequered record in last week's vote. After a day-long meeting of the party's National Executive Committee in Johannesburg, Ramaphosa said the ANC had decided that a broad collaboration with other political forces was "the best option to move our country forward."

"Political parties should come together to forge a common future for our country," he told a news briefing. "We must act with speed to safeguard national unity, peace, stability, inclusive economic growth, non-racialism and non-sexism." Despite its worst ever showing in the May 29 vote, the ANC remains the country's largest party and will control 159 of the 400 seats in the new National Assembly. The election outcome has created a complex situation for Ramaphosa and his party.

The ANC's nearest rivals are the pro-business, white-led Democratic Alliance (DA), with 87 seats; the populist uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) led by former President Jacob Zuma, with 58; and the hard-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) with 39. "We will not preclude the possibility of working with any party so long as it is in the public interest," Ramaphosa said. He added that the ANC had already held constructive discussions with the EFF, DA, the smaller Inkatha Freedom Party, National Freedom Party and Patriotic Alliance. MK confirmed in a statement that it had been in contact with the ANC and a meeting was expected soon. Africa's most developed economy has been in decline for the past decade, with sluggish growth, high levels of poverty and unemployment, crumbling infrastructure and political corruption. "The purpose of a government of national unity must be first and foremost to tackle the pressing issues that South Africans want to be addressed," Ramaphosa said. The new parliament has to convene within two weeks of Sunday's results declaration and one of its first acts must be to elect the president. The constitutional deadline, which will fall on or near June 16, is putting pressure on the ANC and others to reach an agreement quickly.

ly. The DA, for its part, signalled it did not want to join a government that also included MK or the EFF. Any deal with the DA would be welcomed by financial markets but unpopular with many ANC supporters who regard it as the party of South Africa's wealthy white minority. A group of anti-DA protesters stood outside the hotel where the NEC meeting was taking place, holding placards reading "The DA wants to destroy the ANC" and "Not in our names".

On the other hand, a deal with the EFF or MK, which advocate nationalising mines and seizing land without compensation, would be more popular with some in the ANC base but risks tanking the economy, analysts say. Both the EFF and MK are led by former ANC figures who are at odds with the current leadership. Zuma in particular openly loathes Ramaphosa, and his party said after the election that it would not work with "the ANC of Ramaphosa". The ANC said it would not talk to anyone who demanded Ramaphosa's resignation as a condition of joining an alliance. Zuma was forced to quit as president in 2018 after a series of corruption scandals. He was jailed for contempt of court after refusing to participate in an inquiry into corruption, a decision that barred him from running for parliament.

Around 80 migrants rescued in English Channel

LONDON (AP): Around 80 migrants were rescued at sea by British authorities after a small boat got into difficulty while crossing the English Channel from France. The coastguard confirmed that it scrambled two helicopters after the incident while the Royal National Lifeboat Institution dispatched lifeboats.

"The search has now concluded with all people accounted for and back on land," a spokesperson for the coastguard said. The issue of how to stop migrants making the dangerous crossing across the

Channel is one of the main issues during Britain's general election campaign. Though the Conservative government has talked tough on limiting the migrants, the numbers making the crossing are rising. The Home Office said 34 people made the journey in one boat, taking the provisional total number of crossings for the year so far to 10,779. This is up 42% on the number recorded this time last year and 8% higher than at the same point in 2022. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged to "stop the boats" when he took the top

job in Oct. 2022 and is promoting his contentious deal to send people who arrive in small boats on a one-way trip to Rwanda. Sunak says the Rwanda plan will act as a deterrent and has indicated the deportation flights would begin in July - after the election on July 4.

Keir Starmer, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, has said he will scrap the scheme, describing it as a gimmick, if he becomes prime minister. Opinion polls show Labour way ahead of the Conservatives at the moment, with four weeks to go to polling day.

Russian strikes and filthy water: A year after Ukraine dam blast

KYIV (AFP): Standing in what remains of her house, partially destroyed by a Russian artillery strike, Raisa Abramtseva painted a bleak picture of her daily life in southern Ukraine's Kherson region. "Nowhere to live, no water," she said, summarising the day-to-day in her village of Novovorontsovka, which faces regular Russian bombardments and is still suffering from the fallout of the destruction of the Kakhovka dam one year ago. In the early hours of 6 June 2023, the massive Soviet-era dam was blown up, pouring billions of litres of water downstream and flooding dozens of villages on the banks of the vast Dnipro river. Kyiv said Russia, whose troops controlled the dam at the time, blew it up to thwart a Ukrainian counter-offensive. Moscow blamed Ukraine.

Dozens were killed in the floods that followed the blast, which has also caused vast and likely permanent environmental damage to southern Ukraine. Novovorontsovka, which lies upstream from the dam on the banks of the Kakhovka reservoir, faces the opposite problem to settlements downstream: a lack of previously plentiful water. Reservoir levels dropped by almost 20 metres, said Sergiy Pylypenko, head of the municipal company responsible for water supplies.

The systems they once used to collect water no longer work. "And then there are the hostilities, which completely destroyed one of our pumping stations," he added. Carrying out repair work on the shores of the reservoir -- a natural front line between Ukrainian forces on the western bank and Russians entrenched on the east -- is too dangerous. "The crew and the equipment involved will not live long," Pylypenko said.

Abramtseva, 68, is just one of the hundreds of thousands of people that the environment ministry estimated last year had fully or partially lost access to clean drinking water, in what the ministry has called "a direct danger to their lives and health." Leaning on a walking stick and followed by a grey kitten, Abramtseva said she had been determined to come back to the village despite the challenges. She had left after the Russian strike on her house in 2022 but soon returned, and now

lives in a nearby building that was renovated on her shoestring budget and lacks a proper ceiling. Even though her new home resembles a "shed," she said she had felt compelled to return.

"I wanted to go home," she told AFP. Getting clean drinking water to Abramtseva and others is no small feat. A lorry despatched by the authorities snakes around the village, offering people to buy up their water tanks for a fee. The driver must avoid being targeted by Russian drones that often lurk overhead, ready to drop grenades and explosives at any moment. Downstream of the dam, problems remain in the Korabel district of Kherson, an island to the south of the city that was completely flooded. The waters have receded but the impact can be seen whenever taps are turned on. "The water is brown," said Natalia Biryuk, 67.

Power cuts are also frequent -- the result of two years of Russian attacks on Ukrainian energy facilities. "Sometimes there is light, sometimes not," she added. "There is nothing good here. And they shoot (at us) everyday." Some on the

island -- just six kilometres (4 miles) from Russian troops -- tried to put on a brave face. "Our neighbourhood is still alive," local resident Valery Biryukov, 67, told AFP. "But the people aren't here anymore. They've all left," he conceded. Silence hung in the air on the streets of Korabel.

The few who ventured outside were mostly elderly pensioners. Most of the area's pre-war residents have left. Lyudmila Batovrina, a 63-year-old wearing a t-shirt with a shiny Louis Vuitton logo, says only seven of the 40 apartments in her building are occupied. Next to a bomb shelter, a handful of street vendors were selling strawberries and homemade yoghurts and cheese. It is one of the last remaining options for shopping. There are no banks, schools and hardly any doctors, residents said. "They come out here to buy something and then run home," said Lyudmila Kyrzhnyr, a 55-year old vegetable seller. After the floods she had to throw everything out of her ground-floor apartment. Some 12 months later, it still smells of mould, she said. The water from the taps also "stinks."

political prisoners behind bars in the country, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski. The UN report criticized conditions in Belarusian jails and said prisoners are subjected to "torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in places of detention." Political prisoners are particularly singled out, the report said, as they are reportedly made to wear a special yellow mark, are often placed in solitary confinement and are deprived of communication with the

outside world. President Alexander Lukashenko led a harsh crackdown against his critics in 2020 when he declared himself the winner of an election widely dismissed by the Belarusian opposition and the West as fraudulent. The UN report said authorities in Belarus have carried out a "targeted eradication" of civil society in Belarus since Lukashenko's disputed election. "The human rights situation in Belarus remains extremely preoccupying" and requires sustained attention, the report said.

UN calls on Belarus to investigate death of political prisoners

TALLINN (AP): United Nations special representatives on human rights have called on Belarusian authorities to investigate the torture and deaths of political prisoners. A report produced by the UN special rapporteur for Belarus says five people who have died in custody in Belarus were convicted on politically motivated charges.

The report noted that none of the deceased underwent an autopsy and said that the fact the prisoners died while in jail "creates a presumption of arbitrary

deprivation of life by State authorities." It called on Belarusian authorities to launch "prompt, effective, impartial and transparent investigations into all deaths in custody." The UN human rights advocates said they were particularly concerned about several Belarusian opposition politicians, lawyers and activists who are currently in prison and whose whereabouts have not been known for more than a year. According to the Viasna human rights center, there are currently 1,401

political prisoners behind bars in the country, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski.

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The Frontier Post

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

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Doors opening for Taliban

IN a significant development, the United Nations Security Council has temporarily lifted the travel ban on four high-ranking officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. This exemption, specifically granted for travel to Saudi Arabia, allows these officials to perform Hajj. Among those who have been granted this leeway are the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, the acting Minister of Interior, the Director-General of Intelligence, and the acting Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs. This move, seemingly benign on the surface, holds deeper geopolitical implications, suggesting a shift in international attitudes towards the Taliban.

The exemption approved by the UN Security Council Committee on June 5, 2024, under resolution 1988 (2011), includes Abdul Kabir Mohammad Jan, Abdul-Haq Wassiq, Noor Mohammad Saqib, and Sirajuddin Jallaloudine Haqqani. The stated purpose of their travel is to perform the religious pilgrimage, Hajj. This action, however, cannot be viewed in isolation but rather as a piece of a broader strategy that seems to be unfolding with the tacit approval of the United States.

This decision follows previous instances where the US State Department advised that sanctioned members of the Islamic Emirate could travel if granted exemptions by the United Nations. The strategic importance of this stance is hard to miss. It implies a subtle but definitive shift in the US approach towards the Taliban, hinting at an underlying agenda that involves bringing the Taliban closer to the US, possibly to leverage them in future geopolitical maneuvers.

America's evolving stance towards the Taliban suggests a calculated move to stabilize relations with the group. This relationship, built on a complex web of interests, could potentially be aimed at using the Taliban to counterbalance or exert pressure on other regional powers. By fostering a working relationship with the Taliban, the US might be looking to create a new axis of influence in the region, which could be instrumental in its broader strategic objectives.

Pakistan, sharing a border with Afghanistan, must keenly observe these developments. The Taliban's rise to power and their increasing legitimacy on the international stage could have significant implications for regional security and political dynamics. It is imperative for Pakistan to engage with the Taliban-led government in a balanced and pragmatic manner, ensuring that its own national interests are safeguarded while contributing to regional stability.

Adding an intriguing layer to this narrative, a few months ago, a journalist from Voice of America's Afghan news service, Ashna, posed a question to the US State Department spokesperson about the possibility of transferring helicopters stationed in Uzbekistan to Afghanistan. This query, from a US government-funded entity, indirectly suggested that these military assets should be handed over to the Taliban. Such interactions indicate a broader, more complex engagement strategy that the US might be employing, aimed at empowering the Taliban in a controlled manner.

The lifting of travel bans and the potential transfer of military assets are clear indicators that the Taliban are gaining strength and legitimacy, particularly under the Biden administration. This empowerment is not just a consequence of the Taliban's internal consolidation but also a result of external facilitation. The Biden administration's policies appear to be paving the way for the Taliban to emerge as a significant player in the region.

It is essential to recognize that the UN Security Council's exemptions are not merely bureaucratic formalities but part of a broader geopolitical chess game. The sanctioned interim government officials, though ostensibly traveling for religious purposes, are being subtly integrated into the global political framework. This gradual normalization and acceptance could have far-reaching consequences, particularly for neighboring countries like Pakistan, which must navigate this evolving landscape with caution and strategic foresight.

Military experts argue that the negative effects of sanctions are felt more by the populace of Afghanistan than by the officials themselves. The ultimate goal of these sanctions, they assert, is to leverage political power and strategic interests. The recent exemptions could be seen as an attempt to engage the Taliban in a dialogue that aligns with broader geopolitical interests.

As the Taliban continue to gain international legitimacy, it is clear that their ascendancy is being facilitated, if not directly supported, by key international players, including the United States. The implications of this support are profound. It suggests a recalibration of US foreign policy in the region, potentially aimed at creating a counterweight to other powers and stabilizing Afghanistan through a regime that it can influence and engage with more effectively.

In conclusion, the Taliban are indeed becoming stronger, and this strengthening is taking place under the Biden administration. This development is not merely a result of the Taliban's internal dynamics but is significantly influenced by external geopolitical strategies. As the doors open for the Taliban, regional actors, particularly Pakistan, must remain vigilant and strategically astute, balancing their engagements to ensure national and regional stability. The future landscape of South Asia could be profoundly shaped by these emerging dynamics, with the Taliban playing a central role under the evolving international order.

