

Elahi given exemption
F.P. Report
LAHORE: The accountability court in Lahore on Thursday granted former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi's request for exemption from physical appearance in a case involving alleged corruption in development projects. Appearing before the court, a counsel for the PTI leader filed a request for his absence from the hearing, citing his health condition.

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Pak-Azerbaijan to expand investment volume upto \$2b

Islamabad, Baku sign 15 agreements, MoUs to enhance bilateral cooperation in diverse fields

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday agreed to enhance the bilateral investment level of up to US\$2 billion in areas of mutual beneficial projects.

In a joint press stakeout along with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, after witnessing signing of agreements and MoUs in diverse areas between the two countries, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said "we have discussed an initial figure of \$2 billion investment in areas of mutual beneficial projects".

The prime minister hoped that when he will visit Azerbaijan in November this year, the two sides would be ready to ink agreements worth \$2 billion to start with, as there was great potential in both sides to multiply this figure in years to come.

"In today's in depth conversation, we have agreed to enhance our bilateral trade besides discussing areas of joint cooperation and joint investments," he added. The prime minister said, "The bilateral investment volume of less than \$100 million does not reflect the strength of our brotherhood and friendship in the field of joint investment in areas which are mutually beneficial".

Expressing satisfaction over the bilateral meeting, the prime minister said discussions were held on mutual trust and confidence where both sides expressed their unwavering commitment to move forward and touch higher levels of achievements in the fields of trade and investment. He emphasized that Pakistan had always

supported Azerbaijan's stand while the brotherly country had always supported the cause of millions of Kashmiris who had rendered huge sacrifices for more than seven decades to achieve their right of self determination as per UN Security Council resolutions.

He recalled the President Aliyev's visit in 2017 during the tenure of then PM Nawaz Sharif saying that history was repeating as Nawaz Sharif's younger brother was now receiving him along with people of Pakistan. PM Shehbaz hoped that the COP29 to be hosted by Azerbaijan in Baku would be a significant international event for all developing countries including Pakistan. "We are confident that under your wise stewardship, COP29 will deliver on the climate change related issues of developing countries like Pakistan."

He said the Government of Pakistan was impressed by the beautification of Baku, therefore it has decided to copy Baku. Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev said the brotherhood between the two countries was based on deep feelings between peoples of the two sides. "This connection is a big asset, we are brothers, we are friends, and we support each other on every international issue."

He said, "Our state forward support on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, is our commitment to our brotherhood and also our respect to international law, the rights of Kashmiris are ignored and violated for decades." He said the UN Security Council resolutions clearly indicated

how this issue must be resolved but unfortunately UNSC resolutions had no mechanism of implementation.

"But we as brothers and friends will always stand side by side with you, with our brothers in Kashmir, with International law, with justice and I am sure justice will prevail," he added. He said the two sides were analyzing the projects for initial investment of \$2 billion. "During our today's conversation, we reviewed several projects in the areas of energy, connectivity, infrastructure, and defence industry," he said adding "we will build strong partnership not only on political level that we already had but also on economic and trade investment levels."

Meanwhile, Pakistan and Azerbaijan signed 15 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and agreements to promote bilateral cooperation in a range of fields including trade, commerce, tourism, mines & minerals, science technology, law & justice and cultural exchange programs.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev witnessed the signing ceremony held here at the PM House. Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Azerbaijan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Samir Sharifov signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan on Consular Affairs.

(Continued on Back Page)

Justice Aalia Neelum sworn in as LHC CJ



F.P. Report

LAHORE: Justice Aalia Neelum on Thursday became the first woman sworn in as a chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) when she took oath as the top judge of the LHC in a simple ceremony at the Governor's House here.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath to Justice Neelum. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, judges of the High Court and other top officials attended the oath-taking ceremony. It may be noted that Ayesha Malik is the first woman Supreme Court judge. While, Musarrat Hilali was the first woman to be elevated to the rank of chief justice in any court of Pakistan, she sworn as chief justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC).

Chief Justice Neelum's appointment is a significant milestone in the history of the court and a testament to her exceptional qualifications and dedication to the law profession. She is a distinguished jurist with a remarkable career spanning over two decades. The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) had unanimously approved her name in a meeting chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa. The council also considered the names of Justice Shujaat Ali Khan and Justice Baqar Najafi for this post. She would replace Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan who has been elevated to the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Chief Justice Neelum, who was third on the seniority list of the high court, was born in 1966. She earned her degree from the Punjab University Law College in 1995 and holds several other diplomas in law.

No designs to enter into any talks with TTP: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan says it has no designs to enter into any talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the terrorist entity is involved in the killing of Pakistani and foreign citizens inside Pakistan.

The Spokesperson said Pakistan respects Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. She said we expect the Afghan authorities to uphold their

sovereignty and take action against terrorist groups which have found sanctuaries inside Afghanistan and using their territory for terrorist attacks against Pakistan.

Responding to a question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan is committed to implement Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan. She said the first phase of this plan is near completion and alluded to the illegal foreigners including Afghans repatriated to their home countries. The spokesperson clarified that Pakistan has

not given any understanding to the UNHCR for the suspension of the plan. She pointed out that the government has approved one-year extension of the validity of Proof of Registration cards of the Afghan refugees.

To a question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan and the United States have a multifaceted and a robust partnership. She said we believe that this relationship should move forward on the basis of mutual respect, sovereign equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Army requires changes in service structure: Aurangzeb

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday said that Pakistan would strike a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) this month, expressing optimism about the positive progress in talks between Islamabad and the global lender to reach a staff-level agreement on a new bailout programme.

The government is looking to clinch the IMF agreement on a bailout of more than \$6 billion after addressing all of the lender's requirements in its annual budget. "The talks with the IMF are progressing positively," the finance czar said while briefing the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance.

Aurangzeb informed the body that no country could run on a 9% tax-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio and pledged to raise the ratio to 13%. "The Fund requires taxation on the actual income which is fair," the minister said.

The federal government presented the tax-loaded Rs18.877 trillion budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) last month, aimed at shoring up public revenue and satisfying the IMF, which has repeatedly demanded improved tax collection. The budget aims to raise Rs13 trillion by next July, a roughly 40% increase from the current financial year, to bring down a ruinous

debt burden that has caused 57% of government revenue to be swallowed by interest payments.

The tax rises mostly fall on salaried workers, who comprise a relatively small part of Pakistan's mostly informal economy, as well as some retail and export businesses. The budget also threatened punitive measures for tax avoiders, including restrictions on mobile phones, gas and electricity access and the ability to fly abroad. On Sunday, the finance minister warned that Pakistan won't be able to break lose from IMF bailouts if it fails to boost tax revenue.

The minister in today's briefing expressed hope to bring all the sectors into the tax net, saying that everyone will be made a filer as per Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's directives. Taxes had to be jacked up because the tax net was not wide, he added. He further stated that there was a need to reduce human interference in the FBR system, adding that the government will work on increasing people's trust in the FBR.

Aurangzeb went on to say that loan and interest repayment had a major share in the government's expenses. He further stated that five federal ministries would be abolished, as announced by PM Shehbaz Sharif following the budget 2024-25 presentation last month and added that the

decision in this regard will be made by July 30.

While addressing the standing committee, the minister said all the economic indicators remained positive during the last fiscal year, while the foreign exchange reserves remained well above \$9 billion. Moreover, the inflation rate saw a gradual decline during the last fiscal year, he added. The finance czar stated that the Pakistani currency destabilised due to a delay in the IMF programme in 2023.

FinMin Aurangzeb further stated that some changes were being made in the service structure of the military, saying that the military's entire service structure needed amendments. He said that a system of contributory pension for the armed forces of Pakistan will be launched. He said that the system has been notified for the civil servicemen from July 1, 2024; however, new pension scheme for the military servicemen will be applicable from July 1, 2025, he added.

"Those joining service from July 1 will receive their pensions under the new scheme," he added. The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet last month approved major changes to the federal government's pension system. However, the changes to the pension scheme for the armed forces follow with effect from the next fiscal year 2025-26.

The Frontier Post

Man kills three sisters

F.P. Report

SWABI: A man opened fire on his real sisters over a domestic dispute in Zida village of Swabi and killed all three on the spot. The rescue team shifted the bodies of the dead women to the hospital. Earlier, residents of D.I Khan urged the Police to combat soaring crime rates and to make a joint strategy to launch a grant operation against street crimes.



ISLAMABAD: President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif witnessing signing of MoUs and agreements in various sectors between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Flour millers go on strike

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The flour mills were eventually shut down on Thursday for an indefinite period in various parts of the country after the government failed to redress concerns of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) against imposition of withholding tax on the flour, says in media reports.

According to the PFMA, more than 1500 flour mills have halted wheat washing and flour supply followed by recent announcement of taking to strikes if its demand of uncapping the withholding tax on the flour.

SC reserved seats verdict to be announced today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court will announce a verdict on a case related to reserved seats of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) on Friday (today). A cause list was issued on Thursday.

A second consultative meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, with all 13 judges of the full court in attendance. It is noteworthy that the full court bench had also deliberated on the Sunni Ittehad Council's reserved seats for almost two hours on Wednesday.

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan

Saadat Khan and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan attended the meeting. SIC counsel Faisal Siddiqui submitted before the Supreme Court that he would prove that the Election Commission (ECP) had not fulfilled its responsibility.

He stated this as soon as the court resumed hearing on the SIC's plea regarding reserved seats for women and minorities. "I will take 15 minutes to argue my point," he added. Advocate Siddiqui stated that they [ECP] argued that the SIC did not participate in the elections and did not submit the list of candidates for reserved seats.

He argued that the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) did not win any seat in 2018 but got three reserved seats. The ECP submitted a prejudiced response regarding the BAP election. The issue was raised before the ECP before moving the Supreme Court, he submitted and added that the ECP claim was contrary to its own documents.

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2.1m houses being built for flood victims, tells Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Senior Minister of Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon said on Thursday that a total of 2.1 million houses are being built for the flood victims in Sindh.

This he said while addressing a press conference in Karachi after the Sindh Cabinet meeting. The Senior Minister announced that the master plan for Rani Bagh Hyderabad had been approved. Rani Bagh, under the Public-Private Partnership Department of the Local Government Department, was being revived. The government aims to provide recreational facilities to children, he said.

Mr Memon said that the Cabinet meeting approved the recruitment of teachers at Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical College Lyari. He said, previously, if a person bought a car, they would get the vehicle registered within 60 days. Now, no unregistered vehicle will be allowed on the road.

People used to drive vehicles without registration for years, but this will no longer be allowed. This measure will discourage the use of unregistered vehicles in crime and increase revenue. He said that the federal government had allowed the export of 150,000 metric tons of sugar. The cabinet has given conditional approval for the export of sugar, including the quota from Sindh, which is currently under a stay order. As soon as the stay order is lifted, the government will proceed with exporting the sugar.

Memon said that in the Cabinet meeting, approval was given for the establishment of an Infant and Young Child Board and the construction of another bridge on Manchhar Lake and the Indus Highway. The construction of these two bridges will cost 2.3 billion. It was also decided to secure health insurance for employees of the Sindh Assembly and Secretariat from the State Life Company. Additionally, a campus of IBA Sukkur is being built in Ghotki, which will provide quality education to the local community.

Addressing the press conference, Provincial Minister for Minerals and Education Sardar Shah emphasized that the issue of mining in Nangar Park had persisted for a long time, extending into previous administrations. The People's Party firmly believed that local development must align with the will of the community. Mining of granite will not proceed without the consent of the local residents, reflecting the core vision of the People's Party leadership. During the caretaker government, significant confusion arose when the caretaker minister expressed intentions to proceed with mining. I personally conducted a survey in Karunjhar while raising the matter with SIFC, where it was deemed not a workable plan. The Sindh High Court has issued two decisions on this matter.