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Beijing and Islamabad building a community with a shared future

Muhammad Asif Noor

THE ongoing five-day visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China from Tuesday marks a significant moment in the longstanding and robust partnership between the two countries. This visit, the first by Sharif since the new Pakistani government took office, underscores the deep-rooted ties and strategic cooperation that characterize the relationship between the two neighbors.

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, championed by China, finds a tangible embodiment in its relationship with Pakistan, reflecting a partnership built on mutual respect, strategic alignment, and shared aspirations for regional and global peace and prosperity.

Given the significance of Sharif's visit, it is important to consider the historical context and the strategic depth of China-Pakistan relations. Over the years, Sino-Pakistani relations have evolved into an "all-weather strategic cooperative partnership", a term that aptly captures the essence of their ties. Whether in times of peace or crisis, China and Pakistan have stood by each other, demonstrating mutual support and cooperation. Sharif's visit therefore is expected to further consolidate this partnership, with both sides poised to discuss a range of issues crucial to bilateral relations as well as regional stability.

One of the key aspects of Sharif's visit is the discussion on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative. Launched in 2013, the CPEC has been instrumental in transforming Pakistan's economic landscape. It has led to significant infrastructure development, including the construction and development of roads, highways, power plants and ports, which are aimed at addressing Pakistan's critical energy shortage and improving connectivity.

During the visit, both sides are likely to explore ways to further upgrade and expand CPEC, ensuring that it continues to con-

tribute to Pakistan's economic growth, industrialization and sustainable development.

In addition to infrastructure, the focus will also be on enhancing cooperation in other key areas such as industry, agriculture, new energy and information and communications technology. China's commitment to sharing its technological advancements and expertise with Pakistan is a testament to the collaborative

highlighted the importance of enhanced security measures to protect both Chinese and Pakistani citizens involved in CPEC projects.

Both countries are committed to deepening cooperation in the fight against terrorism, ensuring that such incidents do not derail their collaborative efforts. China's unwavering support for Pakistan's fight against terrorism and its efforts to maintain regional stability are indicative of

reflect their commitment to upholding fairness and justice on global issues.

Sharif's visit is also expected to strengthen people-to-people relations between the two countries, which are a cornerstone of China-Pakistan relations. Cultural exchanges, educational collaboration and tourism are areas that hold immense potential for deepening mutual understanding and friendship between the people of the two countries. These interactions not only foster goodwill but also build a strong foundation for long-term cooperation. And the emphasis on cultural and educational exchanges is a testament to the holistic approach that both countries adopt in nurturing their relationship.

As a matter of fact, the significance of Sharif's ongoing visit extends beyond bilateral cooperation. It is a reaffirmation of the strategic importance that both countries place on their relationship. The high-level meetings scheduled during Sharif's visit will provide an opportunity for the two sides to engage in comprehensive and in-depth strategic communication. Such interactions are essential for aligning the two countries' visions and strategies, and ensuring their partnership continues to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Moreover, this visit is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of China-Pakistan relations. Despite the challenges posed by global and regional issues and the growing uncertainties, created by, among other things, the COVID-19 pandemic and terrorism, both countries have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt to the changing times and cooperate on critical issues. The successful implementation of CPEC projects during these challenging times is a reflection of the two countries' commitment and strategic foresight. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind is best exemplified by the ironclad partnership between China and Pakistan, a partnership that continues to thrive and evolve, bringing greater benefits to both countries and their peoples.

The recent terrorist attacks targeting Chinese nationals in Pakistan have highlighted the importance of enhanced security measures to protect both Chinese and Pakistani citizens involved in CPEC projects. Both countries are committed to deepening cooperation in the fight against terrorism, ensuring that such incidents do not derail their collaborative efforts. China's unwavering support for Pakistan's fight against terrorism and its efforts to maintain regional stability are indicative of the strong trust and strategic alignment between the two countries. Sharif's visit to China comes at a time when regional and global dynamics are rapidly evolving. The geopolitical landscape in South Asia is marked by complexities and challenges, and the China-Pakistan partnership plays a crucial role in maintaining regional stability.

spirit that underpins their relationship. This cooperation is aimed at not only boosting economic growth but also fostering innovation and sustainable development in Pakistan.

In fact, by aligning their development strategies, China and Pakistan are setting an example of how strategic partnerships can drive progress and prosperity.

Security cooperation is another crucial area that will be high on the agenda during Sharif's visit to China. The recent terrorist attacks targeting Chinese nationals in Pakistan have

the strong trust and strategic alignment between the two countries.

Sharif's visit to China comes at a time when regional and global dynamics are rapidly evolving. The geopolitical landscape in South Asia is marked by complexities and challenges, and the China-Pakistan partnership plays a crucial role in maintaining regional stability. Both countries share a common vision for peace and development, and their coordinated efforts in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Will Israel move toward 2030, or stay stuck in 1967?

Faisal J. Abbas

IN case you missed the headline, or saw it but thought you might have misread it, allow me to repeat: the Middle East - despite all its woes, wars and wounds - still has a chance to "change for the better." These enthusiastic words are not mine, but are rather what the US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Michael Ratney, repeatedly told Arab News in an exclusive interview this week with our flagship talk show "Frankly Speaking."

The ambassador acknowledged that the word "historic" was a cliché, but still insisted on using it to describe a proposed new Saudi-US pact that would give birth to a written security agreement, normalize ties, integrate Israel into the region and guarantee Palestinians a state. "All the elements ... are of extraordinary value," he said. "The real value is taking it all together." Such comments from a US ambassador are a big thing, which is why they were quickly translated into Arabic and widely shared online. Moreover, Ratney is not just any ambassador: before Riyadh, he served in the US Embassy in Israel and, in total, has devoted nearly three decades to trying to resolve Middle Eastern conflicts and counter violent extremism.

A few days after our interview, US President Joe Biden said it was time for the Gaza war to end and laid out the details of a reasonable three-phase peace plan: an initial six-week ceasefire for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, negotiations for a permanent end to all hostilities, and finally the reconstruction of the devastated Gaza Strip. Some, including me, might argue that this is all too little, too late, but let's be realistic too: it is better late than never.

Those who burn American flags and think that by boycotting hamburgers and caramel lattes they are serving the Palestinian cause are delusional if they believe that any peace deal or regional stability can be achieved without the deployment of the carrots and sticks available only to the US. The fact is, America remains the world's most significant superpower and it alone has leverage over Israel.

On the subject of Israel, eight months after this war began, all that Benjamin Netanyahu and his war Cabinet have managed to achieve is a human-made famine, the loss of approaching 40,000 Palestinian lives - mostly civilians, women and children - and the reduction of Gaza's infrastructure to debris and rubble. They have achieved none of their stated war aims: the hostages remain in captivity, Israel is no safer and, as for eradicating Hamas - well, the Israeli prime minister and his right-wing extremist government may well have sown the seeds and applied the fertilizer that will grow into Hamas 2.0 in generations to come.

That would be nothing new for Netanyahu: in fact, it would be a continu-

ation of his policy for the past 16 years, which has sought to empower Hamas and discredit the legitimate Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Again, don't take my word for it but take it from Tal Schneider, The Times of Israel columnist who wrote an op-ed published the day after the Oct. 7 attack on Israel under the headline: "For years, Netanyahu propped up Hamas. Now it's blown up in our faces."

That newspaper also reported recently that Saudi Arabia was removing antisemitic materials from educational curriculums. This should not be surprising; it is not new and the Kingdom's Education Ministry seldom gets credit for the incredible work done so far. The truth is that Saudi reforms have been underway since 2016 and the Kingdom is ensuring that its entire ecosystem reflects its long-standing point of view - which is that the issue with Israel is not religious, it is a land dispute and, once it is resolved, there will be recognition, reconciliation and rewards for both sides.

This newspaper, for example, has published reports celebrating Judaism as part and parcel of our social fabric as Arabs; we were the first to wish Jews "Shana Tova," or happy new year; and we have published interviews and columns by leading rabbis and community leaders from Ronald Lauder to Deborah Lipstadt, Biden's envoy for combating antisemitism. In fact, it is the actions and rhetoric on the Israeli side that need to be monitored and accounted for.

As The New York Times writer Tom Friedman put it in a column published last month, Saudi Arabia and Israel are now "trading places" in terms of how they are viewed by the US. While elected Israeli officials are calling for Gaza to be nuked and citing biblical references that they claim justify the killing of women, children and even animals, Saudi officials are pushing for peace, investing in artificial intelligence and sending the first female Arab Muslim astronaut into space. With our compass set to 2030, Saudi Arabia is determined to keep progressing and long-time partners such as the US are invited to be part of the journey.

Israel, too, has a pending invitation and could benefit greatly from being part of the 2030 club. Saudi Arabia offers legitimacy and Arab/Muslim world recognition, along with its huge diplomatic weight and vast international relations network to support the legitimate Palestinian Authority in being a peaceful and prosperous neighbor to Israel - which simply has to choose between being stuck in 1967 or boarding the bullet train toward 2030 with the rest of us. All Israel needs to do is end the hostilities, trust in Biden's peace plan and recognize that only by allowing a legitimate Palestinian state to exist can it guarantee its security and end its isolation, which is increasing on a daily basis.

Arab News

Silent settler coup that took over Israel

Ross Anderson

TRICKY business, democracy. For confirmation of that, if he were still alive we could ask Edmund Burke, the 18th-century Anglo-Irish statesman and philosopher who did much to establish the tenets of modern conservatism. Burke is no longer with us, obviously, but fortunately his words live on. And what words they are: his maiden speech in the House of Commons in 1765 was "spoken in such a manner as to stop the mouths of all Europe," according to William Pitt the Elder.

In November 1774, having been elected member of Parliament for the Bristol constituency in southwest England, Burke delivered what became known as the "Speech to the Electors of Bristol at the Conclusion of the Poll," in which he told them what they might expect of him as he carried out his duties. Having promised voters that their views would

always carry great weight with him, Burke then gave it to them with both barrels. An MP's "unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living," he said. And in case his meaning was unclear, he continued: "Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

In political science terminology, Burke was rejecting the constituent-imperative form of democracy in favor of the representative mandate version. In plain English, he told voters: "If you think I'm going to Westminster to do your bidding, you have another think coming." For 250 years, Burke's brave words have been used by democratic idealists in support of the "perfect" representative assembly, populated by people of intelligence and integrity beholden to no vested

interests, and therefore empowered to enact laws for the benefit of the whole of society rather than only those who elected them.

It is a noble thought. However, such idealists rarely mention what happened to Burke. What he had done, in effect, was to offer the voters of Bristol a choice at any subsequent election: either elect an MP who would do what they told him or elect an MP who would do what he thought was right. Overwhelmingly, at the next general election in 1760, they opted for the former and the hapless Burke was booted out of office. Now, you may think there is little in common between Burke, a man of profound wisdom, erudition and integrity, and the shameless reprobate currently masquerading as the prime minister of Israel. In fact, they are connected by a 250-year-old historical thread. Leaving aside for now his

venality, his corruption and his bloody-minded determination to cling on to power and office like some sort of malign barnacle regardless of the damage caused to other people and his own country, Benjamin Netanyahu - like Burke before him - is in hock to the people who elected him. And they have made it crystal clear what it is they expect him to do.

Not only that, but they have also elected a couple of enforcers to hold Netanyahu's feet to the fire should his resolve weaken, in the form of Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich. Of the two, Ben-Gvir is the pantomime clown. He is a man who once hung a portrait on his living-room wall of the Jewish extremist mass murderer Baruch Goldstein and then wondered why he was arrested and convicted of inciting support for terrorism. Smotrich is another matter altogether. He is that most

dangerous of creatures - an intelligent fundamentalist religious bigot.

While Ben-Gvir craves and obtains publicity with his interminable, provocative stunt marches through Palestinian areas of Jerusalem, Smotrich is quietly using his ministerial power to get on with his life's work: in his own words, this is "flooding the areas of Judea and Samaria with settlements and Jewish settlers. When this happens, the Palestinians are supposed to understand that they have no chance to get a state of their own, and they would have to choose between one of the three options - a life of subjugation under Israeli rule, emigration, or a martyr's death." It is easy to be appalled by people such as Smotrich, Ben-Gvir and Netanyahu, but they are easy targets, low-hanging fruit. Israel's tragedy, I think, is not that such grotesque figures hold public office: as Burke showed, elected representatives can swiftly be unelect-

ed. My question is, what possessed the people of Israel to elect them in the first place?

Part of the answer may lie in a devastating report in The New York Times last month, entitled "The Unpunished: How Extremists Took Over Israel." It describes "a sometimes criminal nationalistic movement that has been allowed to operate with impunity and gradually move from the fringes to the mainstream of Israeli society ... how voices within the government that objected to the condoning of settler violence were silenced and discredited ... and how the occupation came to threaten the integrity of Israel's democracy." In other words, in a silent coup, Israel has effectively been taken over by the settler movement, using the tools of the country's own democracy to do it. It has been a coup a long time in the making and I fear it will take a great deal more than the removal from office of Netanyahu to reverse it.

How does the US antiwar movement today differ from that of 1967-1968?

Jim Laurie

SCHOOLS are out, summer vacations fixed. But if the past is any guide to the future, United States university campuses come autumn will again erupt in demonstrations with inevitable violence and arrests if Israel continues its war on Gaza.

I covered my first antiwar demonstration on October 21, 1967. Then a 19-year-old cub reporter for a local Washington, DC, radio station, I marched with nearly 100,000 people across the Arlington Memorial Bridge into Virginia and on to the Pentagon. They were a mixed lot. Most just wanted to end the Vietnam War and bring home the more than 380,000 soldiers fighting there. But some seemed to be rooting for the Vietnamese communists to win. A 29-year-old protest leader named Walter Teague, who I came to know, carried a Viet Cong flag. Famed novelist Norman Mailer later profiled Teague in his book *Armies of the Night*, calling him a longtime "revolutionary" who believed in the communist "liberation" of Vietnam.

I watched US marshals man-handle 700 young people and take them into custody outside the doors of the Pentagon that night. Two years later, I left the US to report the war from Vietnam.

Antiwar activists, like Teague, carrying their Viet Cong flags, gave the administrations of President Lyndon B Johnson and Richard Nixon an excuse to attack the protesters. It allowed them to claim all demonstrators were communist sympathisers who wanted the enemy to win.

Spin ahead 56 years to another generation carrying out antiwar protests in a dozen US cities and on university campuses during the past few months. If the protesters of 1967-1968 were seen as communist sympathisers, those who protest Israel's war in Gaza today are portrayed as anti-Semites and terrorist sympathisers. Radical right Republicans and a segment of the Israel lobby define the narrative, pushing a conflated logic.

The attacks on today's antiwar demonstrators are magnified in the era of social media and a much more radicalised traditional media. On May 19, Rupert Murdoch's New York Post ran a story with the headline "Hamas flag proudly waved at NYC anti-Israel demonstration: 'Marching for terrorists'".

Pictures of a single masked figure waving a Hamas flag accompanied the article. "A pro-terror protester proudly waved the Hamas flag at a weekend rally in Brooklyn - in a shocking and disturbing display of solidarity with terrorists," the Post said. Police moved in, disbanded the protest and arrested a dozen men who appeared to have participated in a radical offshoot of a series of daylong peaceful demonstrations across Brooklyn. When I reached out to one of those who had marched from the Bay Ridge neighbourhood to the Brooklyn Bridge, he said: "I saw no Hamas flags. I was among about 10,000 people calling on Israel to stop the war in Gaza. There were Jews among our marchers, even Hasidic Jews who for very different reasons hate the [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu government. All just wanted a ceasefire, an end to war."

On May 23, a Republican-led congressional committee summoned three university presidents to question them, or rather lambast them, for allowing anti-Semitism to spread on college campuses. A North Carolina congresswoman named Virginia Foxx chaired the session and led the attack.

"Suddenly over the course of weeks, ... universities have burst into anti-Semitic chaos, ... a powder keg of pro-terror campus fervour, a shocking spectacle for the American public," Foxx read in her opening statement. While the three college presidents defended their actions in trying to end campus protests peacefully without police intervention, none questioned the committee's stated

premise.

Fox News amplified the exchange: "Congressional hearings accuse university presidents of capitulating to 'antisemitic, pro-terror encampment organisers'". Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, perhaps the most influential Jewish lobbying group in America, helped set the stage for the narrative by broadening the definition of anti-Semitism in early 2022. He criticised those, including Jews, who spoke in opposition to the Israeli or 'Zionist' state. He declared: "Anti-Zionism IS anti-Semitism."

It has now become difficult to condemn Israeli actions or the Netanyahu government without being labelled an anti-Semite. With their anti-Zionist slogans and pro-Palestinian sympathies, young people in their encampments at Columbia University in New York or the University of California in Los Angeles had put targets on their backs.

The roots of their protests lay in demands to end Israeli military action against Gaza and US government support for it, to stand up for Palestinian rights and to end their suffering. No, the students said, they had not forgotten about the Hamas atrocities of October 7. Were there among them those who held a bias against Jews? Possibly. But Jewish students helped organise sit-ins and were most vocal in denouncing the false equivalency of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

Several Jewish students at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, walked out of a speech this year by Greenblatt. They denounced him for embracing "political Zionism". Such an ideology, they argued, had "negative impacts on the lives of millions". The students wrote that such Zionism "cannot be separated from the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948, the sustained violence for the last 75-plus years or the current genocide in Gaza." Whatever the beliefs of

the protesters, they have become, as their parents or grandparents had been in the 1960s, a critical element in a close and bitter presidential campaign.

The radical right aligned with Christian fundamentalists and led by former President Donald Trump now claim to be the true defenders of Israel. They embraced Netanyahu's denunciation of student demonstrations in April. They predictably condemned the increasingly large percentage of progressives and Democrats who identify themselves as antiwar and pro-Palestinian rights.

The senior leader of the progressives, 82-year-old Senator Bernie Sanders, came out swinging last month. "No, Mr Netanyahu, it is not anti-Semitic or pro-Hamas to point out that in a little over six months, your extremist government has killed 34,000 Palestinians." "I am a Jew whose father's family was wiped out by Hitler," Sanders continued, "and I find it outrageous that Netanyahu wants to hide outrageous military behaviour behind the terrible image of anti-Semitism."

The Gaza war puts US President Joe Biden in a lose-lose position. Sanders warned Biden last month that he may lose young voters. Pollsters reported he may have already lost the Palestinian-American vote in the key battleground state of Michigan. He may also be in danger of losing critical older Jewish voters in Pennsylvania, another battleground state in November's presidential election. Unlike 56 years ago, the 2024 election will not be decided by the fractures caused by a foreign war alone. The fractures in today's America are arguably deeper and more dangerous. But what is remarkable in 21st century America is the ease with which political operatives and their social and mass media supporters set the narrative, distort facts and create false equivalencies to the detriment of all.

Aljazeera

The real winner of Russia's war? FSB

Andrei Kalitin

EXACTLY 25 years ago, the man widely regarded as President Vladimir Putin's political instructor was hiding in Paris from the Russian police. Anatoly Sobchak, the former mayor of St. Petersburg, was suspected of corruption and was helped to leave Russia on a Finnish private jet by KGB lieutenant colonel Vladimir Putin, who had just been appointed director of Russia's FSB.

When I interviewed him on my program "Top Secret", Sobchak seemed a bit confused and unable to imagine the future. But that evening in the lobby of the Hôtel Ambassadeur we talked about the future. As we were leaving, Sobchak said to me, "I understand why Yeltsin chose Putin as his successor - he would never betray you. But I also understand that once he has power, Putin will never give it back to anyone." The meaning of these words was then understood by very few people, but Sobchak did not hope to be heard.

A quarter of a century later, Vladimir Putin's supporters and critics understand exactly what Sobchak meant. Putin has only one successor - himself. The transition of power, about which so many political scientists both in Russia and abroad have speculated, ended in the elections this March. If Putin still holds power in 2036 - which the sham 2020 referendum enabled him to do - he will surpass Josef Stalin and Catherine the Great to become the longest-ruling leader of Russia. After the outbreak of war with Ukraine, when Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was asked whether Putin consulted with him, he replied, "Putin has three advisers - Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great and Catherine the Great."

Having placed himself on the level of the tsars, Putin remembers that power changed only after the monarch's death. To continue this political tradition, however, two conditions must be met. The tsar must be reliably protected from assassination and must never give up the throne himself. When Putin became president in the spring of 2000, at a closed board meeting of the Russian FSB, he said from the podium: "The KGB's task of infiltrating the Russian government has been accomplished." It is unclear whether he was joking or serious.

But from that moment on, the influence of the FSB on all the processes taking place in the country grew every year. Until May of this year, the only state institution that was not subject to the FSB's influence was the army. Putin considered the military to be the most important pillar of

power, but he never trusted it 100%.

When Putin approached Sergei Shoigu in November 2012 to take over as defense minister, Shoigu set one condition: that there be no FSB officers around him in the army leadership. Putin agreed, receiving in return a military leadership personally loyal to him. But to balance controlled conflicts within the Defense Ministry, Putin appointed General Valery Gerasimov, considered a close ally of Shoigu, to the post of Chief of the General Staff in the same fall of 2012. The time of the security services, for whom control over the army and its budgets was a cherished dream, had not yet arrived. It was to come later.

Until February 2022, there was a conditional truce between the influential clans in the Russian government. But two years ago, the FSB, whose reports (as well as those of the military) had convinced Putin that victory in Ukraine would be easy, opened its own personal front - an internal one. The FSB's task was to take control of all spheres of life in Russia, to destroy the opposition and its leaders, to introduce censorship, to subjugate the industrial sector, financial institutions, culture and, of course, the military. After Putin's victory in the heavily corrupt presidential election, the Chekists went on the offensive. As journalists at Agentstvo calculated, 21 criminal cases were opened against officials and heads of state companies between March and April alone. Not only was Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov arrested, but also Gennady Sakharov, an executive at the state Rosatom corporation, and Igor Andreev, vice president of Rossiya Bank. The truce among the elites is over.

But despite what the Kremlin says, this is not a fight against corruption. It is a fight for power. By the beginning of Putin's fifth term, the FSB had won. Officials from the Culture Ministry can tell you that all films are reviewed by two plainclothes officers before a rental certificate is issued. Raw materials businessmen will tell you how the new board of directors includes undercover FSB officers. The work of the presidential administration is controlled by the FSB's Second Service (that combats terrorism and "protects the constitutional order"), and the Security Council is staffed only by security officers. To paraphrase Putin's quote from 2000, Lubyanka has infiltrated the country's hierarchy of power more successfully than at any other point in history.

Therefore, it was not difficult for the FSB to lobby for

its employees to be exempt from military service, remaining to guard the political comfort of the regime in the rear. This decision caused serious irritation among the Defense Ministry and other institutions of power. But Putin sided with his former colleagues from the FSB, whom the historian of special services Andrei Soldatov once called "the new nobility." Historically, the Russian nobility was a military class. During the War of 1812, when the Russian army was defending its country rather than attacking a neighbor, representatives of the nobility led the fight. Now, the elites from the FSB, Interior Ministry, Federal Penitentiary Service, and special services remain at the rear.

Their real task in the conditions of the military-political "special operation" is not to protect the people, but to secure the regime. But in fulfilling this task, there is an inevitable temptation for the aforementioned elites to become an integral part of the state, and in the long run - to lead it. However, this battle of the bulldogs in Moscow may deal the Kremlin a blow far more severe than the drones and missiles coming from Ukraine. The Russian system of political power is now organized in such a way that any bias in the direction of one of the clans can lead to the collapse of the pyramid or a coup by the siloviki.

And it is not by chance that today, Mikhail Khodorkovsky wrote that in 1996 Russia did not face a choice between Yeltsin and Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist Party candidate. The choice was between electing Yeltsin and declaring a state of emergency. The FSB and FSO were in favor of a state of emergency that would have turned Yeltsin into a puppet of the security services. "By defending the rejection of the state of emergency, we postponed the FSB's rise to power for 8-12 years." Putin's new term is just beginning. It will take place under the full control of the FSB, whose presence in government at all levels is growing constantly. Data suggests that in the last years of the Soviet Union, only 3% of officials in top government positions were representatives of special services. During Yeltsin's rule, the figure was over 30% and has risen to 70-80% today. Putin's regime has become a dictatorship of the security services, which will try to ensure the sustainability of this model of government for as long as possible. But that will only be the case until the rising clan of young siloviki sees the 72-year-old president as a weak link in the chain of power.

The Moscow Times

World War 3 has already started

Andrew Fox

THE D-Day commemorations in Normandy took place against a sombre backdrop. Ukraine's war for national survival has been raging for over two years, and the Middle East is on fire. While the Second World War is in our thoughts this week, we should soon be turning our thoughts on World War Three.

The UK's strategic competitors are obvious: China seeks dominance over the Pacific theatre as well as mineral-rich countries in Africa and Asia. Russia aims to establish Soviet-style dominance over former USSR client countries. Iran seeks the end of US and wider Western hegemony in the Middle East. The Turkish and Qatari-backed Muslim Brotherhood seek domination of the Arab world. Take a step back, and it looks as if the Third World War has started already. It just doesn't look like the conflict we thought it would be. Rather than a shooting war, we are seeing intense strategic competition. No country can compete with the USA and Nato on the battlefield, so instead our enemies are trying to defeat us through economic and cultural means without firing a shot.

These states have been anticipating a coming confrontation for a long time, and preparing for it. China's Belt and Road Initiative has invested in more than 140 countries, covering 75 per cent of the world's population and more than half of its GDP. Beijing has bought influence, created international economic dependence on Chinese infrastructure development, and gained access to strategic ports and

other potential military bases. Meanwhile, Western universities have been flooded with students, creating a loop of financial dependence even as valuable knowledge flows back to the Chinese economy.