Shah clarified that the caretaker Minister of Minerals proposed generating significant funds through the export of granite, but this plan was deemed impractical and opposed by the local community.



Nangar Parker Granite Mining site has already been designated as a cultural heritage site. It is firmly established that there are no plans to permit mining in Karunjhar. The Cabinet has decisively resolved to safeguard this historical heritage, ensuring that both Karunjhar and Nangar Parker remain completely secure. This decision by the Cabinet eliminates any ambiguity on the matter. In response to a question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon assured that all departments of the Sindh government are prepared and operational to manage the challenges posed by monsoon rains.

In response to another question, Education Minister Sardar Shah stated that textbooks will begin reaching schools from August 1. Book banks are also being established in schools. He emphasized that he will personally oversee the distribution and transportation of books, and any officer unable to fulfill these responsibilities will be replaced. In response to a question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted that the People's Party faced numerous threats during the elections.

He criticized the PTI government for funding madrasas that allegedly train terrorists and for releasing terrorists from jails. He emphasized that Barrister Saif's allegations against Chairman Bilawal are entirely baseless. He said that the assassination of our leader, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, is a significant example of terrorism against us.

In response to a question, Syed Sardar Shah mentioned that Nangar Park is soon to be declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, and the Sindh High Court has also recommended declaring Karunjhar a heritage site. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, responding to a question, praised Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab for his efforts in establishing urban forests and said Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab has made significant contributions to the development of urban forests. Additionally, the Sindh government's mangrove project is also noteworthy.

In response to a question, Shah clarified that Karunjhar and its surrounding hills have been declared safe, and this report will be submitted to the Supreme Court. Currently, there is no mining activity taking place in Nangarpark or Karunjhar. Responding to another question, Syed Sardar Shah criticized the previous caretaker minister for not providing adequate justification for his claims regarding mining reserves.

Rain forecast in many parts of country

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Meteorological Department on Thursday informed that monsoon currents from Arabian Sea are penetrating upper-central parts of the country and a trough of westerly wave is likely to affect upper parts of the country from tonight.

Thursday weather: Mainly hot and humid weather is expected in the most parts of the country. Rain-wind-thundershowers is expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, upper Punjab, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and northeast Balochistan during evening-night. Heavyfall is likely at isolated places during the period.

Friday weather: Rain-wind-thundershowers is expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Islamabad, upper-central Punjab, northeast Balochistan and southeast Sindh. Heavyfall is likely at isolated places during the period. Hot and humid weather is expected elsewhere in the country.

Past 24 Hours Weather: Rain-wind-thundershower occurred in Islamabad, northeast Punjab, Pothohar region, Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Zhob. Hot and humid weather prevailed over other parts of the country.

Rainfall(mm): Punjab: Islamabad (Saidpur 45, Zero Point 39, Golra 22, Bokra 05, Airport 03), Rawalpindi (Shamsabad 34, Chaklala Airport 19, Kacheri 11), Lahore (Tajpura 30, Lakshmi Chowk 29, Qurtaba Chowk 25, Farrukhabad 24, Upper Mall 23, Mughalpura, Chowk Nakuhda, Shahi Qila 20, Airport 14, Gulshan-e-Ravi 13, Nishtar Town, City 05, Wasa Head Office, Samanabad 02), Faisalabad (City 19, Dogar Basti 10, Allama Iqbal Colony, Madina Town 09, Gulistan Colony 08, GMA Water Works 04), Mangla 12, Jhelum, Hafizabad 08.

Narcotics seized

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh Excise and Narcotics Control Department conducted five major raids across Karachi, resulting in the arrest of seven smugglers and the seizure of substantial quantities of narcotics.

The operations, executed in various parts of the city, yielded a total haul of 59 kg of hashish, 7 kg of ice (crystal methamphetamine), and 1 kg of heroin. Notable arrests included Chingiz Ali and Riyaz Ahmed at Hub River Road, where 3 kg of ice was found hidden in their vehicle. Another operation at Jhanda Shah graveyard led to the arrest of Amjad Khan and the recovery of 1 kg of heroin.

Pakistani women proved abilities in all fields: Kundi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Thursday said that Pakistani women have proved their skills and abilities in all sectors of life besides significantly contributing to the country's socioeconomic and development process.

Addressing national conference on role of women in peace as chief guest at Islamabad, the Governor said that first women prime minister of the Muslim world Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was a role model for women even today due to her matchless services for empowerment of females, democracy, politics, supremacy of constitution and development of Pakistan.

He said that socioeconomic welfare and bringing poor women under national mainstream was the top priority of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed. For ensuring peace, development and mutual coexistence in society, said that Pakistani women have all required skills and abilities to prove their mettle in every sector of life and their services for Pakistan were highly praised and worthy.

Faisal Karim Kundi said the role of women in existence of a peaceful and prosperous family viz a viz society



was of paramount significance, and underscored the need for equal opportunities to women folk for establishment of durable peace and harmony in society.

"Economic empowerment of women and highlighting their potential and talent for betterment of society was his priority," he said, adding Benazir Income Support Program has raised the stature of poor women and dignity in Pakistan.

The Governor said that ownership papers of houses after its reconstruction recently were being given on names of women in Sindh province, saying it is Pakistan Peoples Party that had given proper representation to females whether it was speaker,

national assembly, foreign minister, senate or any other forum.

The struggle of women in the media sector could not be overlooked, he said, adding services' jurisdiction regarding provision of technical education to women of KP and Balochistan would be enhanced. Efforts are underway to enhance skills of women and for this purpose negotiation with different institutions including NAVETC was in progress. The Governor reaffirmed commitment to work for increasing expertises and abilities of youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by enabling them to become jobs givers instead of jobs searchers.

Every employed Pakistani should pay income tax


F.P. Report

KARACHI: Renowned economist Dr Kaiser Bengali said that there was the need for a national consensus among all stakeholders on the country's defence, diplomatic, and economic goals and interests.

He noted that developed countries had a national consensus on sustaining economic and developmental continuity, where policies remained consistent even if the governments changed. Dr Bengali made these remarks as the guest speaker at the monthly meeting of Hamdard

Shura Karachi, held at the Hamdard Corporate Head Office, titled "Budget 2024-25: Was Justice Done to All Sectors?" Speaker General (r) Moinuddin Haider, presided over the meeting. Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, also attended the meeting.

In his address, Dr. Bengali stated that before 1977, there was a national consensus on the country's economic development. However, Pakistan later took a wrong direction. The main economic issue of Pakistan is trade and budget deficits.



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Jawad Ali	16102-2863836-5	Mohalla Ghazi Khail, Post Office Khas, Mardan.	23	1 Necklace, 2 Kanty
Asim Shah	16101-8282203-5	Seedan Dheri, Cuta Khat, Tehsil and District Mardan.	13.25	1 Necklace, 1 Tikka
Imran Khan	16101-0488063-9	Kala Dheri, Post Office Khas, Pallu Dheri, Mardan .	30.35	4 choorian

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Mobilink Bank

Labor organizations play down Sindh Labor Code

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The leaders of representative labor organizations today rejected the anti-worker draft of the "Sindh Labor Code" presented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Sindh Labor Department without consultation.

They rejected the draft while addressing a joint press conference of workers' representatives in Karachi. They declared that any attempt to legalize it will be strongly resisted. Nasir Mansoor, General Secretary National Trade Union Federation told the press conference that the code draft was a conspiracy to impose anti-labor laws on the workers of Sindh without the established tripartite consultation process. He further said that the Sindh Labor Code draft aimed to usurp the basic rights of workers, which they had achieved through over a century of struggle. It was a blatant violation of the core conventions of the ILO, where the identity of the worker and his relationship with the employer had been eliminated.

Mansoor said that the current labor laws grant the right to permanent employment to workers, but the "Sindh Labor Code" seeks to

legalize the illegal contract labor system, thereby imposing a wage slavery system in workplaces and providing capitalists with a legal excuse to evade their responsibilities.

Naseem Rao, Senior Vice President Pakistan Workers Federation said that Instead of making the definition of workers modern, comprehensive, and better aligned with current needs, this code had made it more complicated, leaving workers entirely at the mercy of contractors, sub-contractors, or third-party recruiting agencies, which will reduce millions of workers to unrecognized wage slaves.

Liaquat Ali Shai, General Secretary State Bank of Pakistan CBA Union said that the proposed "Sindh Labor Code" shamelessly redefined factory owners into different categories, exempting them from their legal responsibilities and informalizing the formal

sector. As a result, in the event of any industrial dispute, workers will be deprived of all basic rights such as legal action, social security, pension, unionization, bonuses, working hours, and gratuity.

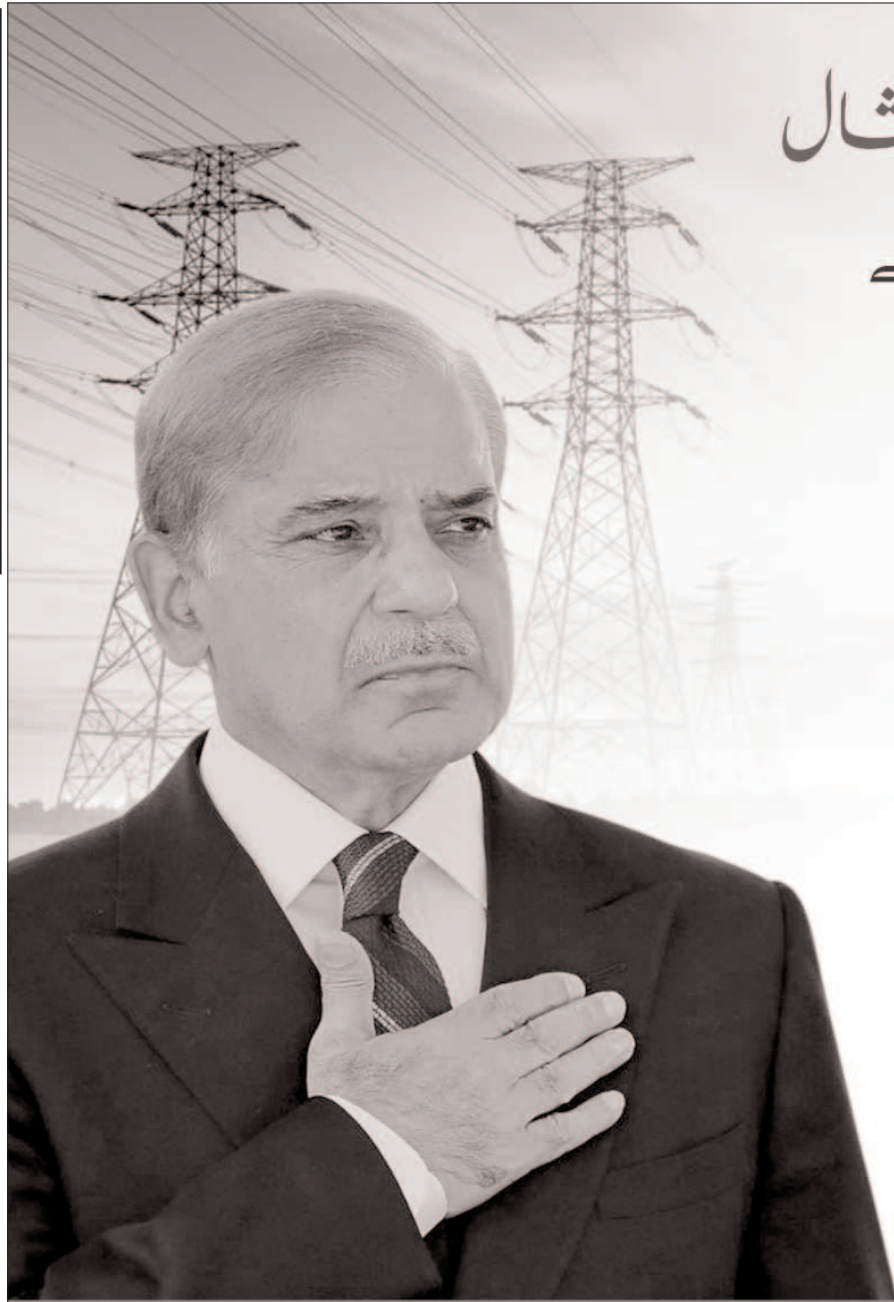
اعلان گشدری

مجھ سے میری اہم نقل کی اور پبلشنگ ڈگری جس کا سربریل نمبر 0 0 4 3 8 اور انٹرولٹ نمبر B0320131005 بعد اہم نقل ڈی اہم کی چارسدہ روڈ بٹشوہل پر گم ہو گئی ہے۔ اگر کسی کو ملے تو مندرجہ ذیل پتہ پر ارسال کریں۔ انٹلافورڈ ملہ محمد فرید خان کاؤن ہائیکمپلشنگ ملہ کرک