Russia, meanwhile, has conducted subversive activities across the West, attempting to influence US presidential elections, poisoning opponents on British soil and creating EU dependence on Russian gas. Moscow has been a key proponent of international disinformation campaigns, strategically investing online and in the media to undermine its opponents and destabilise pro-Western support in the Balkans and central and eastern Europe. Putin has demonstrated military aggression in Ukraine and Georgia and shown a willingness in the former to commit to a lengthy and costly military campaign of attrition. Iran, meanwhile, has taken advantage of chaos in the Middle East to establish regional hegemony since the Iraq War in 2003. Tehran has built influential and violent proxies in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, funded and supported by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which provides command, training and arms for these proxies. The Houthis have shown the ability to disrupt vital shipping lanes approaching the Suez Canal; Hezbollah in Lebanon, battle-hardened by the Syrian Civil War, has set northern Israel on fire, repeatedly launching rockets since 7th October. Iranian-backed militias have fired on US bases in Iraq, and the regime puts a heavy emphasis on

pushing its narrative in the USA and Europe.

Qatar and Turkey, meanwhile, have played both sides. Turkey exploits Nato membership and EU trade links, and Qatar offers the West military bases in Doha and huge financial investment. At the same time, they continue to support Hamas in Gaza, which has started a regional war enabling Iran and their militias to escalate attacks on Israel. Heavy investments have been made in Western academic institutions, buying influence in the organisations that train and advise our Foreign Office and security service. The Qatari funded media organisation, Al Jazeera, has been a critical vector in pushing anti-Israeli narratives in the West, while Hamas leaders shelter in Doha. Turkey has provided medical care for wounded Hamas fighters.

Through buying influence and soaking Western media in disinformation designed to demoralise and undermine support for military action, these countries have subverted our democracies, media, and academic institutions, with the aim of building support in the West and destroying our will to fight. Ukraine and Israel give us a taste of the deluge of influence operations that will swamp us, should things escalate to a shooting war. These conflicts have been noticed around the world. But for over a decade, our enemies have been using influence, a weapon equipped with a silencer, to fire the opening shots in a global conflict-and we have only just noticed. With all eyes on Normandy, the Third World War is closer than we realise: we are already fighting it.

The Telegraph

A huge boon for Trump

Julian Zelizer

WHILE former President Donald Trump was convicted by a Manhattan jury on 34 charges of falsifying business records last week, the remaining three criminal cases against him are unlikely to be resolved before Election Day - a huge boon for Trump's political future.

Judge Aileen Cannon, a Trump appointee who is presiding over the classified documents case in Florida, has made it much less likely that a decision in that case will be reached before November 5. In a series of unusual moves, Cannon has allowed third-party groups unaffiliated with the case to argue in court, delayed some hearings without setting a new date, and scheduled additional ones, including one regarding a gag order request to limit Trump's rhetoric about law enforcement. She also allotted more time to hear arguments about Trump's request to declare special counsel Jack Smith's appointment invalid.

Trump also scored a huge victo-

ry this week with the election subversion case in Georgia put on hold until a panel of judges rules on whether to disqualify Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis because of her relationship with Special Prosecutor Nathan Wade. There have also been serious delays in the federal election interference case, as the Supreme Court still has to make a decision about Trump's claims of presidential immunity. The trial date can't be set by Judge Tanya Chutkan until after SCOTUS reaches a decision, and the court's decision might leave room for further delays.

This would be hugely beneficial for Trump. While a delay takes away the chance that Trump might vindicated with a finding of innocence, it also means he won't have to contend with the blowback from another potential conviction. Instead, delays allow Trump to continue railing against the justice system while maintaining the status quo, which keeps him ahead in

most swing states. Of course, without verdicts in the remaining three cases, voters will have less definitive information on which to base their decisions come November. And if Trump is elected again, he could use his presidential powers to pardon himself - at least in the federal cases.

Although many observers believe the New York hush money case was the least serious of all the criminal cases against Trump, the jury's decision struck a nerve. Republicans were quick to rally around the president, but early polls show that his conviction for falsifying business records might have made a dent in his political standing. According to a New York Times/Siena College poll, Trump's three-point lead over Biden before the verdict fell to just one point after the conviction. While these numbers are not hugely significant, small shifts in the electorate could be pivotal in the handful of swing states where the election will be

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In brief

PBBF announces trials

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has announced one-day trials for the selection of the Pakistan basketball team to compete in the 6th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games-2024 in the 3x3 format (Men). The trials will be held on June 28, 2024, at 4:00 PM at the Government College University Basketball Courts in Lahore. The affiliated units of PBBF have been directed to nominate budding, talented and upcoming players for the trials. The nominated sportsperson must be below the age of 23 years on Dec 31, 2024. The National Basketball Training Camp will be sponsored by the Pakistan Sports Board. The qualified coaches will impart training to the players. PBBF is also exploring possibilities that selected team also undertake training cum competitions tour of neighbouring countries before participation in the Indoor Games. Additionally, PBBF is also in process that this team must have international exposure and match temperament to get benefit of home ground and crowd to clinch Gold in the next South Asian Games being hosted by Pakistan in 2025.

Sri Lanka complain to ICC

COLOMBO (AFP): Sri Lanka said Friday they have complained to the International Cricket Council over their T20 World Cup team's treatment and conditions in co-host the United States. The sports minister Harin Fernando alleged other teams had it better and said Sri Lanka had lodged a formal protest after the squad was held up by a seven-hour flight delay at a Florida airport. He said Sri Lanka had also been given accommodation more than 90 minutes' drive from the practice stadium when they reached New York. He said India's team had been put up much closer. Sri Lanka lost to South Africa by six wickets in their opening match on Monday in New York. "Sri Lanka Cricket has complained to the ICC," Fernando told parliament. "Different countries are being treated differently. We have called for an explanation from the organisers of the tournament." Sri Lanka's sports ministry has dispatched an officer to the United States to look into the welfare of the team, Fernando added. AFP has contacted the ICC for comment. Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa said Sri Lanka's parliament was united in its upset over the supposed conditions. "We stand against this injustice, we should not allow this," he said. Angelo Mathews, a former skipper and current member of Sri Lanka's T20 squad, told local broadcaster Ada Derana TV the past few days had been "most challenging". "Practice facilities are not good. Wickets are not good. Last four to five days have been very challenging for us," he said. "We had to cancel practices because a flight was delayed." "We are not going to use this as an excuse, we are a team that has won despite obstacles. We want to put all this behind us and do well at the next match." Their next game is against Bangladesh on Saturday.



NEW YORK: Canada players celebrate Andy Balbirnie's dismissal.

Babar admits USA outsmart Pakistan in all departments

LAHORE (APP): Captain Babar Azam has said that the USA team outsmarted experienced Pakistan contingent in all departments and won the match in the super over at the Grand Prairie Stadium, Dallas. In the post-match press conference, the Pakistan captain said that Mohammad Amir is an experienced bowler who knew how to bowl in a super over situation but the USA batsmen were smart in pinching seven runs off the wide balls, adding that the fact put the US team ahead in the super over. Though Pakistan, the 3rd ranked ICC T20I team before the match, failed in all departments but the frustration was visible which permeated during the super over among the bowlers and the fielders especially wicket-keeper Mohammad Rizwan. Mohammad Amir bowled too many wide deliveries while the USA batters pinched singles from the wicket-keeper.

The ground fielding was equally poor. Pakistan had set a target of 160 for the USA team and looked to have won match before Haris Rauf conceded 14 runs in the last over of the match to push the match into a super over. The USA batsmen, taking advantage of the seemingly frustrated team Pakistan, top 18 runs in the super over which Pakistan batsmen could not overhaul and lost miserably. To a question, Babar Azam admitted that the team failed to execute plans and failed in all departments be it middle order batting, bowling or fielding. 'As a batting unit, the batsmen need to step up and do well in the middle overs and the death overs,' the T20I top run scorer responded. Babar, to a query, said that the bowling was below par as the bowlers did not take wickets with the new ball while the spinners failed to make any impact in the middle overs, adding that though the bowlers made some recovery after the first 10 overs but the credit must go to the USA batsmen for finishing the game in style. On losing to associate team in the ICC events, Babar said "it does not matter you are playing an associate or a full member team, any team may beat you on the day if the plans are not executed by the team." Babar confessed the plans were not being executed by the team as a whole. On lack of preparations due to weather, Babar said that the weather did not hinder their preparations, adding that they had prepared well for the fixture. "Weather also did not impact the result of the match," Babar added. On the pitch conditions, Babar Azam said the first six overs were tough for batting as the bowl stuck in the pitch and swung, adding that they further lost the momentum by losing three wickets

in the power-play. He said It was difficult to score runs in the first half of the innings due to the pitch conditions, adding that he and Shadab Khan made a recovery through a good partnership but the back to back wickets turned the momentum in the team USA's favor once again. Babar was candid in admitting that they played bad cricket on the day. About toss being a deciding factor in day matches at the ICC T20 World Cup in the USA, the skipper, who looked somewhat subdued by the defeat, said the pitches will always have 'juice' in first six over of the day matches, adding that the USA bowlers exploited the conditions to their advantage in the early part of the Pakistan innings. However, he was of the opinion that the pitch settled down in latter part of the innings. "Pakistan bowlers did not bowl in the right areas in the second innings although help was there in the pitch for them as well," Babar remarked. About plans in the last two overs of the USA innings, he said the bowlers were required to bowl Yorkers to the opposition batsmen. Babar Azam rued the fact that the Pakistan pace battery of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Amir and Haris Rauf failed to defend the total given their reputation and experience.

NEW YORK (Agencies): Ireland were left on the brink of elimination from the T20 World Cup after they slumped to a 12-run defeat to tournament debutants Canada. Nicholas Kirton's 35-ball 49 helped Canada post a respectable 137-7, the highest score at this ground in New York since the tournament began properly. The dependable Barry McCarthy (2-24) was the pick of the Irish bowlers but they struggled to find any real momentum with the bat. Between the sixth and 15th overs of their reply Ireland failed to hit a single boundary as their innings stalled. From a perilous position of 59-6 in the 13th over an Irish victory seemed unlikely but George Dockrell and Mark Adair gave them faint hope with a stand of 62 for the sixth wicket. However, with 17 required off the last over Adair (34) skied one and was caught leaving Dockrell (30 not out)

with too much to do as Jeremy Gordon (2-16) calmly closed out the game for the Canadians. Ireland must now win their remaining two games – against Pakistan and the USA – and hope results elsewhere go their way. Canada's victory was their biggest in an International Cricket Council tournament since a win over Bangladesh at the 2003 World Cup. Bad day in the Big Apple for the Irish The USA's shock victory over Pakistan in Texas has blown this group right open giving extra significance to this match, especially for Irish hopes of reaching the Super 8s. The much-scrutinised pitch at the New York stadium had all the grass taken off it and was rolled as late as possible by groundsperson Damian Hough. In front of a sparse, but perhaps higher-than-expected, crowd of 5,153 Paul Stirling understandably bowled first but it played sufficiently well for the

Canadians to post a defendable total. Barbados-born Kirton, a former West Indies U19 player, played nicely as Canada hit 13 fours and two sixes in their innings. One over from the experienced Craig Young (2-32) was dispatched for 16 by Kirton including two sixes thwacked down the ground. Wicketkeeper Shreyas Movva again played a lower-order cameo with 37 from 36 balls. Ireland's batting looked undercooked in their emphatic defeat to India and they lost key wickets here partly thanks to some smart bowling, partly through poor shot selection. Stirling top-edged a pull while Harry Tector was bowled by a beauty which straightened from left-arm spinner Saad Bin Zafar. Lorcan Tucker needlessly ran himself out. Adair and Dockrell momentarily had the Irish fans believing, but it was a case of not enough six in the city after those 54 boundary-less balls proved costly.

Canada shock Ireland for first win at a T20 World Cup

Shaheen Shah Afridi nominated for ICC Player of the Month award

DUBAI (Monitoring Desk): The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday revealed the nominees for the ICC Player of the Month awards, with Pakistan star pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi among the contenders. The ICC Men's Player of the Month contenders feature three familiar faces competing at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies. Pakistan pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi enjoyed a prolific wicket-taking month in his side's T20I tours of Ireland and England last month. Similarly, Gudakesh Motie of the West Indies earns a nomination after his Player of the Series exploits in their whitewash series triumph over South Africa. ICC Men's Player of the Month Nominees for May: Shaheen Shah Afridi (PAK)



Motie took three for 25 in the opening contest to restrict the tourists' chase and he backed that performance up with another impressive spell of three for 22 to stifle the middle order in the second fixture. Another two wickets in the final match turned the tide in favour of the hosts once more and allowed the 29-year-old to claim the Player of the Series accolade. Lorcan Tucker (IRE)

ed three consecutive three-wicket hauls. Spells of three for 49 and three for 14 against Ireland helped Pakistan overturn a series deficit to win in Dublin, before the 24-year-old followed up with three for 36 against England in Birmingham. The three-time nominee has never won a Men's Player of the Month award but has a strong case to claim his maiden prize. Gudakesh Motie (WI) The West Indies' left-arm spinner enjoyed plenty of success in the home series against South Africa in May, taking eight wickets across three matches at an average of 8.50, as the hosts sealed a statement 3-0 victory in Jamaica.

The wicketkeeper-batter aims to become the first Irish winner of the Men's Player of the Month award since Harry Tector in May 2023, and is nominated thanks to explosive run-scoring feats during a busy month of international competition. Tucker top-scored for Ireland in the second and third matches against Pakistan with successive quickfire scores of 51 and 73, and carried that momentum into the tri-series against Scotland and Netherlands, hitting 40 and 55 as Ireland sealed confidence boosting wins ahead of their ICC Men's T20 World Cup campaign.

Portugal's SL Benfica, Pakistan Football League team up to boost sports economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Portugal's national football club SL Benfica has announced partnership with the Pakistan Football League (PFL) Pearl Project to develop professional football and boost the sports economy in Pakistan. SL Benfica, as the official partner of PFL, a pioneering initiative to develop professional football in Pakistan and stimulate the country's football economy, will impart technical expertise to coaches and players, significantly advancing football in the region. With support from government officials, this initiative aims to inspire a new generation of footballers and fans in the region. Benfica representatives are currently in Pakistan for prominent events in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. SL Benfica stated that this partnership places the club at the forefront of football expansion in a nation with a population of approximately 250 million. They attended the formal launch of PFL in Lahore on 4th June – attended by the likes of Michael Owen, Emile Heskey, Pascal Chimbonda and Raúl Rodríguez. The global delegation held meetings with the senior government ministers who offered full support to the football initiative. "June marks the launch of the Pakistan Football League, a project with the potential of 250 million inhabitants committed to launching a football league. Benfica has been invited to present itself as the league's technical partner to support its teams, coaches and players. As leaders in identifying and developing players, we had to accept this challenge. This project is another historic moment for Benfica, as we will be collaborating with an international league for the first time", said Miguel Reis, SL Benfica's Operations Coordinator for Global Expansion. "For Benfica, this repre-



sents another great project with a huge responsibility, igniting a passion for sport in children and guiding them towards clubs to commence playing in a more structured and professional manner. Our goal is to facilitate the simultaneous development of young athletes and coaches, fundamentally transforming the football landscape in the country. Our distinct methodological approach will be harnessed for the benefit of the league and the clubs, with Benfica potentially becoming the driving force in shaping the future of football in Pakistan. We are also excited about the upcoming global campaign 'One Ball One Smile', which will bring smiles to the faces of countless children by providing them with footballs. This initiative will not only empower them to play football in their communities but will also nurture the grassroots of football worldwide", explained Davide Gomes, technical coordinator for international projects at SL Benfica. This partnership not only recognizes Benfica's global reach and expertise but also marks a significant milestone in the evolution of football in Pakistan. With SL Benfica's support, the Pakistan Football League aims to inspire a new generation of footballers and fans, taking the game to new heights in the region. The Portuguese club will be the central incubator of the league and the entity that will ensure that standards in football development are maintained. Benfica will lay the foundations for success by training local coaching staff and offering annual training masterclasses in Lisbon for local players, with the possibility of joining the academy if they prove to be exceptional talents. As part of this collaboration, Benfica has organized a special exhibition to showcase the club's history, featuring selected items from the Benfica Museum. This exhibition is being displayed during the launch events, underlining the club's commitment to fostering a deep connection with Pakistan's growing football community. "I'm proud to be Pakistan's Global Football Ambassador. I visited Pakistan two years ago and was impressed by the passion and interest people have in football here. I am very excited about the future and am fully available to contribute to the development of football in Pakistan", said Michael Owen during the PFL launch event. "We are here to discover the best talent. Football has millions of fans around the world, and we want to provide opportunities for our players to showcase their talent. From the northern areas of Pakistan, Chaman and Karachi, there is raw talent everywhere, I'm grateful to the international delegations who came here. Together with the international delegates and world football stars involved, we will work out strategies to improve football", said Ahmar Kanwar, president and CEO of PFL.

Alcaraz outduels Sinner to reach French Open final

PARIS (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz beat incoming world number one Jannik Sinner 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 on Friday to reach the French Open final and continue his bid for a third Grand Slam title. Alcaraz, 21, will play fourth seed Alexander Zverev or two-time Roland Garros runner-up Casper Ruud on Sunday after becoming the youngest man to reach Grand Slam finals on all three surfaces. "It's one of the toughest matches I've played for sure," said Alcaraz. "The toughest I've played in my short career have been against Jannik. I hope to play many, many more like this." "You have to find the joy in suffering," the Spaniard added. Alcaraz has won both of his two previous major finals -- at Wimbledon last year and the 2022 US Open. Victory on Sunday would see him head to the Australian Open next January seeking a career Grand Slam. Both Alcaraz and Sinner arrived in Paris under an injury cloud, gradually finding their best level over the course of the tournament to set up a meeting billed as the match "everybody wants to see". The ninth chapter of an enthralling rivalry destined to shape the future of the sport was the youngest Grand Slam semi-final pairing since Andy Murray beat Rafael Nadal at the 2008 US Open. It was their first Grand Slam meeting since a spectacular five-set quarter-final two years ago in New York, and while perhaps not as exhilarating this one was no less gripping. Alcaraz, who was hampered badly by cramp in last year's semi-final loss to Novak Djokovic, had said that playing Sinner was like running a marathon, and it was the Spaniard doing much of the chasing early. Sinner pinned Alcaraz on the back foot straight away as he broke in the very first game.

Akram lambasts Pakistan over "pathetic performance"

DALLAS (Monitoring Desk): Legendary pacer Wasim Akram termed Pakistan's performance "pathetic" as they succumbed to a shock loss in their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign opener against the United States of America (USA) on Thursday. Akram, while speaking to an Indian channel, did not mince his words in criticising the national team's performance before praising the associate nation for playing well in tense situations. "Pathetic performance. They were playing against the USA. I was confident, that Pakistani supporters were confident that they would win but credit to the USA for the way they played their cricket," stated Akram. "The first innings, the second innings when they came out to chase and then of course the Super Over. I mean 19 runs in Super Overs is like getting 36 runs in an over. So well done USA," he added. Akram also predicted that the Babar Azam-led Pakistan would struggle to qualify for the Super 8s, given the current situation of Group A. "Pakistan will struggle from here onwards to qualify for the Super 8s because they have to play India and two other good teams too." Wasim Akram also highlighted the turning point of the match before pointing out the errors, the national team made. "I think turning point of the game... was the way they got early wickets. They had one little partnership between Shadab and Babar and then nobody looked comfort-

able. The fielding was average, overall cricket was very average by Pakistan. "Winning and losing is a part of it, we all know it but till the last ball, show some fight, put some dives. Catches are being dropped, wickets are tough to get. So yeah, it was a bad day for Pakistan I suppose," Akram concluded. Former champions Pakistan had a disastrous start to their T20 World Cup 2024 campaign as they endured a shock loss against the USA in the Super Over as they failed to chase down the 19-run target. Senior pacer Mohammad Amir bowled the Super Over for Pakistan and conceded 18 runs. In response, the Green Shirts only managed 13/1. Former cricketers lash out at Pakistan after shock loss against USA: Legendary Pakistan cricketers Inzamam-ul-Haq, Waqar Younis and Shahid Afridi lashed out at the national team following their upset defeat against the United States of America (USA) in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. Pakistan endured a five-run defeat against the co-hosts in the Super Over as they failed to chase down the 19-run target. Senior pacer Mohammad Amir bowled the Super Over for Pakistan and conceded 18 runs. In response, the Green Shirts only managed 13/1. Reacting to the defeat on his YouTube channel, former captain Inzamam-ul-Haq stated the team is heading towards a "downfall". "Babar Azam and company should sit down and think about the kind of cricket

they are playing. But, looking at our cricket and selection, I think our cricket is headed towards downfall," the former right-hander said. Legendary all-rounder Shahid Afridi, on the other hand, raised questions over the team's strategies in crucial situations. "They made a huge mistake by opting for Iftikhar instead of Fakhar to play the first ball of the super over. The left-arm fast bowler would have suited Fakhar because of the angle of the bowling. I don't know who told Iftikhar to face the left-arm," Afridi said on his YouTube channel. Afridi also questioned Mohammad Amir's performance in the Super Over. "Mohammad Amir bowled really well during the match and I thought that they will go with in the super over as well. But he conceded a lot of extras in the super over which also didn't help Pakistan's cause," stated Afridi. "He is experienced and knows how to bowl yorkers. The ball was reversing as well which is why I think he shouldn't have given away so many runs," he added. On the other hand, legendary pacer Waqar Younis termed the USA's victory over Pakistan historic and asserted that the national team looked "helpless". "USA grounded Pakistan in their opening game. History's been registered. Pakistan looked exhausted and helpless in the field. Congrats USA for a thumping victory," Waqar tweeted.



In brief

Commissioner visits ICT offices

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Chief Commissioner, Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Friday conducted surprise inspections across various offices under his jurisdiction and issued directives to the officials to observe punctuality in dispensing their duties. During his visit, the chief commissioner reviewed the attendance of officers and staff, and strictly warned them to ensure punctual conduct otherwise stern action would be taken against them, said a press release. He also engaged with the general public and visitors besides issuing directives to the authorities concerned to promptly address their concerns and reservations to provide essential support to the most vulnerable communities, ensuring smooth functioning.

Two bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police claimed to have arrested two bike lifters and street criminals during raid launched against the criminals on Friday. Police in an operation recovered three stolen motorcycles and other items from the possession of outlaws, said a Police spokesman here. He said that a team under the supervision of SHO, Dhamial Police Station managed to nab two bike lifters namely Owais and Farhan and recovered three stolen motorcycles and other essential items from their possession. The accused were shifted to jail for further investigation. A case has been registered against the accused for further interrogation. Meanwhile, Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Muhammad Nabeel said that accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind the bars.

DG PHA visits nurseries

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General (DG) Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi, Ahmed Hasan Ranjha on Friday visited nurseries and parks in Murree. The DG issued directives regarding plantation, green belts, flood lights, rope lights and pole planters. During the visit, the DG reviewed the nurseries, public parks and recreational facilities. DG said that PHA Rawalpindi is committed to provide quality entertainment facilities to the citizens as per the special instructions issued by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz. He instructed the authorities concerned to utilize all available resources for the improvement of the parks. The DG visited the areas of Jhika Gali, Upper Jhika Gali Road, Fourth Chowk Road, Government House Road, Bagh Shaheedan Road and other areas. He also inspected hanging baskets, plantations, pole planters, rope lights erected at roadsides and PHA Murree nurseries.

Unhealthy food causing illnesses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director Punjab Food Operations (PFO) Asif Iqbal Friday said that the reckless use of agricultural chemicals, use of sewerage water for irrigating the crops and contamination of food with harmful substances are the main causes of spreading of the diseases. According to a private news channel, he said the food contaminated with chemicals' availability should be checked in the market for the general public. Asif Iqbal claimed that food quality was compromised in the absence of a cold supply chain in Punjab however the Punjab Food Authority works to pledge a nutritious food supply chain shift from farm to table. According to the World Health Organization, compromised diet had caused over 200 diseases.

BISP plays crucial role in women empowerment: Rubina

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid Friday said that BISP was playing crucial role in the economic empowerment of women.

Speaking during a meeting with the Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the chairperson reiterated her commitment to serve the marginalized segments of society through the programme.

Ayaz Sadiq extended his heartfelt congratulations to Rubina Khalid on assuming her new role as Chairperson of BISP.

"BISP is dedicated to provide essential support to the most vulnerable com-

munities, particularly focusing on the economic empowerment of women", she said. She said that steps were being taken to enhance the programme's outreach and impact to ensure that no one was left behind.

Rubina Khalid briefed the speaker about the ongoing and recently launched initiatives of BISP.

The speaker expressed his support for the programme and wished Rubina Khalid success in her endeavors.

"The BISP is vital for the socio-economic uplift of marginalized communities and I wish for its continued success under the leadership of Rubina Khalid" he stated.

Later, Central Additional General Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party, Engineer Mohammad Humayun Khan met Rubina Khalid at the BISP headquarters.

The discussion was held with focus on the issues faced by women beneficiaries of BISP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa related to the stipend disbursement and the provision of necessary facilities.

Rubina Khalid assured General Secretary PPP that all problems faced by the beneficiaries would be promptly addressed.

"Our priority is to ensure that every woman in need receives the support she deserves without any delays," she added.

Gillani for formation of Senate Standing Committees

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani on Friday directed that the issue regarding the formation of Senate Standing Committees would be resolved immediately to ensure the committees can play their roles effectively.

He was chairing the House Business Advisory Committee (HBAC) which discussed in detail the leg-

islative business to be transacted during the 339th Session of the Senate.

Moreover, the session will address other important issues. The HBAC decided that the current session would continue until June 21, 2024.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chairman Senate Senator Syedal Khan, Leader of

the Opposition Syed Shibli Faraz, Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Irfan ul Haq Siddiqui, Senator Atta ur Rehman, Senator Jan Muhammad, Senator Manzoor Ahmad Kakar, Senator Kamil Ali Agha, Senator Hidayatullah Khan, Minister for Law and Justice Muhammad Azam Nazir Tarar and Secretary Senate Syed Hasnain Haider.

Minister assures to provide scholarships to deserving students

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has assured to give scholarships to deserving students from all provinces.

He was presiding over a meeting of the Board of Directors of Pakistan Education Endowment Fund in Islamabad today.