نوٹس (مشتری ہوشیار باش)

بذریعہ نوٹس بڑا اشتہار کیا جاتا ہے کہ دکان نمبر B-39، برقیہ 259 مربع فٹ، سروے نمبر 542/3-B، C&D، واقع پور پازہ، صدر روڈ، پشاور کیٹ کے لیز ہولڈر انش جو کہ کیونٹ بورڈ کے رکارڈ میں سہ ماہی کے نظام و نظام کے نام پر موجود ہے۔ یہ کہہ سکتے ہیں ہارون ولد اولیاء خان، بحیثیت قمار عام مناجاب مسماہ راج بیگم ولد نظام محمد نے مذکورہ بالا دکان نمبر: محمد عارف محمد آصف اور محمد ادریس پیران اولیاء خان پر بذریعہ رجسٹری شدہ دستاویزات نمبر: 1948، بی نمبر: 01، جلد نمبر: 364، مورخہ: 27-06-2023 کو فروخت کر دی ہے۔ اب نمبر: محمد عارف محمد آصف اور محمد ادریس پیران اولیاء خان نے مذکورہ بالا دکان کے لیز ہولڈر انش اپنے ناموں پر منتقل کرنے کے لئے ایک محدود درخواست بعد رجسٹری دفتر بذمہ ادا کر دی ہے۔ اگر کسی شخص، بینک یا ادارے کو مذکورہ بالا دکان کی منتقلی پر کوئی اعتراض ہو تو اشتہار ادا کی اشاعت کے پندرہ (15) دن کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض مجھے ذمہ داری چیلن کریں۔ بعد ازاں منتقلی کی کارروائی مندرجہ بالا درخواست گزار کے ناموں پر عمل میں لائی جائے گی اور کوئی تاخیر قابل قبول نہ ہوگا۔

اشتہار: کیونٹ انٹیکو آفسر پشاور



عوام کا خیال - ریلیف بے مثال

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200 یونٹ تک

بجلی استعمال کرنیوالے تمام گھریلو صارفین کو جولائی سے ستمبر تک

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اس ریلیف سے کے الیکٹرک کے صارفین بھی مستفید

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حکومت پاکستان



Reforms in local govt and subsidiary bodies underway: Arshad Ayub

WSSP event honors employees for outstanding performance

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Arshad Ayub Khan, announced that significant reforms are being introduced within the Department of Local Government and its subsidiary bodies. The department is undergoing digitization, and a new lease policy has been approved to strengthen institutions by eliminating corruption. Employees demonstrating exceptional performance will be rewarded, while those with poor performance will be guided towards improvement.

He made these remarks while addressing an award ceremony where cash prizes and certificates were distributed among Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) employees for their excellent performance during the Eid-ul-Azha operation. Secretary Local Government Muhammad Dawood Khan, Commissioner Peshawar, and CEO WSSP Riaz Mehsud also spoke at the event. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Commissioner Afaq Wazir, WSSP Board members, and management officials.

The provincial minister distributed cash prizes to 52 employees and certificates to 17 management officials, totaling PKR 520,000. He praised the exemplary sanitation campaign conducted across the province during Eid-ul-Azha, highlighting WSSP's outstanding performance in Peshawar. The government provides an annual grant of PKR 7 billion to seven sanitation companies in the province. The caretaker government had halted payments for basic services, causing difficulties for WSSP and other institutions. However, due to the interest of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, significant arrears have been paid, with the remaining dues expected to be cleared in the next three to four months.

Minister Ayub emphasized that institutions should not always rely on government grants and must work towards increasing their revenue to become self-sufficient. The government is considering various options, including granting more autonomy to institutions, to bring about reforms and increase transparency. Corruption has deeply rooted itself, and if not controlled, it will cripple the institutions. Zero tolerance for corruption will be maintained.

Secretary Local Government Dawood Khan commended the successful teamwork that led to the effective Eid-ul-Azha cleanliness campaign, receiving praise from all sectors of society. He stressed the importance of municipal institutions and how employee morale can be boosted through appreciation and encouragement. The department will continue to support WSSP.

Commissioner Peshawar and CEO WSSP Riaz Mehsud assured that efforts to improve performance would continue. The staff lived up to the government's expectations during Eid-ul-Azha, and those who performed well are being encouraged. Disciplinary actions were taken against 297 employees for absenteeism during the operation. Multiple measures have been taken to make the company self-reliant and increase revenue, with optimal utilization of available resources and continuous efforts to enhance services.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Arshad Ayub Khan giving cash prizes to WSSP employees for their outstanding services.

PHC grants bail in alleged bounce cheques case

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhel granted bail to Zahid Iqbal held in bounce cheques relating to business activities.

The complainant in his application/ first information report alleges that the petitioner had issued three cheques on 20. 07. 2023, 21. 07. 2023 and 02. 08. 2023, which were dishonored, PHC judgement stated.

The complainant further alleges that after dishonor of the cheques he moved application for registration of FIR, but the accused on getting knowledge of application arrived at settlement and in this respect they have scribed an Iqarnama dated 02. 08. 2023, but the accused did not adhered the agreement and again handed over the said cheques of the dates 02.05.2024 and 03.05.2024, which were dishonored.

The counsel Subhan Sher advocate argued for release of petitioner on bail and stated that it is business related issue while isn't lays in the jurisdiction of offense.

The facts narrated by the complainant does not appeal to prudent mind and create doubts, as once the cheques were dishonored, then how the accused again handed over the same cheques with new dates and why the case was not registered in the year 2023, when initially the cheques were dishonored.

Moreover, the cheques were given in a business transaction, hence the intention of petitioner to commit fraud and issue a cheque dishonestly will be seen during trial, while at this stage it requires further probe into the matter.

PHC verdict stated that "this also establishes that business transactions had been taking place between the parties and the allegation of the complainant that the disputed cheque had been issued only for a single transaction also call for further enquiry".

Meeting discusses reforms in KP universities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 4th meeting of the Task Forces Committee convened at Khyber Medical University (KMU) under the supervision of Vice Chancellor KMU, Meritorious Prof Dr. Zia Ul Haq.

This committee, formed by Minister HED Meena Khan, had participation from its members, including Prof. Dr. Jameel Ahmad from HEC (IT) Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Abdussalam Khalis, Prof. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Director of IM Sciences, Prof. Dr. Gul Muhammad from UET Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Zahoor Khan from IM Sciences Peshawar, Fareed Ullah Shah, Director of Colleges, Prof. Dr. Raza Shah, Dr. Abdullah Sadiq, Dr. Mohsin Habib, Deputy Secretary Universities, Prof. Dr. Shafiq ur Rehman, Adviser QA (HED), Prof. Dr. Hafeez Ullah and Dr. Abdul Sadiq.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Minister and HED Meena Khan are striving to enhance innovation and quality assurance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's higher education system.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa govt is committed to ensuring the financial stability of all universities in the province. Contrary to media rumors, there are no discussions to merge universities. Instead, the committee is focused on improving quality standards and giving future road map for all universities.

The Task Force Committee is preparing a foundational outline to guide their recommendations, which will be presented to the provincial government on July 31, 2024.

These recommendations aim to bring significant improvements to higher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, potentially revolutionizing the sector.

The proposed steps will focus on sectoral plans, policy recommendations, optimal utilization of funds and resources, financial crisis management, and resource optimization in higher education institutions.

Contempt of court plea filed against KPHFA officials

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A contempt of court petition has been filed against Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Halal Food Authority Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Secretary Food Zareef ul Mani, Director General (DG) Halal Food Authority Waseem Saeed and Director Administration for failing to comply with Peshawar High Court (PHC) orders.

The petition was filed by Tahir Muhammad Khan through his lawyer, Shahab Khattak while pleaded that the applicant applied for the post of Administration Officer in Halal Food Authority in 2018 and was at the top of the merit list.

Despite being the most qualified candidate, he was not given the job. The applicant filed a writ petition in the Peshawar High Court, which was accepted on 8th May 2024, the writ says.

PHC ordered cancellation of Shah Faisal appointment, who was illegally appointed to the post. The court also directed the relevant authorities to withdraw the notification of Shah Faisal's appointment.

However, despite the clear orders of the court, Shah Faisal has not been notified and is still working on his post.

The respondents have been using different tactics to delay the matter and have not withdrawn the appointment orders of Shah Faisal, the petition stated.

Moreover, the petition requested for actions against the officials for contempt of court and added that cancellation of appointment to the post of Administration Officer as per the court's orders.

Drug-afflicted girl 'Mahnoor' under treatment in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the directive of Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mahsud, a 20-year-old girl, Mahnoor, afflicted by severe drug addiction, has been transferred from Jamrud for treatment.

She is currently undergoing treatment at the Al-Khidmat Rehabilitation Center in Peshawar under the supervision of consultant psychiatrist Dr. Iqtidar Ahmed Roghani.

According to medical reports, Mahnoor's blood samples have shown traces of various narcotics including ice, opium, heroin, alcohol, cannabis, and addictive pills. Formal treatment has commenced to address her condition.

Following her recovery, efforts will be made to locate her parents and relatives, while investigations will delve into the reasons behind her addiction.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister on Population Welfare Malik Liaqat Ali Khan presenting shielf to Secretay Population Mutasim Billah.

NAB KP distributes cheques among affectees

PESHAWAR: A cheque distribution ceremony was held at NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding distribution of cheques among the affectees in reference against Qazi Abu Bakar and others. NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had filed a reference of Rs.47.11 million against Qazi Abu Bakar and others in a cheating public at large case under the garb of Mudarba. The Accountability Court Peshawar announced its judgment on 18.09.2018 and convicted the accused persons. In the said judgment, one accused person namely Abdul Rehman Shoaib was declared as proclaimed offender. He remained proclaimed offender for over six years. NAB KP through its dedicated efforts apprehended the accused Abdul Rehman Shoaib in May 2024 and presented him before the Accountability Court. During his physical custody, the accused submitted application for Plea Bargain, which was accepted by the Competent Authority and approved by the Accountability Court Peshawar. The amount recovered from the accused through Plea Bargain was distributed among the .affectees on Thursday.

Chanzeb inspects various uplift schemes for tourism in Balakot

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzeb, Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture, during a detailed visit to Balakot and Kaghan Valley, inspected various development schemes under the Department of Tourism. Local MPA Munir Laghmani, Director General Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) Mohammad Shabbir, Chief Planning Officer of Tourism Department Syed Zain Ali Shah Gilani, Assistant Commissioner Balakot Syeda Basharat Shah and other authorities accompanied him besides the local elite.

Zahid Chanzeb specially reviewed the work on Ghanol site and Manoor Valley Roads, besides other schemes on development of tourist spots on the banks of Kunhar river.