He expressed hope that PEEF will ensure to provide education to all deserving students irrespective of their background. On this occasion, the Board approved

approximately one billion rupees annual budget for PEEF.

It was also decided to hire a full time CEO to fortify the performance of organization. On June 3, the University of Oxford has agreed to provide scholarships to students from Balochistan, under the Benazir Scholarship Program.

The agreement, in this connection, was signed between Oxford University and the government of Balochistan, with Chief Minister Mir

Sarfraz Bugti and Malala Yousafzai, the global ambassador for girls' education, in attendance.

Under this program, talented students from Balochistan will receive full scholarships to pursue higher education at Oxford University, one of the world's most prestigious institutions, said the handout issued by press secretary to chief minister Balochistan.

The program aims to provide access to quality education and empower the youth of Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors keenly observes the on displayed artworks during an Art exhibition at Gallery 6. —APP Photo

Passport policy for women amendable under IHC orders: Pirzada

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Housing and Works Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Friday informed the Senate that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in its ruling had directed the respondents to ensure consultative process for amending the passport policy for married and divorced women.

He was responding to the calling attention notice of Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) drawing the attention of the Interior Minister towards a statement of the Director General Passport and Immigration regarding the proposed amendment to introduce an 'ex-husband category' in the passport data for divorced women.

The minister read out the court's decision, which stated that there was no reason "for adjudication of the question involved in the

matter can conveniently be disposed of in the following term. "It is expected that the respondent number 2 would complete the consultative process and remain logistically ready to make requisite amends in the formatting details of the passport giving options to the women to retain their father's name or CNIC or passport within three months of the passing of this order.

"It is pertinent to observe that the government shall ensure synchronization of the record of NADRA (National Database Registration Authority), Passport and Immigration Department."

The minister said as per the court's decision the matter raised by Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri should be referred to the standing committee concerned to fulfill the consultative process. Senator Samina Zehri, on her

calling attention notice, highlighted that mentioning the ex-husband's name in the category of the passport to declare the parentage of a child borne by a divorcee woman was against the NADRA's provision to retain the name of the father on her Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC).

She claimed that the DG Passport's statement was a sheer violation of the Constitution and discrimination towards women, who after divorce faced societal pressures. "This policy is redundant, and against international norms and the global passport index, and should be withdrawn," Ms Zehri said.

Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Shibli Faraz said that women comprised half of the country's population and the issues raised by Senator Zehri were pertinent. It was necessary to



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Mrs. Rubina Khalid in a meeting with Central Additional General Secretary PPP Engineer Mohammad Humayun Khan at BISP HQs.

Summer vacations announced

ISLAMABAD (PPI) The Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) Friday announced summer vacations in all private and public Islamabad schools.

According to the announcement, summer vacations for all educational institutions within the Islamabad Capital Territory will begin on June 10 and last until July 31.

"The competent authority i.e. the Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is pleased to announce that summer vacations for all the educational institutions working under the ambit of Federal Directorate of Education shall commence from 10-06-2024 till 31-07-2024 and schools/colleges will reopen on 01-08-2024," the notification stated.

Earlier, the Sindh Education Department also announced summer holidays in all private and public sector schools, colleges.

According to the notification issued here, summer holidays in all public and private institutions in Sindh will be observed from June 1 to July 31. Prior to this, the Punjab government announced early summer holidays for all public and private schools due to the prevailing heatwave.

According to a notification, all government and private schools in Punjab will be closed from May 25 till August 15.

IRSA releases 295,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 295,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 279,500 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1462.87 feet and was 64.87 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 188,600 cusecs and 185,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1188.45 feet, which was 138.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 55,800 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively.

CM Punjab committed to implement 43 exemplary initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari Friday while appreciating exemplary 43-initiatives of Chief Minister Punjab government during her 100 days' performance assured that all public welfare projects will soon practically and equally be implemented across Punjab without discrimination.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that one of the commendable achievements under the leadership of Maryum Nawaz Sharif has been a dramatic reduction in inflation, adding, the introduction of air ambulance, field hospitals and clinic on wheels has revolutionary medical services for people of Punjab.

These remarkable measures underscore her commitment to ensuring that healthcare is not a privileged but a

fundamental right of every citizen, she added.

Under the leadership of Maryum Nawaz Punjab is also witnessing a transport revolution, adding, eco-friendly buses in various cities is a significant step towards sustainable transportation, she added.

Azma Bukhari added that another project named 'Aapna Ghar' aims to provide low-income families with their own houses, adding, over 3000 houses will be built in every district of Punjab soon.

These initiatives will address fundamental needs and empowering vulnerable segment of society, she said, adding, Maryum Nawaz Sharif administration has also taken swift steps which will address the issues of employment and education. Replying to a query, she said that at the end of June air ambulance

service will officially be functional adding that Maryum Nawaz has set up new standard for proactive governance.

Azma further said, a billion farmers' package Kisan card has been approved, solar panels at low costs will also be provided to 50 thousand deserving people, an Easter package has also been prepared for the Christian community.

She said that historic relief had been provided on roti, naan, rusks, bread, and other bakery products while with special efforts of the government chicken prices had also been reduced maintaining the availability and quality. She added a state of the art agricultural units will be be setup and the government is working hard to bring down inflation by at least three percent.

Salik appreciates ILO's efforts to support workers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OPHRD), Chaudhary Salik Hussain Friday appreciated the efforts and important initiatives taken by the ILO to support workers and mitigate the adverse effects of the crises being faced by Gaza and the West Bank.

The minister made these remarks during the 112th International Labour Conference being held on 3rd June to 14th June 2024 featured significant engagement from Pakistan. Chaudhry Salik Hussain led the Pakistani delegation, which also included Zulfikar Ahmad, Secretary, Workers Welfare Fund. The conference served as a vital platform for global labor discussions, covering topics such as labor standards,

employment strategies for fostering decent work, and inclusive economic growth, a news release said.

Pakistan's active participation emphasized its commitment to addressing key labor issues and contributing to the global dialogue on work-related challenges and solutions. This involvement highlights Pakistan's dedication to improving labor conditions and aligning with international labor standards.

While addressing the conference, Chaudhary Salik Hussain delivered a statement on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He acknowledged the collective failure to uphold the ideals of the Declaration of Philadelphia on its 80th anniversary despite the commitment to social justice.

The minister emphasized the dire situation in the

occupied Arab territories, particularly in Palestine, and stressed the failure of the multilateral system. He further elaborated that the initial task was to improve working conditions in occupied Palestine, but the current focus has shifted to saving lives, especially those of women and children, due to the worsening situation.

The minister highlighted the recent attack on Rafah mentioned in the Director-General's report, where more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed and 77,000 injured, including 14,000 children. He noted the severe impact on employment, with the unemployment rate reaching 45% and a significant plunge in GDP. The OIC stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire and the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Randhawa inspects electric buses, charging points

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Friday visited the Convention Center to inspect electric buses and charging points and personally test drive the bus.

Speaking on the occasion, the chairman announced, "Around 60 buses out of the total 160 designated for the Islamabad Bus Service project have now reached the federal capital. These buses

are intended to offer modern transportation amenities to the residents of Islamabad."

The updated routes aim to offer convenient and eco-friendly transportation options for residents. The initial route will link NUST, Orange Line Depot, G-11, and Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital, encompassing 13 stops. The second route will commence at PIMS and conclude at Bari Imam. Service hours will

run from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m..

The chairman also paid a visit to the H-9 bus depot and issued instructions to ensure the completion of its construction before June 30. The depot, along with its charging points, must be finished before the arrival of the next phase, comprising 70 buses. Plans will be formulated to provide subsidies to deserving segments of society, including individuals with special needs, students, and others.

14 lawbreakers arrested, illegal weapons recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an operation launched against illegal weapon holders, fireworks dealers and other lawbreakers on Friday arrested 14 accused and recovered nine pistols 30 bore, ammunition, fireworks items, petrol and other items from their possession.

The spokesperson said that Taxila, Saddar Wah, Westridge, Kahuta, Numan and Shah Rukh and

recovered fireworks items from their possession. In another raid, Rattaamral and Wah Cantt police also nabbed two accused for running illegal petrol agencies and recovered petrol and other items. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused for further investigation. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police teams to accelerate ongoing operation.

Construction of Major Power Plant Begins in Jawzjan

JAWZJAN (TOLONews): The construction of a large power plant has begun in Aqcha district of Jawzjan province. Officials from the Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) said at the project's inauguration ceremony that the power plant will cost 390 million afghani and will be completed within a year. According to the officials, this project also includes the transfer of a 220 kV line from Turkmenistan and its distribution network.

Around 3,000 Afghan refugee families return home

KABUL (Ariana News): During the last two months, around 3,000 Afghan refugee families in Pakistan have returned to their country through the Torkham crossing, officials said. The officials at Nangarhar Directorate of Refugees and Returnees say that they have provided all the facilities for the returnees from Pakistan in Omari camp. Some of the returnees complain about the mistreatment of the Pakistani forces.

Public Flogging in Afghanistan Sparks Intl Outcry

KABUL (TOLONews): Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, told TOLONews that the implementation of Sharia punishments is based on court decisions and that international organizations should not speak against Islamic laws.

Mujahid said: "The concern is unnecessary. The punishments that are implemented are based on court rulings and are in accordance with Islamic Sharia, which the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is obligated to implement in society. Society also demands punishments for criminals."

Earlier, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Amnesty International, and the UN special rapporteur Richard Bennett criticized the implementation of corporal punishment on 63 people in Sar-e-Pul



province. These sentences were carried out by the Islamic Emirate on Tuesday in the sports stadium of Sar-e-Pul city.

UNAMA condemned this act and called for respect for international human rights commitments in Afghanistan.

UNAMA said: "63 people were publicly lashed in Saripul yesterday by Afghanistan's de facto authorities. UNAMA reiterates its condemnation of corporal punishment and

calls for respect for international human rights obligations."

The UN special rapporteur Richard Bennett also called for the cessation of corporal punishment by the Islamic Emirate.

Richard Bennett said: "Once again I condemn the widespread flogging of men, women, children, this time in public in Sar-e-Pul & Ghor for so-called 'moral crimes' (adultery, elopement...)" This violates Afghanistan's obligations

to prohibit torture/other forms of cruel & inhuman punishment. It needs to stop now!"

"Judges must have complete understanding and full knowledge of Islamic Sharia laws. Likewise, the cases of criminals should be thoroughly examined, and these punishments should be applied according to the needs and circumstances of the time," said Haseebullah Hanifi, a religious scholar.

"If society feels the need, the ruler can execute flogging or corporal punishment in public. It is not against international treaties or jurisprudential texts," Zia Yousufi, a lawyer, told TOLONews.

Earlier, corporal punishments have also been carried out in the provinces of Panjshir, Bamyán, Logar, Farah, Laghman, Ghazni, Maidan Wardak, and Jawzjan.

Agenda of Doha meeting should be acceptable to all parties: Muttaqi

DOHA (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi has met with the UN Secretary General's special representative for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, and the two sides discussed the upcoming third UN-sponsored meeting on Afghanistan in Doha.

Based on a statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released on Friday, the UN envoy that her team is working on the agenda of the third Doha meeting and seeks to prepare the agenda in such a way that is acceptable to all parties.

She added that she wants to hear the Islamic Emirate's opinion on the final agenda of the Doha meeting, and once the agenda is finalized, official invitations will be sent to the



participants of the meeting.

Meanwhile, Muttaqi emphasized that it is important to prepare the agenda in a way that is acceptable

to all parties. He added that the Afghan government has shared its position on the third Doha meeting with all parties and is working

closely with the stakeholders in this matter. The third Doha meeting on Afghanistan is scheduled to be held on June 30.

Afghanistan Presence at St. Petersburg Economic Meeting 'Important': Omari

KABUL (ToloNews): Acting Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Abdul Manan Omari, described the participation of the Islamic Emirate delegation in the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum as important for the economy, reconstruction, stability, and independence of Afghanistan. Omari stated that in such meetings, all parties should consider the others' interests.

The acting minister said: "The interests of both parties should always be considered by both sides."

On the sidelines of this forum, Abdul Manan Omari met with the Minister of Economy and the president of the Chamber of Commerce of Dagestan, discussing the development of trade, strengthening economic relations, and providing visa facilitation to Afghan



traders.

Samiullah Ebrahimi, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, said: "In this meeting, the two parties had detailed discussions on expanding trade, strengthening economic relations, and providing visa facilitation to Afghan traders."

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment said the presence of the Islamic Emirate delegation at international forums will be influential in improving economic relations and increasing exports from Afghanistan to regional

countries.

"The Chamber of Commerce and Investment of Afghanistan seeks to connect in the global region with all other chambers of commerce," said Mohammad Younis Mohmand, the acting head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

"The more the Afghan delegation participates in such meetings, the more it can pave the way for political and economic interactions. I think that in such meetings, sectoral ministries should also participate to have useful discussions on investments," said Abdul Nasir Rashtia, an economic analyst. Earlier, the acting minister of Industry and Commerce had also participated in the 15th Kazan summit to attract investments and increase trade with Russia.