During the visit he expressed extreme anguish over the non-completion of some schemes in the stipulated time. He made clear that these roads were going integral part of the tourism development in these scenic but backward areas. He issued orders to complete all tourism schemes including the construction of road infrastructure in Balakot. He clarified that the construction of highways has a key role in the development of tourism in order to make the travel of tourists to these remote places easier and comfortable as well as to increase the attraction of such tourist hill stations.

The Tourism Adviser further cautioned the officials that he would make a surprise visit to tourist spots across the province during which he would not refrain from taking disciplinary action on the spot against the officers found guilty of negligence in timely and quality completion of development schemes.



ERDA organizes workshop for capacity building of agri inputs dealers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (ERDA) organized a one-day workshop for the capacity building and business-to-business networking of the agriculture inputs dealers from different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the Merged Districts. The workshop also provided a platform to some of the leading national and multinational agriculture input providers participating from across the country. Titled as 'Building Capacities and Creating Partnerships', the workshop was designed to strengthen public-private sector engagement as well as provide networking opportunities to agriculture inputs providers, dealers, and suppliers of seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides.

In his opening remarks, the ERDA's Deputy Chief of Party, Shakeel Kakakhel said, 'Khyber



Pakhtunkhwa has been experiencing a decline in agricultural farm sizes and land holdings because of increasing population and division of land among family members in successive generations. In order to overcome this limiting factor, it is important to increase land productivity through optimal application of quality agriculture inputs, adoption of advanced agricultural practices and utilization of modern technologies.'

The relevant officials from the Agriculture Department of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also present at the workshop and shared the government's regulatory frameworks, ongoing initiatives, and planned interventions with regards to the registration, supervision, and facilitation of agriculture inputs providers. The technical presentations given by the Agriculture Department officials covered standard operating procedures for the registration of

agriculture input providers, innovative practices and modern technologies to address plant protection challenges, and safeguards in the use of pesticides to reduce their environmental and climate impacts.

Speaking at the workshop, the Director Plant Protection at the Directorate General Agriculture Extension, Muhammad Naveed Khan said, 'we are keeping a close liaison with the agriculture inputs service providers and dealers in order to facilitate them properly'. He further stated that their mandate was to improve the quality standards of agricultural inputs and to regulate the sale, distribution, manufacturing, standardization, registration, and monitoring of agriculture inputs service dealers and companies.

The presentations were followed by a panel discussion comprising agriculture research and development experts from the public and private sectors. The interactive panel discussions

focused on the role of agriculture inputs dealers in protecting improved variety seeds in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, climate-friendly plant protection technologies and practices, and emerging products, including bio-fertilizers and micronutrients for increasing crop productivity. The discussions were made more engaging and responsive by providing space for sharing comments, feedback, questions, and answers.

As part of the networking and business-to-business partnerships sessions of the workshop, the agriculture input dealers held corner meetings with representatives from the public and private sectors on matters of common interest and interventions. The session also provided facilitation in business matchmaking and partnerships development for private sector firms dealing in the supply of agriculture inputs to further promote their products and services.



In brief

Protestors attack grid F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: An angry mob on Thursday attacked the PESCO's Sarai Naurang Grid and after mistreating the staff threw all the valuable gadgets out of the grid premises. According to PESCO Spokesman, the protestors with stones and sticks in their hands entered forcefully into the grid and not only damaged the grid machinery but also threw out the electric wires, meters and other gadgets on the road outside the grid. He said the protestors, besides incurring losses of hundreds of thousands to the grid, also switched off the whole electricity transmission resulting in disconnection of power supply to the city. The protesting consumers of Mamakhel Feeders attacked the grid due to electricity load shedding in the areas. The Spokesman said Mamakhel Feeder was showing line losses of 68 percent which resulted in power management on the feeder. The protestors also attacked the PESCO Field Store and Sub Division Office. Later, the protestors blocked the Sarai Naurang Highway for hours saying that power outages had forced them to stage a strong protest.

13 including women injured F.P. Report

HANGU: At least 13 people including women were injured when the roof of an under-renovation masjid fell in Hangu district on Thursday. Assistant Commissioner Hangu, Asfandyar Khalid told media persons that the incident occurred in Lodhi Khel area where work on repair and renovation of a masjid was underway. He said Masjid e Bilal was being renovated for Muharram ul Haram and local men and women were taking part in the work when its roof could not bear the weight of people and collapsed. At least 13 people were injured in the incident. He said nine women were among the injured 13 people adding that the injured were shifted to Kohat and Peshawar for treatment.

Public safety top priority: DPO

KHANEWAL (INP): District Police Officer (DPO) Ismail ur Rehman Khan on Thursday pledged to make the district crime-free, stating that the protection of life and property in Khanewal is his top priority. According to DPO Office, Ismail ur Rehman assured that foolproof measures have been taken to maintain law and order during Muharram. The police chief expressed these views while meeting with a delegation of senior journalists from the District Press Club. He emphasized that criminals, regardless of their influence will be brought to justice. DPO also acknowledged the important role of the media in helping the police address public concerns and solve problems. He ensured that the police are working hard to ensure the safety of the people and are monitoring Muharram processions and meetings closely.

Polling end peacefully F.P. Report

KHAR: The polling process for the by-election on PK-22 Bajaur began at 8 a.m. as according to the ECP schedule, voting will conclude at 5 pm. Mubarak Zeb, who was elected as an independent on, vacated the PK-22 seat after retaining NA-8, prompting the ECP to announce elections for the vacant position.

KP govt to establish furniture zone in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Thordher along with Provincial Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru visited Mardan, on Thursday. He presided over a meeting at the office of Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) Mardan in which SIDB Managing Director Habibullah Arif, Government Polytechnic College Mardan Principal Nasrullah Khan and other officials of SIDB and Industries Department participated.

The meeting discussed necessary measures for establishing a modern industrial zone for furniture making in Mardan. Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru highlighted the importance of furniture making industry in Mardan and said that this industry needs to be developed on modern lines. The meeting was told that Mardan has a prominent position in the furniture industry.

The provincial government is working on a plan

to promote this industry in the region, which includes the establishment of an industrial zone in Mardan with state-of-the-art furniture manufacturing facilities over a large area. This will not only strengthen the economy of the province but also provide ample employment opportunities in the region.

Special Assistant for Industries and Technical Education directed the relevant authorities to prepare a report regarding the required administrative and legal matters for the establishment of this zone. He said that a number of projects are in progress for the promotion of small and large scale industries in the province.

The Special Assistant also visited Central Jail Mardan along with Food Minister. On this occasion, members of Provincial Assembly Abdul Salam Afridi and Amir Farzand Khan were also present. Superintendent Jail Najam Abbasi, while giving a briefing, said that different types of technical trainings have been arranged for prisoners in Central Jail.

A detergent factory and a marble factory are already

functioning in the jail, for which modern machinery and tools are needed. He said that the products manufactured in the jail are being kept for sale at various mega marts. The inmates also have a share in the income from this, which is directly transferred to their personal accounts.

The delegation visited marble and detergent factory inside the prison. He appreciated the quality of work of the prisoners working in the factories. The Special Assistant to Chief Minister assured that the products produced in the jail will also be kept in the Art and Craft gallery of SIDB.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Islamabad. He said that the government is trying to make the prisoners useful citizens of the society by teaching them various skills during their imprisonment. He said that talks are going on to set up a carpet industry in Mardan Jail. Abdul Kareem said that the Department of Technical Education will fully cooperate with the Department of Prisons regarding the training of prisoners.

Two killed 30 injured in rain related accidents

F.P. Report

BANNU: Strong winds, stormy rains and hailstorms have caused havoc in various areas, dozens of accidents, the roof of many houses collapsed in various accidents, two people were killed, while 30 people were injured, including women and children, rescue sources to the injured DHQ and Khalifa Gul Nawaz Hospital are being transferred.

Emergency in effect in all three hospitals, doctor's holidays canceled Deputy Commissioner of Bannu Shah Saud's administration visited the DHQ hospital with officers and instructed to provide all medical facilities to the injured.

During the tehsil, Municipal Officer Muhammad Yusuf Khan visited various areas with TMA staff to monitor the relief operations, while in the city, after visiting the low-lying areas below, TMA employees inspected the ongoing operation.

Four killed over children quarreling

F.P. Report

LARKANA: As many as four people were killed while several other were injured over children quarrel in the premises of Rasheed Waggan police station, on Thursday.

According to details, the dispute created over children fighting, in which Shaukat Ali Zangejo, Arz Muhammad Zangejo, Shaman Ali Zangejo and Ali Akbar Zangejo were killed on the spot while more than three people were injured due to gunshots. Later they were handed over to the heirs.

Deputy Inspector General Larkana Nasir Aftab Patahan took strict notice and issued orders to the Senior Superintendent of Police to send a heavy force to the said village Naich and the arrest the accused involved in the incident have been issued. While four people were killed in one village, the village is said to be in a state of mourning, while the police force has been alerted for any other sudden incident.

Jirga held in Wana

F.P. Report

WANA: A grand jirga was convened demanding redressal the deteriorating law and order situation in the region. The jirga brought together prominent elders from the nine major tribes of Ahmadzai Wazir, religious scholars, local political leaders, and representatives from all walks of life.

The attendees unanimously passed a resolution urging the government to take concrete measures to restore peace and order in Lower Waziristan. They emphasized that the state is responsible for maintaining peace in the area, which has been disrupted by recent incidents of terrorism, kidnapping, and target killing.

UET Swat employees held protest in favour of their demands

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: University of Engineering (UET) Swat employees staged a protest demonstration at Kanju campus while demanding the administration to address their long-standing grievances. The protesters held placards inscribed with slogans, urging the university to fulfill their demands.

Addressing the protesters, Shafqat, Riaz, and Ishtiaq said that the contracts of employees working on a duty-based system had expired on June 30, leaving them in a state of uncertainty. They alleged that the university had been without a permanent project director for a long time, which had pushed the insti-



tution towards destruction.

The protesters condemned the provincial government's proposal to merge Engineering University Swat with UAT Peshawar, terming it a "gross injustice" against the institution and the local community. They demanded the government to reconsider their legitimate demands,

including the appointment of a permanent project director, extension of employees' contracts, and expansion of the university project.

The protesters warned that if their demands were not met, they would launch a full-fledged protest movement and would not hesitate to make any sacrifices to achieve their rights.

KKKUK inspection body visits Govt Degree College

F.P. Report

KARAK: The Inspection Committee of Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, led by Registrar Dr. Rafi Ullah Khan, visited Government Degree College Latamber on Thursday, to assess the college's facilities and readiness for affiliation of its BS Computer Science program.

The Inspection Committee included Dr. Rafi Ullah Khan, Controller of Examinations Muhammad Rahim, Director, QEC Dr. Muhammad Anwar, HoD Physics and Chemistry Dr. Abdul Hakim Shah, Chief Librarian Dr. Muhammad Hussain, Dy. Registrar Ahmed, Lecturer, Computer Science Shad Muhammad, Ashraf Ali and Amjad Islam.

During the visit, the Inspection Committee precisely inspected various facilities including classrooms, library, computer



labs, sports stadium and allied facilities, and examination halls. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the infrastructure, faculty availability, and overall suitability of Government Degree College Latamber for affiliation with Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak in BS Computer Science.

The Committee members engaged with the Principal of Government Degree College Latamber and posed several inquiries regarding faculty availability, infrastructure adequacy, and support systems in place for launching of BS

CS Program.

Upon completion of the inspection, the committee will compile its findings and submit a detailed report to the Director Academics & Research at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Dr. Anwar Khan. The report will outline the observations made during the visit and provide recommendations for the further process of affiliation. This visit is a significant step towards enhancing educational opportunities in the region, aiming to enhance access to quality higher education in the field of Computer Science.

Awareness walk held on World Population Day

F.P. Report

TANK: The Population Welfare Department, Tank arranged an awareness walk to mark the World Population Day, here on Thursday.

The walk was started from Deputy Commissioner Office which was participated by Additional Assistant Commissioner Jamshed Alam, Additional Assistant Commissioner Jandola Inaam Khan, District Population Welfare Officer Dr Muhammad Tariq, District Sports Officer Irfan Ullah and other officers and staffers of Population Welfare Department.

The participants were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans of importance of small family as well as problems of rapid increase in population.

Addressing the participants, Additional Assistant

Commissioner Jamshed Alam and District Population Welfare Officer Dr Muhammad Tariq said that organizing this walk was aimed to create awareness among people that controlling the population was mandatory for a healthy society.

Therefore, everyone should strive and play a role in overcoming the challenge of rampant population growth.

They said the public cooperation was mandatory to control rapid increase in population. Therefore, everyone should consciously follow the population welfare program to overcome the issues of education, health, poverty and unemployment. At the end of the walk, the participants made this commitment that they will play their full role in spreading the message of World Population Day and controlling population.

Quality, prices of food items checked
F.P. Report

MINGORA: Additional Assistant Commissioner Bahrain, Swat Ahmad Sher paid a surprise visit to the bazaar and checked the quality and prices of food items. According to the district administration Swat, the Additional Assistant Commissioner reviewed the availability of basic food items such as flour, oil, ghee, rice, pulses, vegetables, meat, poultry, and bread at official rates for consumers and tourists.

He informed shopkeepers and hotel owners about the provincial government's clear instructions and emphasized strict adherence to the officially prescribed rates.

High time for population control strategy for progress

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: On the eve of World Population Day, the District Population Welfare Office Kohat has arranged a one-day Sensitization Seminar for the Heads of Government Departments which was attended by the heads of government departments, on Thursday.

The participants on this occasion also presented various useful suggestions for the successful family planning programs. District Population Welfare Officer Kohat Malik Taj while highlighting the aims and

objectives of the seminar said that family planning is the need of the hour for establishment of a developed and progressive Pakistan. He added that Pakistan's population rate is much higher than other neighboring countries, which is alarming.

The officer said that the rapidly growing population of Pakistan, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will have very negative impacts on the socio economic conditions in the future. Therefore, it is high time to adopt Islamic teachings and family planning

methods to control the rapidly growing population, Malik Taj said.

He added that the participants of the seminar belong to an important section of the society, they have an identity and have a say, therefore, they can play a very important role in the government's initiatives for family planning. The population officer said that effective family planning can reduce problems of the country manifold. If the unplanned population continues to grow like this, the next generation will have to pay a huge price for it, he concluded.

As many as 30000 activists enroll as JUI-F workers

F.P. Report

BUNER: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F) Election Coordinator Maulana Sher Zaman Khan and Sher Rehman have said that like the entire country, the membership campaign is going on successfully in Buner district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and thirty thousand membership forms have been submitted before the deadline 25th July.

JUI-F claimed, data has been put on the computerized software, according to which Buner is at the top in the entire province. They further said that ten to fifteen thousand more members are expected for which the membership form books will be received soon from the Peshawar office. While

talking to the media, Nazim Intikhabat (chief election commissioner) his Assistant have claimed that the membership forms have been delivered to each village council level of the Jamaat and the responsible at the Tehsil level is monitoring the process and entering data on the computerized software, they shared.

They proudly added that in the present worst political situation, the leaders of the treasury and the opposition leadership too, repeated visit at the palace of Maulana Fazlur Rehman. They argued it has been proved the Jamaat's leadership and Jamaat's politics of national interest.

They repeatedly claimed the Jamaat leadership and politics the time

tested and proved to be correct. They invited the workers of Jamaat and the public of Buner to join the membership drive and fill of membership form of Jamaat to achieve success in this world and the hereafter.

Armed robbers looted family

VEHARI (INP): Four armed robbers looted women in front of their house on Thursday, police said. As per detail, the veiled robbers carrying pistols intercepted a car just a few feet away from the house in the limits of Danawal Police Station. The bandits snatched gold earrings with bracelets from the women at gunpoint.

Over population and environment

Murad Khan

GHALANAI: With increase in population growth the need for facilities, energy, infrastructure, manufacturing and industrialization is also increased, all these leads to global warming, which ultimately creates climate change issues like change in weather pattern, increase in temperature, heat trafficking, scarcity of water (water crises), food insecurity, droughts, glacier melting and flooding. Besides this, due to population increase our forest and wildlife sector has been also badly affected.

About the bad effects of overpopulation on wildlife species the divisional forest officer Mohmand Kiramat Shah said "there is a common proverb "when forest land is decreasing, the wildlife species also decreasing and we see, when population is increased, the need of food and infrastructure is also increased, due to which more forest land has been converted into agricultural land, so ultimately the habitat of the wildlife species is disturbed, which cause decrease in the wildlife species". He said that this phenomenon is also explained well in Food chain. For example: where there

is grass, there will be grasshopper, which is bird food and birds are used directly as food by human beings. Either it helps in decomposition, which helps in grass.

The divisional forest officer of Mohmand wildlife division added that there is a direct relation of population to the environment, and this is the biggest problem in Pakistan which should be addressed on an emergency basis. He said that although there are Wildlife and Biodiversity laws (Section 9F and 9G) which protects Biodiversity and wildlife species, the people are still unaware of the importance of the issue.

Dr Muhammad Ather Rafi, the Ex-Director of National Insect Museum, Department of Plant and Environmental Protection (National Agricultural Research Center Islamabad, Pakistan) said that with increase in population the basic needs of the human beings also increased, which ultimately will cause bad effects on environment, in other words we can say that with increase in population the environment get polluted and all these are interlinked with each other, if there is over-

population, there will be need of basic facilities in the form of energy, which will ultimately cause infrastructure and deforestation, due to which the climate change issues will increased.

General Physician and CEO of Daudzai institute of Medical Sciences Dr Nooran Afridi said that population increase is a serious problem for Pakistan, it affects our finance and economy, it creates poverty because our basic needs are not fulfilled in case of increased in population rate, which ultimately have bad effects on our health, daily life, food and education as well and this is the main reason that around 26 per cent of children are out of school in our country. Besides this due to increase in population, environmental issues increase, which leads to many diseases to humans.

Religious scholar Mufti Abu-Sufiyan said that we should think and do proper planning about the birth spacing and I think we can do good care and sound education of 2/3 children instead of 5/6, as our religion stressed upon the health of mother and child, therefore in case of good health of mother and child we should consult with

doctors.

11th July is celebrated as World Population day in the whole world, the theme for this year is "To Leave No One Behind, Count Everyone, the basic aim of this day is to raise awareness about global population issues and to educate people about family planning, gender equality, and reproductive health. According to the Census 2023, Mohmand's population is 553,933, this record is also available on Pakistan Bureau of statistic and the increase in population rate in Mohmand Tribal District is 2.6 per annum, which is very high growth rate, this rate should be decreased to 1.5, 1.6 or 1.7.

The District Population Welfare Officer, Ghafoor Shah said "To control population, we are doing two types of activities, 1. Project base and 2nd regular activities. In regular activities we are giving training to our staff, which is the basic need for giving training about the medicine, field visits, psychological counselling, field visits and other techniques for birth spacing (which has been recommended 2 to 3 years by The World Health Organization). "Besides this we are arranging

awareness seminars and conferences, in which we invite community elders, clerics, religious scholars, media and other prominent personalities having great influence in the community, we publish banners and brushers for the information of the general public." He added.

"Due to low budget, limited staff, resources and other facilities our department's activities are operational in just four Tehsils of the whole Mohmand district i.e Haleemzai, EkkaGhund, Pandialai and Prang ghaar Tehsil." He added. Ghafoor shah said that In Tehsil Haleemzai we have stations which are situated in District Head Quarter Hospital Ghallani, kasay and Sangar area, we have two centers in EkkaGhund Tehsil, one is situated in EkkaGhund and the other one is situated in Michani, similarly we also have three centers in Pranghaar and a center in Pandialai Tehsil and as well.

The 37 years old Officer explained the govt. planning for population control and said that task forces have been made on the federal and provincial stage, which are working for population control on different projects.

About bad effects of overpopulation, Mr. Ghafoor shah said "rapid growth in population badly effects many sectors like energy, health, education and environment as well, over population increases economic growth of a country, it creates growing demand for jobs, lack of housing and schools, lack of basic necessities of life and infrastructure leading to poor living, and increase in pollution and waste are the main bad effects of overpopulation."

Before fifty years, Mohmand was the green area, where there were springs of clean water, where the people were used to drink directly the water from these springs, but increased in population rate and other environmental factors the greenery of Mohmand has been turned into droughts, now the people belonging to the district between two rivers (river Kabul & River swat) is thirsting for drinking water and other environmental issues and these issues will be increased with the passage of time, if proper steps have been not taken for Population control.

The writer is a Radio producer and Freelance Environmental Journalist who tweets on @Muradonline123



South Africa's Cape Town is hit by more storms

CAPE TOWN (AP): The South African city of Cape Town and surrounding areas were hit by more storms Thursday that ripped roofs off houses and caused widespread flooding, forcing at least 4,500 people out of their homes and damaging at least 15,000 structures, authorities said. The devastating weather began a week ago.

Multiple cold fronts have battered the region on the southwest tip of Africa since late last week, bringing record rainfall in some parts and gale-force winds. City authorities said the bad weather was expected to continue until the weekend and possibly into next week. The Wynberg neighborhood of Cape Town was littered with damage Thursday morning after the latest front hit overnight. The strong winds blew off roofs, destroyed parts of houses and other buildings, and brought down electricity poles.

The City of Cape Town said its Disaster Operations Centre worked through the

night to respond to calls for help from residents. At least 4,500 people were displaced and 15,000 structures damaged in and around Cape Town and the wider Western Cape province before the latest storm and those figures were expected to rise.

JP Smith, the Cape Town mayoral committee member for safety and security, said the city and non-governmental organizations had already provided more than 36,000 meals and distributed 6,000 blankets to affected people in the last two days. Many people left homeless were in the impoverished informal settlements on the outskirts of Cape Town, where metal and wooden shacks are especially vulnerable to strong wind and flooding.

Schools were closed in Cape Town and other nearby areas, including the renowned wine-growing region of Stellenbosch, where snow lined the streets earlier in the week in a highly unusual occurrence as a result of the

extreme cold fronts coming in from the Atlantic Ocean. Three major rivers in the province had burst their banks, Cape Town mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis said.

The provincial disaster management services had ordered evacuations of some people in the agricultural area of Citrusdal and parts of the wine-growing region around Stellenbosch, which is around 30 miles (48 kilometers) inland from Cape Town, because of flooding. Authorities were considering the controlled release of water from some dams as a "precautionary measure" to prevent them from overflowing and causing more damage, the provincial government said. Cape Town and other parts of the southwest coast of South Africa are often affected by cold fronts in the winter months in the middle of the year which bring heavy rain and strong winds. But it's unusual for multiple fronts to hit in a short space of time.

Four killed as heavy rains pound South Korea

SEOUL: Torrential rains hammered parts of South Korea's southern region, killing at least four people and causing travel chaos. Heavy precipitation damaged property, roads, and infrastructure, with landslide warnings for at least 50 regions and more than 3,500 people displaced, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety said.

"I ask that people refrain from going to underground parking spaces, underpasses and streams during heavy rainfall," Interior Minister Lee Sang-min said in a statement. Weather department data showed three areas — Geumsan, Chupungnyeong, and Gunsan — experienced some of the heaviest hourly downpours on record.

"It was a level of severity seen once in about 200 years," an unnamed weather agency official told South Korea's Yonhap news agency. 131.7mm (5.4 inches) of rain fell in one hour, more than 10 percent of the area's average annual rainfall in Gunsan city. South Korean broadcasters showed images of rivers overflowing and roads flooded, with people wading through waist-deep water in some areas. Four people died as a result of the torrential downpour.