50 dead, injured due to floods

BADAKHSHAN (Ariana News): Local officials in Badakhshan say that flash floods have left 50 dead and injured over the past month in 21 districts of the province.

Local officials said that 1,300 houses, 14 schools and thousands of acres of land have been destroyed.

They added that 6,700 livestock lost lives and that the roads from many villages in 21 districts of this province to the district center are still closed.

"We had approximately 13 to 14 schools in some districts that were destroyed by floods and 6,700 livestock were also lost," said Mohammad Kamgar, head of Badakhshan Natural Disaster Management Department.

Kamgar added that after the survey, they have started the process of assisting the victims and have distributed emergency aid in coordination with relief agencies, which includes food and non-food items.

A number of victims, meanwhile, said that due to recent floods, they have lost all their means of life and are in serious need of help.

"If the problems of these people are not addressed, it is possible that they will not be able to connect their roads to their area for months. The roads are completely destroyed. The way they used to come for one hour, now they can't come for three to four hours," said Abdul Khaliq, a flood-affected individual.

In the meantime, some district officials ask for shelters to be created for the flood victims. "Aid should be increased because the needs are greater. People have suffered a lot. Many people's houses have been destroyed and their agricultural lands have also been destroyed," said an official of Yamgan district.

Meanwhile, it's been more than a month that the roads of dozens of villages to the center of Badakhshan districts are still closed, and people commute with difficulty.

National theater appeals for restoration funds

KABUL (ToloNews): The Kabul National Theater called on the caretaker government to address their challenges. Officials said that the activities of this administration are continuing normally, but they are facing some problems.

"The theater staff used to number around 200 people in the past, and since then it has decreased by 170 - 150 people. The number of the theater staff during the republic was reduced to 50 people and has now decreased to 47 people," said Sayed Abdul Rauf Sadat, the theater coordination officer.

Sayat said Kabul Nandari Theater, which was called the second most beautiful theater in the world during the times of Amanullah Khan and Zahir Shah, has turned into ruins today and the officials of the caretaker government must rebuild it.

Taliban's Ministry of Justice to halt Tamadon TV broadcasts

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Justice of the Taliban administration has announced that Tamadon TV's broadcasts will be stopped due to its affiliation with a political party.

Barakatullah Rasouli, the spokesperson for this ministry, wrote on his Twitter account on Thursday, June 6, that the activities of Tamadon TV will be halted because of its

affiliation with a political party and the use of seized government lands.

He also mentioned that Khatam al-Nabiyan University in Kabul, which is affiliated with the

Tamadon TV chief denies Taliban allegations of political affiliation

KABUL (Khaama Press): Mohammad Jawad Mohseni, the head of Tamaddon TV, has denied the Taliban's Ministry of Justice's allegations that the private media outlet is affiliated with a political party and has usurped government land.

Mr. Mohseni stated that the land for Tamaddon TV was purchased from a private owner and is not state property in any way.

Mohammad Jawad Mohseni also mentioned that Asif Mohseni, the former head of the Islamic Movement Party of Afghanistan, had resigned from the party before establishing Tamaddon TV in 2005.

He, the current head of Tamaddon TV, is the grandson of Asif Mohseni, the founder of this private media outlet.

In a post on the social media platform X, Tamaddon TV quoted Mr. Mohseni saying, "The land for Tamaddon TV was purchased from a private owner and had legal documentation; it is not, and never has been, state property."

The post requested that the Taliban appoint a committee to review the documents and evidence held by Tamaddon TV.

Previously, Barakatullah Rasouli, the Taliban's Ministry of Justice spokesperson, claimed that "Tamaddon TV, Khatam al-Nabieen School, and Khatam al-Nabieen University belong to the Islamic Movement Party."

This Taliban official asserted that the buildings of all these institutions were constructed on usurped state lands.

However, Jawad Mohseni countered that the Khatam al-Nabieen University building is leased and that the land for Khatam al-Nabieen School was legally transferred to Asif Mohseni during the previous government.

The Afghanistan Journalists Center described the Taliban's move to close Tamaddon TV as a manifestation of the suppression of media and freedom of expression in Afghanistan.

Over 125,000 metric tons of goods transferred via railway

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Public Works has announced that more than 125,000 tons of transfers have been made via railway lines in the past two weeks.

National Radio and Television, quoting this department today, Thursday, 6th, Jawza, reported that the Ministry of Public Works stated that 125,290 metric tons of goods had been transferred through the country's railway lines in the past two weeks.

According to this ministry, these transfers have been made through the railway lines of Hairatan, Aqina, and Torghundi. The Islamic Emirate Railway Administration has announced that it is providing suitable conditions and better facilities for traders.

In addition to the domestic railway develop-

ments, Afghanistan is also involved in several significant transnational projects aimed at boosting regional cooperation and economic growth.

One such project is the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline. TAPI is expected to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India, enhancing energy security and fostering economic collaboration among the participating countries.

Another important project is the Central Asia-South Asia power project, commonly known as CASA-1000. This initiative aims to transport surplus hydroelectric power from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. CASA-1000 is crucial for addressing energy shortages in the

recipient countries and strengthening regional energy integration. Additionally, the Lapis Lazuli Corridor is a key regional connectivity project involving Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey.

This corridor aims to facilitate trade by providing a new transit route linking Central Asia with Europe. The project is expected to enhance trade and economic cooperation, contributing to the overall stability and development of the region.

However, the current security situation under the Taliban regime is concerning. Stability is crucial for the successful implementation of projects, and the prevailing instability poses significant challenges to the progress and execution of such initiatives.

Afghanistan and Qatar match ends in goalless draw

KABUL (Khaama Press): The match between the Afghan and Qatari football teams in the second round of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers and the 2027 Asian Cup ended in a goalless draw.

This match, Thursday night, June 6th, was held at the Prince Abdullah bin Jalawi Stadium in Saudi Arabia, where the national team achieved a draw and gained 5 points in the game. With this draw, Afghanistan stands in third place, ahead of the Kuwait national team. Meanwhile, the match between India and Kuwait also ended in a 0-0 draw.

However, the national team will play against Kuwait in the last game of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers and the Asian Cup,



which is scheduled to be held next Tuesday. The Afghan football team, despite showing remarkable skill and resilience, often faces a lack of attention and support. The challenging socio-political environment in Afghanistan has made it difficult for the team to receive adequate resources and training facilities.

Moreover, the global football community has not focused enough on promoting and assisting the Afghanistan team, which hampers their growth and ability to compete at higher levels. Increased international support and recognition could significantly improve their performance and morale.

Orphan children in Ghor seek govt's support to continue education

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): A number of orphan and working children in western Ghor province say they want to study and the caretaker government should help them in this regard, while local officials say education programs for such children have been launched.

Abdul Sabour, 12, is an orphan who works as a cobbler from dawn to dusk along the dusty roads of Ferozkoh City to provide food for his mother and sisters.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News that his father was a police officer in the previous government and he died in the conflict seven years ago. Sabour also goes to school, but with many difficulties as he has to work to eke out a living for his family. According to him, they (Sabour, his mother and

two sisters) live in a rented house, and he often thinks to quit education.

"If the government helps my family, I can study with enthusiasm and peace of mind, otherwise I may leave the school," he added. He earns up to 200 afghanis daily, but some days he returns home empty-handed.

Meanwhile, 10-year-old Fridden, a resident of Ferozkoh city, scavenges junk from garbage heaps with his 12-year-old sister.

He said: "After my father fell sick and died, our situation became very bad, my mother goes to people's houses every day to wash clothes. I go to the market with my sister and we collect paper, old iron or anything that can be sold."

This child collects reusable things from garbage piles in

implementation of this matter. We will also no longer tolerate the celebration of terrorist crimes."

Scholz also said that the presence of these individuals in Germany threatens the security and stability of the country.

The German Chancellor added: "Germany will tighten its deportation laws to make praise for terrorist crimes a basis for deportation after a series of attacks that have prompted calls for a tougher stance on immigration policy."

Military affairs experts considered it important for migrants to adhere to the security laws of other countries.

"Foreign countries must also respect all immigration laws and conventions, and they should not violate these accepted immigration laws," said Sadiq Shinwari, a military affairs expert.

The issue of deporting Afghans and other migrants intensified after a recent attack in Mannheim, southwest Germany, when during a demonstration organized by an anti-Islamic movement, an Afghan injured several people, including a police officer, who later died from his injuries.

Both children asked the government to save them from this situation and provide them with the chance to pursue an education.

However, Maulvi Abdul Wahid Hamas, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok that they had plans to place the orphaned children under their protection and provide them with education.

"Currently, there are 250 orphaned children, 50 of them are girls who are currently enrolled in the kindergarten of the labor and social affairs department."

According to him, these children are taught carpentry, welding and making handicrafts in addition to school subjects.

India’s president invites Modi to head new coalition govt

NEW DELHI (Reuters): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that President Droupadi Murmu had invited him to form a government, as he promised his new coalition of 15 parties would strive for unanimity and emerge successful.

Modi’s comments came after he met Murmu and accepted her invitation to head the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government and run the world’s most populous nation for the next five years. He said the new government would be sworn in on Sunday evening, which would make him prime minister for a historic third consecutive term.

“I want to assure the people of the country that in the 18th Lok Sabha (lower house) also ... we will work with the same pace, same commitment to fulfil aspirations of the people,” he told reporters outside the president’s palace. It is the first time in a decade that his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) — which won majorities outright in 2014 and 2019 — has needed the support of regional parties to form the government, a shift that initially spooked markets and worries analysts about policy certainty and fiscal discipline.

The party, which had a handsome majority in the previous two terms, secured only 240 seats in the lower house of parliament, far short of the 272 needed to govern on its own. The NDA won 293 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha, and the INDIA

alliance, led by Rahul Gandhi’s centrist Congress party won more than 230 to exceed forecasts.

“It is my good fortune that all of you from NDA have chosen me to lead,” Modi said earlier on Friday after NDA lawmakers voted for him to head their coalition. “No alliance has ever been as successful as the NDA,” he said after lawmakers and senior leaders thumped tables and applauded, with some standing and chanting “Modi, Modi!” in the central hall of the old parliament building.

“We have won the majority ... but to run the country it is unanimity that is crucial ... we will strive for unanimity,” he said, in a sign of the change in style coalition government may force on a leader used to ruling with a strong hand. The new government would, among others, focus on raising the savings of the middle class and improving the quality of their lives as the “middle class is the driving force of the country”, Modi added. “It is with utmost humility that I accept the responsibility of leading the NDA to yet another term of development-oriented governance,” the premier said in a statement on social media platform X. “I am grateful to our fellow NDA allies and MPs for their trust in me.”

Key NDA leaders — whose support has wavered in the past as they hopped in and out of alliances — praised Modi and expressed confidence in his leadership. “I am confi-

dent that whatever is left he will now complete it. We will be with him at every step,” said Nitish Kumar, chief minister of the eastern state of Bihar whose Janata Dal (United) party is the third largest in the NDA with 12 lawmakers.

Indian media said both Kumar’s party and the Telugu Desam Party, the second largest with 16 lawmakers, are eyeing the post of the speaker in the lower house, while BJP itself is expected to retain four key ministries — foreign affairs, defence, home and finance. The Janata Dal (United) also wants the new government to review a military recruitment system introduced in 2022 under which young men and women are enlisted for a four-year tenure at non-officer ranks, with only a quarter retained for longer periods.

Previously, soldiers were recruited by the army, navy and air force separately and typically entered service for up to 17 years for the lowest ranks. The shorter tenure caused concern among potential recruits and led to riots in some parts of the country as it was seen as hurting employment prospects. A lack of jobs, besides rising prices and falling incomes, were key issues in the election and led voters to rein in support for Modi, according to a post-election survey. The coalition negotiations are a throwback to an era before 2014 when Modi swept to power with an outright majority for his BJP.

SC orders issuance of advertisement to summon Qasim Suri

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) has ordered to issue an advertisement to summon Qasim Suri in the electoral irregularities case.

A hearing was held in the Supreme Court on the appeal against the de-seating of former deputy speaker National Assembly Qasim Suri. Suri, once again, did not appear before the court despite summons issued for him.

The court ordered to issue an advertisement to summon Suri and asked to paste the notice outside Suri’s house. Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa remarked that according to record, Suri’s brother Bilal had refused to receive the notice. “Suri is deliberately not appearing in the Supreme Court. The former deputy speaker’s refusal to receive the notice is unfortunate,” said the CJP.

The chief justice, while talking to Suri’s lawyer Naeem Bukhari, said, “Your client is very active on media and social media. Naeem Bukhari replied, “I don’t watch TV.” The chief justice remarked, “You are a TV personality yourself and do not watch television. Are you familiar with X or Twitter?,” the CJP asked. Bukhari replied, “I do not use social media nor do I know how to use it.” The chief justice asked, “Why are you considering yourself old, stay young and up-to-date.” Bukhari replied he was old now. Justice Irfan Saadat remarked, “In a TV programme you had said your friends don’t let you grow old.”

Bukhari told the court he had no contact with Qasim Suri. The chief justice said in his remarks that the next hearing will be held in July, and the next date will be fixed in the court order. Later, the court adjourned the hearing till next month.