The rain flooded an apartment building in Nonsan, with one man dying in a lift. A house collapsed after being hit by a landslide in Seocheon, and rescuers found a man in his 70s inside. He was moved to a hospital but was later pronounced dead. Another man in his 70s died after his car plunged into an overflowed stream, and a farmer in his 60s perished in Daegu after being sucked into a drainage system while inspecting his farm. South Korea also experienced record-breaking rains and flooding in 2022, which killed at least 11 people. — Aljazeera

Number of Chinese warplanes detected

BANGKOK: Taiwan has said it is watching China's military movements after detecting the most Chinese warplanes near the island in a 24-hour window so far this year, as Beijing conducts drills that are coinciding with the NATO summit in Washington, DC. Taiwan's Ministry of Defence said in a statement on Thursday that "66 PLA aircraft and seven PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6am [22:00 GMT Wednesday] today".

Of those, 56 aircraft crossed the sensitive median line that bisects the narrow 180-kilometre (112-mile) waterway separating the self-governing island from mainland China, according to the ministry. Taiwan's Defence Ministry also released two pictures of a Chinese J-16 fighter and a nuclear-capable H-6 bomber, which it said were taken recently.

"The military has a detailed grasp of the activities in the seas and waters around the Taiwan Strait, including of the Chinese communists' aircraft and ships," ministry spokesperson Sun Li-fang said. Taiwanese officials announced that China's Shandong aircraft carrier had passed close to the Philippines on its way to military exercises in the Pacific.

The Philippines military said it had received reports of a China-Russia exercise taking place in the Philippine Sea without directly referencing the Shandong. Taiwan, which Beijing considers part of its territory, has complained of a sharp uptick in Chinese military activity in recent years as Beijing seeks to put pressure on the island's Democratic Progressive Party government, which has advocated strengthening Taiwanese identity and forging closer relations with the international community.

Beijing has labelled Taiwanese President William Lai Ching-te a "dangerous separatist" and said the island should be "reunified" with the Chinese mainland by force if necessary. In a communique released, NATO leaders said China has acted as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine and poses systemic challenges to Europe and its security. — Aljazeera

Bosnian Muslims commemorate Srebrenica genocide

SARAJEVO (AFP): Thousands of solemn mourners gathered in the town of Srebrenica in Bosnia on Thursday to remember the 1995 massacre of Bosnian Muslims, less two months after the United Nations established a memorial day to mark the genocide.

On July 11, 1995, Bosnian Serb forces captured the eastern Bosnian town -- which was then a UN-protected enclave -- and killed 8,000 Muslim men and boys in the following days. It was the worst massacre in Europe since World War II and two international courts ruled it was genocide. "It's hard when July comes. They ended up like this only because they had a (Muslim) name," said Mevlida Hasanovic as she prayed at the tomb of her cousin, who was 18 when he was killed.

Hasanovic lost a dozen male relatives in the massacre including her father and husband, whose grave is next to her cousin's. His remains were buried twice as they were found in two different mass graves. The 54-year-old woman is still waiting for "at least one bone" of a brother to be found so she can bury him, she told AFP.

"Their souls know that we are here next to them. When I get here, I feel as if we just parted ways in Srebrenica," she said. In May, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring July 11 the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. The resolution was fiercely opposed by Serbia and Bosnian Serbs, who continue to play down the crime.

Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik has repeatedly denied a genocide occurred and says his administration will not recognise the resolution. But Dodik expressed sympathy to the families of the victims on Thursday. "Regardless of our differences, we must show respect for the pain and suffering that has befallen many people of all nations and religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina,"



Dodik said on X.

A UN court sentenced Bosnian Serb wartime political leader Radovan Karadzic and his army chief Ratko Mladic to life in prison for war crimes including the Srebrenica genocide. Bosnia's 1992-1995 war between its Croats, Muslims and Serbs claimed approximately 100,000 lives. Nearly three decades after the war ended, the Balkan nation remains deeply divided along ethnic lines.

On Thursday, the remains of 14 more victims of the bloodshed, including a 17-year-old boy, will be buried at a memorial cemetery in Potocari, just outside Srebrenica. Beriz Mujic, whose remains were found in the Srebrenica region last year, will be laid to rest next to his brother Hazim. The remains of 6,988 Srebrenica victims have been buried, most of them under white tombstones in Potocari.

The remains were found in 87 mass graves, and a spokeswoman for Bosnia's institute for missing persons told AFP that they are still looking for around 1,000 people. To

cover up the crime, Bosnian Serb forces moved the bodies of the victims to so-called secondary mass graves. Kada Sikovic, accompanied by her two daughters and son, stood by the coffin of her husband, Musan, with tears rolling down her face.

Parts of his chin bone were recovered in 2010 but she had resisted holding a burial ceremony until more remains were found last year. "Thank God we found some of his bones," she told AFP. She remembered the painful moment when the family split in Srebrenica in 1995.

"He cried, kissed the girl (daughter), took the little one (five-year-old) son in his arms and said: 'See you'." The European Union, which Bosnia aspires to join, called the atrocity "one of the darkest moments in modern European history". "There is no place amongst us for those who deny genocide, attempt to rewrite history, and glorify war criminals," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and the bloc's enlargement commissioner Oliver Varhelyi said in a joint statement.

Former Indonesian agriculture minister sentenced to 10 years

JAKARTA (AP): Indonesia's anti-graft court sentenced a former agriculture minister to 10 years in prison Thursday after finding him guilty of corruption-related extortion, abuse of power and bribery involving ministry contracts with private vendors.

Syahrul Yasin Limpo is the sixth member of President Joko Widodo's Cabinet to be sentenced to prison in a corruption case, casting a shadow over his efforts to clean up government in the closing months of his administration. The court in the capital, Jakarta, ruled that the former minister was guilty of abusing his power by enriching himself and other officials. It also ordered him to pay a 300 million rupiah (\$18,500) fine, and said he would be subject to another four months' imprisonment if he fails to pay.

"The defendant has legally and convincingly been proven guilty of corruption," presiding Judge Rianto Adam Pontoh said. "He wasn't a good example as a public official,

what he has done is counter the government's efforts to fight corruption and enriched himself by corruption." Limpo had been arrested last October by the Corruption Eradication Commission, known as the KPK. He has denied wrongdoing.

Several ministry officials testified during the trial that secretariats, directorates general and agencies within the ministry were required to give up 20% of their budgets to Limpo, as though they were indebted to him, and he threatened their jobs if they rejected his demands. Vendors and suppliers were also asked to set aside money to fulfill the then-minister's demands, the trial revealed. Limpo used the money on luxurious cars, gifts and apartments, charter private jets, family parties and gatherings, and for religious observances and pilgrimages. Limpo also used the bribes to disburse humanitarian aid for disaster victims and to his Nasdem political party.

Prosecutors, who sought 12 years imprisonment for Limpo, said the politician accepted a total of 44.7 billion rupiah (\$2.7 million) between January 2020 and October 2023. In their indictment, prosecutors accused Limpo of ordering his two subordinates, Kasdi Subagyono and Muhammad Hatta, to collect the illicit money. They were each sentenced to four years in prison in separate cases.

During the trial, Limpo said he was the victim of political persecution and felt that he had been slandered by his subordinates in his ministry who fears of being replaced or removed from their position.

"Since the start of the investigation into this case, there have been efforts to manipulate public opinion using wild and misleading accusations to depict me as a greedy person," Syahrul told the court.

"I never received any information about their objection to any of my orders," Limpo said. "If they think it's wrong, they should consult and discuss with me ??first."

After the panel of judges read out the verdict, both Limpo and prosecutors told the court that they are considering an appeal. Limpo, a former South Sulawesi governor, is the second politician from the Nasdem Party to face prosecution in recent years. Johnny G. Plate, a former communication minister, was sentenced to 15 years in prison in November 2023 for corruption while overseeing the construction of mobile phone transmission towers in remote parts of the country.

Corruption is endemic in Indonesia and the country's anti-graft commission is frequently attacked by lawmakers who want to reduce its powers. Widodo campaigned in part on a pledge to run a clean government in a country that ranked 115th out of 180 nations in the 2023

Corruption Perceptions Index compiled by Transparency International. Like Widodo, President-elect Prabowo Subianto has vowed to fight corruption after taking office in October.

US senator call on Biden to quit

WASHINGTON: United States President Joe Biden's teetering re-election campaign has plunged deeper into crisis amid a fresh wave of pressure from allies concerned about his age and fitness, with actor George Clooney and several top Democrats joining calls for him to step aside.

In a withering essay published in The New York Times, Clooney said that he had personally witnessed the 81-year-old Democrat's decline at a major fundraiser he co-hosted for the president last month and that he wasn't "even the Joe Biden of 2020". "He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate. Was he tired? Yes. A cold? Maybe. But our party leaders need to stop telling us that 51 million people didn't see what we just saw," Clooney wrote.

"We're all so terrified by the prospect of a second Trump term that we've opted to ignore every warning sign." Clooney said Biden would not beat Republican challenger Donald Trump in November and that Democrats would also lose the House of Representatives and the

Senate if he stayed on the ticket.

"This isn't only my opinion; this is the opinion of every senator and Congress member and governor who I've spoken with in private. Every single one, irrespective of what he or she is saying publicly," he wrote. In an op-ed published in The Washington Post, Democratic Senator Peter Welch, who represents Vermont, became the first member of the chamber to call on Biden to quit the race. "We cannot unsee President Biden's disastrous debate performance. We cannot ignore or dismiss the valid questions raised since that night," Welch wrote. "I understand why President Biden wants to run. He saved us from Donald Trump once and wants to do it again. But he needs to reassess whether he is the best candidate to do so. In my view, he is not."

Also, two more House Democrats, Earl Blumenauer of Oregon and Pat Ryan of New York, and New York Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado called on Biden to withdraw. Ten Democratic lawmakers have publicly called on Biden to drop out so far, while numerous others

have raised concerns about his ability to defeat Trump.

Meanwhile, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declined to definitively back Biden's candidacy in a television interview, saying he should make a decision about continuing in the race soon, even though the president has repeatedly insisted he will not drop out. "I want him to do whatever he decides to do," Pelosi told MSNBC. "We're all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short."

Biden, who is hosting world leaders at the NATO summit in Washington this week, has repeatedly dismissed calls to step aside since a faltering debate performance against Trump that saw him trip over his words and lose his train of thought. The veteran politician has insisted he is the best candidate to beat Trump and cast concerns about his candidacy as largely driven by the media and Democratic Party elites.

On Thursday, Biden, who has done far fewer media appearances than his predecessors, will hold a rare news conference in his latest effort to shore up support within

his party and assuage doubts about his condition. Biden's re-election prospects have dimmed in recent weeks amid concerns over his age and widespread disaffection with the economy, with recent opinion polls suggesting Trump is in the lead both nationwide and in key battleground states.

The non-partisan Cook Political Report switched Arizona, Georgia and Nevada — key swing states won by Biden in 2020 — from "toss-up" to "lean Republican". In a Reuters/Ipsos poll released last week, 59 percent of registered Democratic voters said Biden is too old for office, while one in three said he should step aside. If Biden were to quit, it would cast the race into uncharted territory.

The US presidential primary season has already ended, although the party's candidate will not be finalised until the Democratic National Convention next month. Vice President Kamala Harris has been widely tipped as the most likely replacement for Biden if he were to withdraw, although polling shows her performing roughly the same as the president against Trump. — Aljazeera

Ugandan TikTok star jailed for insulting president

KAMPALA (BBC): A Ugandan court has sentenced a 24-year-old man to six years in prison for insulting the president and the first family through his video posted on TikTok. Edward Awebwa was charged with hate speech and spreading "misleading and malicious" information against President Yoweri Museveni, First Lady Janet Museveni and son Muhoozi Kainerugaba, who is the head of the military.

The court also heard that Awebwa had shared abusive information - saying there would be an increase in taxes under President Museveni. He had pleaded guilty and asked for forgiveness. The presiding magistrate said that while he had pleaded for mercy, he did not look remorseful for his actions, and the words used in the video were "really vulgar".

"The accused deserves a punishment which will

enable him learn from his past so that next time he will respect the person of the president, the first lady and the first son," magistrate Stella Maris Amabilis said. He was sentenced to six years for each of the four charges against him, which are to run concurrently. Rights groups regularly denounce Ugandan authorities for violations of human rights and freedom of expression.

In 2022, award-winning Ugandan author Kakwenza Rukirabashajja was charged with two counts of "offensive communication" after making unflattering remarks about the president and his son on Twitter. He fled the country to Germany after spending a month in jail, where he claimed he had been tortured. Activist and writer Stella Nyanzi, who is also in exile, had earlier been jailed after publishing a poem that was critical

against Mr Museveni.

President Museveni has been in power since 1986 - 14 years before Awebwa was born. In 2022 he signed into law a against speech which rights groups criticised, saying it was aimed at suppressing freedom of speech online. Last year, the constitutional court ruled that a section of the act that penalised "offensive communication" was unconstitutional. Ugandan human rights lawyer Michael Aboneka said Awebwa had been charged under the same broader law that they are still challenging in court because "it is vague". He told the BBC Newsday programme that the president and his family should expect to be criticised "at whatever angle". "Unless they are saying that they are going to arrest every Ugandan for criticising them at every point," he said.

Iraq court sentences a widow of ISIL leader al-Baghdadi to death

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court has sentenced a widow of late ISIL (ISIS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to death for her role in the armed group and for detaining Yazidi women, the judiciary has announced.

The court in west Baghdad handed down the sentence to the woman, who is in custody, under Iraq's anti-terrorism law, according to a statement from Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council. She was accused of collaborating with ISIL and using her home in Mosul to hold kidnapped Yazidi women who were later taken captive by ISIL fighters in Sinjar in northern Iraq.

The court did not name the accused woman, but a judicial official cited by the AFP news agency identified her as Asma Mohamed. She was sentenced to "death by hanging", a court official told the Reuters news agency, adding that the ruling must be ratified by an Iraqi appeals court to become final and applicable. The charges against al-Baghdadi's wife come nearly five years after United States special forces killed the ISIL leader, who had built a self-declared "caliphate" across vast swaths of Iraq and Syria.

Yazidis suffered persecution during al-Baghdadi's lightning advance through northern Iraq in 2014. ISIL fighters systematically killed thousands of their men and forced Yazidi women into sexual slavery. More than 10 years on, members of the minority group are still struggling to recover from ISIL's onslaught with more than 200,000 of them displaced, according to a

report by Refugees International and Voice of Ezidis. Few have received reparations or compensation.

Since ISIL was driven out of all the territory it controlled in Iraq in 2017, Iraqi courts have handed down hundreds of death sentences and life prison terms to those convicted of membership in "a terrorist group". They include more than 500 foreign men and women found guilty of joining ISIL.

In February, Iraq announced it had secured the repatriation of some members of al-Baghdadi's family, who had been detained in Turkey. Al-Baghdadi was known to have four wives. More than a week after his death in 2019, Turkey said it had captured one of his wives and other family members. — Aljazeera

UK police find suspect

LONDON: British police say they have found the man suspected of killing the wife and two daughters of a well-known BBC radio commentator near London in an attack involving a crossbow.

Hertfordshire Police said in a statement that 26-year-old Kyle Clifford was found in the Enfield area of north London, near his home, and that he is receiving medical treatment for his injuries. Police did not say how those injuries happened but said they had not fired any shots.

The BBC said that the women killed were the family of its main radio racing commentator, John Hunt — his 61-year-old wife Carol Hunt and their daughters Louise and Hannah, aged 25 and 28

respectively. "Following extensive inquiries, the suspect has been located and nobody else is being sought in connection with the investigation at this time," said Detective Inspector Justine Jenkins from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit.

"This continues to be an incredibly difficult time for the victims' family and we would ask that their privacy is respected as they come to terms with what has happened," she added. Jenkins said the investigation is moving "at pace" and that formal identification of the victims is yet to take place. She also said that the "premature" naming of the victims "caused great upset".

Earlier, Chief Superintendent Jon Simpson called the incident "horrific", telling reporters a crossbow and possibly other weapons were believed to have been involved. John Hunt is BBC radio's main horse-racing commentator, his voice known to millions through his coverage of the world-famous Grand National and the Derby.

British media reported that he found the bodies after returning home from reporting at Lingfield Park racecourse, which is just south of London. Police did not say if Clifford, who is from London, was connected to the women. Crossbows are legal in the United Kingdom and no licence is required to own one. — Aljazeera

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Biden issue could affect economic forecasts

WITH doubts growing about whether President Joe Biden will remain a candidate for re-election in 2024, some investors are preparing to game out potential economic scenarios and trades if a stronger Democratic candidate emerges. Bond yields rose following Biden's stumbling performance against Republican rival Donald Trump in the first presidential TV debate last month. Growing speculation that Trump would regain the White House on Nov. 5 pushed investors to anticipate higher fiscal deficits and inflationary policies.

Which party holds the White House could determine key issues on trade, regulations and fiscal policies. US stocks rose over the past week partly as prospects for a Republican victory led some investors to expect lower taxes and less regulation. Biden was emphatic about seeking re-election in an interview with ABC News on Friday. However, some Democrats are increasing calls for Biden to halt his campaign and a meeting of senators was being planned by one senator for Monday to discuss Biden's candidacy, according to a Reuters report. The uncertainty could complicate economic forecasts and spur fluctuations in markets.

"For the stock market or bond market, if there's candidate change it's going to add uncertainty to the market," said Michael Schulman, partner and chief investment officer at Running Point Capital Advisors. "Investors have to prepare a strategy for what to do if Biden is no longer the candidate."

Vice President Kamala Harris is the leading contender to take Biden's place in the Nov.5 election if he were to drop out, sources have said.

Some in the market expect Harris would not materially alter the Biden-Harris economic policy platform. Research firm Capital Economics said in a note on Friday that alternative candidates such as Harris or California Governor Gavin Newsom "would avoid making any major proposals and run on platforms that were very similar to Biden's."

If Biden were to pull out, stocks could sell off over the short-term because of the uncertainty following such a decision, especially given equities broadly are at high valuations, said John Lynch, chief investment officer for Comerica Wealth Management.

Stronger chances for the Democrats arising from the appointment of a new nominee could lead to a reversal of the Treasuries sell-off that followed the debate, which hit long-term bonds in particular, some bond investors said, the Reuters report adds. "If a new candidate comes in... maybe the election tightens up a little bit, which could lead to a divided government," said Jack McIntyre, a fixed-income portfolio manager at Brandywine. Congress is currently divided, with the House of Representatives narrowly controlled by Republicans and the Senate by Democrats. A divided government is often seen by investors as positive for markets as it reduces the chances of dramatic policy changes.

Government bond prices could benefit as this would reduce the chances of excessive fiscal stimulus in case of a Republican sweep, said McIntyre. Price gains could be capped, however, as an economic slowdown could play well for the Republican campaign over the next few months.

The S&P 500 had gained over 1% since the June 27 debate between Trump and Biden.

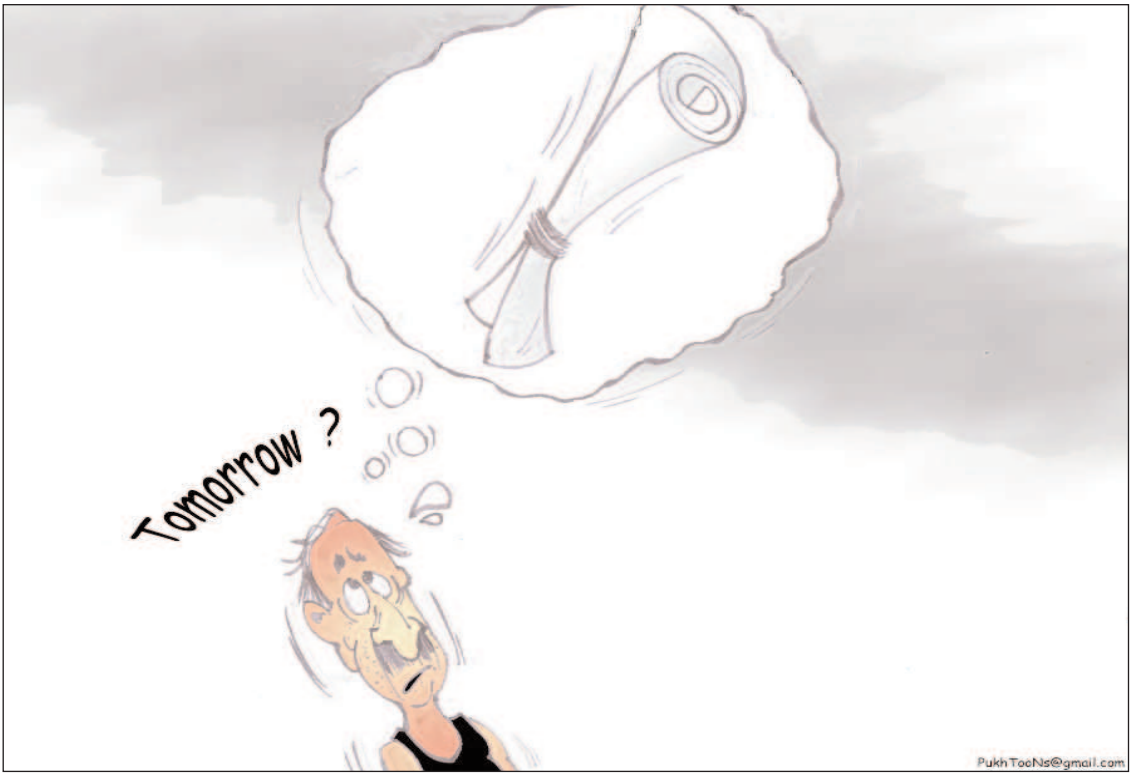
A greater chance of a Trump win in the wake of that debate could be a "contributing factor" to the rise in the benchmark stock index, said Peter Tuz, president of Chase Investment Counsel in Charlottesville, Virginia.

A second Trump presidency could mean lower corporate taxes, which could give a boost to US equity markets, and tougher trade relations and could be a boon for domestic manufacturers, investors have said, although a weight on multinationals at risk if there are higher tariffs on Chinese goods.

Among specific areas of the market, expectations that Trump would seek to reduce regulations are seen as benefiting financials and small cap companies. Solar and other clean energy companies are expected to benefit more from a Democratic administration.

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Gender equality, social protection and people-centered data for Arab world's prosperity

Laila Baker

The world today is wealthier, healthier and has made more technological and data advances than in any single previous generation. We have witnessed many gains specifically related to the UN Population Fund's mandate. Paradoxically, the single greatest threat to these gains lies in inequality.

Age at first marriage in the Arab states has increased for both men and women. Reproductive and maternal health have improved significantly in the region, despite persisting disparities. In 2023, for example, the use of contraceptive methods for women aged 15 to 49 was 34 percent. Strides in reducing maternal mortality were significant, marked by the high percentage of births attended by skilled personnel, which rose to 86 percent in 2020.

On the contrary, child marriage, divorce rates

the Sustainable Development Goals, both at local and national level and among countries.

This also points to big challenges in the Arab region.