Asad Qaiser gets interim bail

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A session court in Islamabad today granted interim bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser in four cases until June 22.

As per details, the court accepted the plea seeking interim bail against a surety bond of Rs 5,500 and a local guarantor. The court has directed Asad Qaiser to appear before the investigation team. The court has also issued notices to the prosecution to present evidence and arguments and adjourned the hearing till June 22.

Earlier, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered the removal of former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser’s name from the Exit Control List (ECL). A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Shakeel Ahmed and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah issued orders and termed the addition of his name as unconstitutional and against the law.

The petitioner’s lawyer told the court that Asad Qaiser was the former speaker of the National Assembly and had to perform Umrah and was barred from leaving country. The court declared the order of putting Asad Qaiser’s name in ECL as illegal and ordered the immediate removal of his name from the list. It is to be noted that several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders including former prime minister Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and others were booked by police in various FIRs related to Azadi March.

PTI’s Aliya Hamza sent on four-day physical remand: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Gujranwala on Friday granted a four-day physical remand of PTI leader Aliya Hamza in the May 9 violence case.

The PTI leader was produced before the Gujranwala court wherein police sought her 14-day remand. The court rejected police request and granted four-day physical remand Aliya Hamza. It also directed authorities to present her on next hearing.

Police on Thursday arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Aliya Hamza in another case pertaining to violence on May 9. The police officials stated that the PTI activist was arrested from outside the Sargodha jail.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring award of Nishan-e-Pakistan upon Prince Rahim Aga Khan in recognition of his services for Pakistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Prince Rahim Agha Khan conferred with award

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday conferred the Nishan-i-Pakistan award on Prince Rahim Aga Khan. The top civilian award was conferred on Prince Rahim Aga Khan to acknowledge his meritorious services for the development, prosperity, and betterment of Pakistan and its people.

The award ceremony was held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr and attended by Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, federal ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, and senior government officers.

Prince Rahim Aga Khan, through his many leader-

ship roles for more than a quarter century within the Aga Khan Development Network, dedicated his untiring efforts to improve the living standard of the people in resource-constrained regions of Asia and Africa. Prince Rahim has contributed immensely to the economic, health, education, and cultural well-being of poor and marginalized communities, upholding a multigenerational legacy. Under his leadership, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development has advanced path-breaking initiatives in Pakistan in commercial banking, microfinance, insurance, sustainable tourism and renewable energy sectors.

The Fund has enabled

access to financial services for nearly 50 million people in Pakistan. As the Founding Chairman of Aga Khan Development Network’s Climate and Environment Committee, Prince Rahim Aga Khan has spearheaded the establishment of environmental stewardship policies and best practices to address climate change issues, besides generously supporting the people of Pakistan in the wake of devastating floods of 2022. The services of the Aga Khan family for the Muslims of India, the formation of the All India Muslim League, and the creation of Pakistan were also highlighted in the ceremony.

PHC disposes of 226 missing persons’ cases

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sana Ullah has sent a report to the Ministry of Defense regarding missing persons’ cases. According to the DAG Sana Ullah, there are 98 cases of missing persons pending in the Peshawar High Court.

DAG stated that Attorney General office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa representing the federal government as a respondent in the missing persons’ cases. As many 226 cases related to missing persons have been disposed of from 1st February to 24th May 2024.

The Deputy Attorney General has sent a report to the Ministry of Defense regarding the progress on missing persons cases, which is a quarterly report. Efforts are being made to ensure that the cases of missing persons are decided soon.

Anti-Corruption Court confirms PTI’s lawmakers’ interim bails: Special Anti-Corruption Court Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judge Salahuddin confirmed interim bail of two Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders named Dr. Amjad Ali and Mian Sharafat Ali in illegal appointments case, on Friday.

Special Anti-Corruption Court Khyber Pakhtunkhwa accepted petitioners’ pleas by confirming the interim bail. According to the prosecution, Mian Sharafat Ali, a member of the provincial assembly, is accused of making illegal appointments in the Bahrain Tehsil Municipal Administration, resulting in a loss of Rs. 1.63 crore to the government treasury.

Similarly, Dr. Amjad Ali is also accused of making illegal appointments. The Anti-Corruption Police Station Swat had registered a case against both accused following an inquiry.

Imran joins FIA probe into X post

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: After refusing to appear before investigators twice in connection with the controversial tweet case, the incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has finally joined the probe into the debatable video that appeared on his official X account a few days ago, sources told media.

The former premier Khan formally joined the FIA’s probe which was launched after a controversial video regarding the Fall of Dhaka incident had been posted on his official X account. “Every Pakistani should study the Hamood ur Rahman Commission Report and get to know who was the true traitor, General Yahya Khan or Sheikh Mujibur Rahman,” the post read.

The sources said that an investigation team comprising FIA’s Additional Director Ayaz Ahmed and Sub-Inspector Munib reached the Adiala Jail, again, to question the PTI founder.

Pakistan wants peaceful ties with countries: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office has stated that Pakistan is desirous of building peaceful relations with all countries including the neighbors.

Responding to the queries of media persons at her weekly news briefing regarding relations with India after formation of a new government there, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan has consistently been advocating for constructive dialogue and engagement to resolve all outstanding issues including the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, she said Indian actions of 5th August 2019 in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir have vitiated the

bilateral environment. The spokesperson said Pakistan believes in peaceful coexistence and it wants peace and stability in the region.

She said Pakistan has been acting in a responsible manner notwithstanding the difficulties and rhetoric coming from India. She expressed hope that India would take steps to create a conducive environment for advancement of peace and dialogue and resolution of longstanding disputes for the mutual benefit of peoples of Pakistan and India. The spokesperson said Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will pay a one day visit to Istanbul to attend the extraordinary meeting of the D-8 Council of the Foreign Ministers.

The meeting is being held to discuss the situation

in Gaza at the invitation of Foreign Minister of Turkiye Hakan Fidan. The Foreign Ministers will deliberate on the shared responsibility of international community to bring an urgent and unconditional ceasefire and an end to the inhuman and unjustified war on the people of Gaza.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the Deputy Prime Minister will represent Pakistan’s stance on the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the urgency of the unconditional ceasefire, lifting of the siege and humanitarian relief for the Palestinian people. He will also call for the unified international efforts to bring an end to the rage against the people of Gaza and the war crime being perpetuated by the Israeli occupation forces.

Completion of ongoing projects govt priority: CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur here Friday said that completing ongoing development projects within the stipulated timelines is the priority of the government.

He said that special attention would be given to providing facilities to people instead of making investment in the construction of new buildings; services delivery mechanism in already established institutions would be improved for this purpose.

Pragmatic steps would be taken to ensure that the

citizens are provided with clean drinking water and other basic facilities. He has directed the authorities concerned to initiate work on installing tube wells in the areas, where clean drinking water facility is not available further directing that work on the solarization of those tube wells should also be started simultaneously.

He was addressing a meeting regarding development projects held here at Chief Minister’s House with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. Additional Chief Secretary Planning &

Development Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary P&D Shahidullah and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The participants were briefed about the progress so far made on the development projects being executed in the various sectors under District Development Program.

He made it clear that there would be no compromise on the quality of development projects. Action would be taken against the responsible authorities in case of substandard and unsatisfactory development works, he added.

Yemen Houthis detain aid workers, UN staff

DUBAI (AFP): Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi rebels have detained more than a dozen aid workers, including United Nations staff, in an apparently coordinated sweep, the Yemeni government and an NGO said Friday. At least 18 Yemeni aid workers were kidnapped in four rebel-held parts of the war-torn country, the Yemeni Mayyun Organization for Human Rights said, listing 10 workers from UN agencies.

Yemen’s internationally-recognized government condemned the “massive abduction campaign,” saying it targeted “dozens of employees of the United Nations agencies, the office of the UN envoy Hans Grundberg, and several international organizations working” in the capital Sanaa and other Houthi-run areas. In a statement on social media platform X, Information Minister Moammar Al-Eryani called it an “unprecedented escalation and a flagrant violation of international laws and conventions.”

A diplomatic source, speaking on condition of anonymity, also told AFP that more than a dozen aid workers including UN staff were kidnapped on

Thursday. There was no immediate comment from the Houthis or the United Nations. The abductions underline the perilous task facing aid workers in Yemen, whose long-running civil war has precipitated one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.

“The Houthi armed group raided the homes and kidnapped staff of the United Nations and other international organizations operating in four governorates under” their control, the Mayyun Organization said. This “serious escalation... constitutes a violation of the privileges and immunities of United Nations personnel,” it added, describing the abductions as “black-market practices in order to obtain political and economic gains.”

The “simultaneous” abductions took place in the capital Sanaa, the key port of Hodeida, Amran and Saada, the rebels’ long-standing stronghold, the aid group said. “The Houthis’ actions are undermining essential humanitarian work in Yemen at a time when the majority of Yemenis do not have adequate access to basic necessities like food and water,” Niku Jafarnia, Yemen researcher at

Human Rights Watch, told AFP.

The Houthis have kidnapped, arbitrarily detained, and tortured hundreds of civilians, including UN and NGO workers, since the start of Yemen’s conflict in 2014, according to rights groups. Several aid workers have been killed or kidnapped throughout the conflict, forcing international agencies to temporarily suspend operations or pull out international staff as a security precaution.

The Yemeni information minister said the Houthis have “previously abducted dozens of United Nations employees,” with at least three kidnapped over the past three years still in detention. Last year, the charity Save the Children suspended operations for 10 days in northern Yemen after a staff member died in detention in the rebel-held capital. Also last year, a long-serving staffer with the UN World Food Programme was shot and killed in the southern city of Taiz by unknown gunmen. The Houthis seized control of Sanaa in September 2014, prompting a Saudi-led military intervention on behalf of the government the following March.

Naval Chief message on World Oceans Day

F.P. Report

KARACHI: World Oceans Day (WOD) is celebrated on 8th of June each year; however, this year the Day will be observed on 7th June 2024. The aim WOD is to raise awareness among populace to protect the oceans and their resources as they provide more than 50% of the oxygen produced on this planet and absorb about 30% of carbon dioxide produced by humans, moderating the impact of global warming. The Day provides us an opportunity to focus on the challenges our oceans face in maintaining an ecological balance in the environment.

The theme selected by UNESCO for WOD 2024 is, ‘Awaken New Depths’. This resonates deeply with our mission to protect and restore our oceans with renewed understanding, commitment, collaboration and vigour. Our oceans are facing unprecedented threats from human activities such as overfishing, pollution and climate change. These

threats not only imperil marine life but also cast devastating impacts on our national security, economy, and human well-being.

We depend on our oceans for livelihood; fishing alone, produces not only food for billions of people but also creates millions of jobs worldwide. We need to conserve our enormous marine resources for our future generations. Pakistan Navy, entrusted with the task to protect our maritime interests is working assiduously, in league with Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and relevant agencies to prevent pollution, monitor marine traffic and enforce regulations to ensure sustainability of our oceans.

To commemorate significance of WOD, Pakistan Navy is playing a lead role in promoting safe and sustainable use of ocean resources. A number of events and activities have been arranged to highlight the spirit of the day and raise awareness about oceans and their resources. Some key PN initiatives include: beach cleaning, enforcement of pollution control using harbour debris collection barges, mangroves plantation in association with International Union for Conservation of Nature, banning use of destructive fishing nets, tackling oil pollution at sea and coordinating with industrial community to reduce waste dumping into the sea. National Institute of Maritime Affairs is also holding a seminar on WOD-24 Theme which will help promote the essence of the day.



Pakistan’s weekly inflation up by 0.45%

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation in Pakistan measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.45 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 06, quoting the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 309.91 points as compared to 308.52 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 21.69 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, increased by

0.81 per cent and went up to 301.25 points from the last week’s 298.82 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 0.70 percent, 0.56 percent, 0.51 and 0.33 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 19 (37.26%) items increased, 14 (27.45%) items decreased and 18 (35.29%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included bread (3.02%), garlic (2.00%), petrol (1.74%), pulse masoor (1.43%), diesel (1.42%), rice basmati broken (1.32%), chilies powder (1.31%), eggs (0.94 %), wheat flour (0.77%) and mustard oil (0.46%). The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on week-on-week basis included onions (33.21%), toma-

toes (15.34%), bananas (4.93%), pulse gram (3.69%), potatoes (2.62%), chicken (1.84%), georgette (1.57%), gur (1.45%), pulse mash (1.07%), lawn (0.66%), cigarettes (0.41%) and energy saver (0.38%).

On-year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease included chicken (29.00%), wheat flour (28.35%), bananas (25.69%), cooking oil 5 litre (17.05%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (15.12%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (14.19%), mustard oil (9.73%), eggs (8.73%) and lpg (5.47%). The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included gas charges for Q1 (570.00%), onions (100.37%), chilies powder (57.89%), garlic (43.40%), tomatoes (36.23%), salt powder (31.30%), shirting (30.52%), gents sandal (25.01%), pulse mash (25.00%), beef (21.86%), energy saver (20.53%) and sugar (19.8%).