While our primary focus and efforts are toward serving the people, we should also tackle the deep-rooted and detrimental disparities in our health and social systems and societies. Where opportunities are denied due to entrenched social norms, discriminatory laws and lack of access to education and economic resources, we must work together to create a society where women and girls are valued, respected and empowered to lead in all spheres of life.

For instance, to strengthen gender equality and combat discrimination and violence, the government of Morocco introduced various legal protection measures for

women.

In Algeria, crucial work is underway to capture and use inclusive population data that is valid and reliable. This can be used for policy-making and to build health systems with a focus on equity, as well as to work with the youth to ensure they can make informed decisions about their bodies, relationships and futures.

Conflict and climate change-fueled crises are further deepening inequalities in access to healthcare, jobs and education, with a disproportionate impact on women and girls, further compounding discrimination and gender inequality. These growing causes of marginalization require attention and immediate action.

Yet, committed efforts offer hope and a way forward.

Even in countries like

check-up and plan your families. I didn't know about family planning before, but I make informed decisions now."

The State of the World's Population Report 2024, the UN Population Fund's flagship publication, outlines the progress made in advancing reproductive health and rights around the world since 1994. It also highlights the disproportionality, with the most marginalized women experiencing the least improvements. In parts of the Arab world, the huge gains we have made in the last 30 years are at grave risk of being erased.

Together, we must root out inequalities from our health systems and policies to ensure everyone benefits. There are already inspiring examples of this.

Amid conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Sudan and Gaza, women-led organizations are on the front lines, ensuring safe births, providing lifesaving supplies and protecting women and girls from gender-based violence. They have long been the backbone of their communities, the heroes who have held families together and worked to provide safety and security in their homes, workplaces and communities, contributing to their societies in countless ways. Yet, too often, their voices have been silenced, their potential untapped, their rights denied or stymied. Their full and equal participation, and their leadership, is key to any lasting peace and shared future prosperity.

Inclusive health and social systems are enablers of human rights and evidence and reliable data shows that empowering women advances prosperity and peace. When women and girls control their bodies, choices and lives — when they can get educated, secure meaningful work and fulfill their dreams — people, families, communities and countries benefit for generations. Inspiring stories like Aisha's are a testament to that.

On World Population Day, which is marked on Thursday, we celebrate and advocate for a cause that is fundamental to the progress and prosperity of any society: the right to health and prosperity of women and girls. It is a cause that goes beyond boundaries, beyond cultures, beyond prejudices. It is a cause that speaks to the very essence of humanity — the right to live a life of dignity, of opportunity and of fulfillment. The UN Population Fund and its partners, with thanks to the generous contributions of its donors, will continue working and investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, emphasizing the important role of gender equality, which contributes to the realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights and people-centered sustainable development.

So, while we applaud the huge progress the Arab world has made in advancing reproductive health and rights, we must make sure that our commitments are fulfilled for everyone, everywhere.

Everyone counts in weaving a collective future.

— Arab News

What happens in America doesn't stay in America

Faisal J. Abbas

"COUNTRY first, party second" were reassuring words on the steps of 10 Downing Street last week from the UK's new Prime Minister Keir Starmer. At a time when polarization and division are paralysing major democracies including France and the US, such an attitude sends comforting signals to constituents, as well as to foreign investors, partners and allies worldwide. Whether this will remain the attitude of the Labour government, time will tell.

I fear the same cannot be said about last month's disappointing US presidential debate.

I had initial thoughts that I wanted to share immediately after the painful 90 minutes in which the incumbent Democrat President Joe Biden sparred with the contender, the Republican nominee Donald J. Trump, but I opted not to write at the time. Why did I hold back? Apart from the few disappointing words by both candidates about Palestine, I thought it would be inappropriate for me, as the editor of a Saudi newspaper, to comment. After all, the sentiment and position of the Kingdom is, and has always been, that we don't interfere in the internal affairs of others, and that our government will work closely with whichever president the American people choose.

The Biden administration is a case in point. Many assumed that after all the hot air and animosity before the 2020 election, Saudi Arabia would not work with Biden and his team. What actually happened? Thanks to a wise, patient and pragmatic Saudi foreign policy, the two countries couldn't be any more closely aligned on mutual interests and a desire to spread peace and prosperity across the region. In addition, the commercial and economic benefits of a potential new US-Saudi deal on security

in the Middle East, by taking out some of the most heinous and wanted terrorists on the face of the earth, and by killing the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

Yet instead of seeking to impress voters, and viewers alike; many comments exchanged during the debate were personal that focused on the physical and mental ability of the candidates — which I must say was neither reassuring nor uplifting. After all, this was a presidential debate, not a boxing weigh-in.

I guess many would agree with me that this debate offered no inspiration at all. Perhaps I expected more because I happen to be living in a country and a part of the world where exciting things are happening at this moment in time. For instance, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will be the patron of the Global Artificial Intelligence summit in Riyadh in September. The patronage of the crown prince is limited to a few events every year, so this is an indicator of how important and significant the event is. Exciting announcements are expected, and many industry leaders will participate in an event that is meant to help the whole world shape and better understand this technological revolution.

Surprisingly, however, AI was not mentioned once during the presidential debate in a world leading country that is facing severe competition from rivals around the world in this particular field.

Similarly, at a time when the space economy is expected to reach \$1.8 trillion by next year, not a single word was said about space exploration by two candidates who both lived through the exciting times of the first moon landing and who realize the potential and capability of NASA. Meanwhile, the Saudi Space Agency has sent the first female Muslim to the International Space Station and is work-

Now, whether or not Biden chooses to step down and allow another candidate to take on Trump is an internal affair, up to him and his party.

However, there is no doubt that Trump emerged from the presidential debate having looked better prepared, and it improved his support in the opinion polls. It is also true that during his presidency he achieved much in terms of foreign policy — most notably with China, with the Abraham Accords in the Middle East, by taking out some of the most heinous and wanted terrorists on the face of the earth, and by killing the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

guarantees and civilian nuclear assistance, with or without an enhanced relationship with Israel, are phenomenal. Now, whether or not the deal will still happen is another discussion. The point here is that this has been achieved with an administration that many believed, wrongly, the Kingdom stood against. Had Trump won the 2020 presidential election, the position would have been no different: Saudi Arabia would have worked equally hard to elevate and strengthen the relationship it has with its biggest and strongest partner.

So why do I say the June 27 presidential debate was painful? Well, it was disturbing for me to see how much disrespect was directed at Biden, who said later that he was simply not feeling well on that day. Like him or not, this man has given his all to his country, and while he has made his fair share of mistakes, many of which were referred to by Trump, they do not justify the personal attacks, online memes and nasty racist comments about a long serving patriot and an elected leader.

Now, whether or not Biden chooses to step down and allow another candidate to take on Trump is an internal affair, up to him and his party. However, there is no doubt that Trump emerged from the presidential debate having looked better prepared, and it improved his support in the opinion polls. It is also true that during his presidency he achieved much in terms of foreign policy — most notably with China, with the Abraham Accords

ing hard to inspire a whole generation to conquer this new realm and make the most of its economy.

It is not that the topics debated by Biden and Trump were unimportant, but US politicians should stop and reflect how never-ending arguments about immigration and abortion convey the impression that their country is unable to move forward. The Supreme Court ruling on Roe vs Wade was issued in January 1973; it should not still be an issue more than 50 years later. I realize that women's rights are not the strongest point in the Kingdom's previous track record, but thanks to the reforms that began eight years ago most issues have been permanently resolved and are no longer part of the public discussion: nobody even thinks about reimposing the guardianship laws or restoring the ban on women driving. Things have moved on: female participation in the Saudi workforce more than doubled from 17 percent to 36 percent between 2017 and 2023.

The bottom line is, both candidates need to remember that the case still very much is that what happens in America doesn't stay in America, and that when Washington sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold. So, whenever the US elects in November needs to reignite belief in the American Dream and end the nightmare of division, polarization and political bickering that impacts global reputation, foreign direct investment and the interests of key partners and allies.

Ignoring Gaza a non-starter for new UK government

LABOUR’S landslide UK election victory had, it is believed, one notable problem. A chunk of its core Muslim voter base chose to back pro-Palestinian independent candidates instead. As a result, four pro-Gaza MPs managed to beat Labour Party rivals to become, alongside Jeremy Corbyn — the long-time pro-Palestinian former leader of the party — the joint sixth-largest party or grouping in the new UK Parliament. This demonstrates that Labour has a bigger problem on the left of the party, driven by Gaza, than previously thought.

The months of demonstrations since Israel launched its post-Oct. 7 reprisal war showed that Gaza was a concern for parts of the UK electorate. And analysis of the electoral results has shown an across-the-board thinning down of Labour majorities in constituencies that are home to a sizable number of Muslims.

New Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s party faced criticism when he was leader of the opposition due to his reluctance to call for an immediate ceasefire. Only in February did Labour call for an immediate ceasefire and it has since committed to recognizing a Palestinian state, but without giving a definite timeline, which many people believe is too little, too late.

Labour’s vote fell by 11 points on average in seats where more than 10 percent of the population identify as Muslim. It is dangerous when the politics of the Middle East becomes the key electoral issue for some communities in big British cities, instead of domestic grievances like hospitals, schools, the cost-of-living crisis, taxation and so forth.

About four in five UK Muslims voted Labour in 2019, reinforcing the historic links between the two that were forged after the mass migration of workers from Pakistan in the 1950s and 1960s. However, in seats where Muslims make up more than a quarter of the population, the Labour vote decreased by 23 per-

cent this time, according to LBC, a London-based radio station.

The government should, in its early days in power, quickly address its foreign policy agenda and its priorities, if only to keep single-issue politics at bay, as witnessed with immigration and Brexit

About four in five UK Muslims voted Labour in 2019, reinforcing the historic links between the two that were forged after the mass migration of workers from Pakistan in the 1950s and 1960s. However, in seats where Muslims make up more than a quarter of the population, the Labour vote decreased by 23 percent this time, according to LBC, a London-based radio station. The government should, in its early days in power, quickly address its foreign policy agenda and its priorities, if only to keep single-issue politics at bay, as witnessed with immigration and Brexit with the outgoing Conservative government and now with Gaza. It is important that UK politics does not become polarized along the lines of continental Europe, where far-right and populist politicians have been winning more and more votes after running questionable single-issue grievance campaigns, which are whipped up among often easily manipulated voters. For a start, I am not sure if new Foreign Secretary David Lammy has the international acumen, credence and weight needed to deal with the adversities of the Ukraine-Russia war. Or whether he has the ability to carve out a positive role for Britain in ending the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza, while keeping an eye on the Middle East’s many other flashpoints, from Yemen to Iran via Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and the Red Sea. This is a time when Britain’s foreign policy standing has been bruised, to say the least, after 14 years of Conservative Party government that was “caught up in an inward-looking conversation,” as Lammy said, and often acted in a conflictive way with allies and lacked a sense of purpose beyond negotiating the exit of the UK from the EU project.

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And though the new foreign secretary has his priorities right, the world he will have to deal with is dangerous, divided and discorded on everything from Ukraine to climate change, with some superpowers emboldened and others locking horns, reducing the space for

the adversities lurking in all four corners of the planet could maybe be better dealt with. EU-UK cooperation could include setting up strategies to deal with the potentially imminent and highly disruptive return of Donald Trump and his style of politics to the White House and factoring in how best to deal with the far-right and populist politicians that are likely to fill the EU’s corridors of power.

Too many ifs and buts are likely to plague the new UK government’s stance on Gaza, which has already cost it several seats. Lammy is likely to face scrutiny from the party’s left on his handling of the Gaza war and issues like UK arms sales to Israel. Labour has no option but to carefully calibrate its commitment to recognizing Palestinian statehood as a contribution to a renewed peace process that should result in a two-state solution. Although it will not want to risk alienating either the Biden administration by making unilateral moves in the run up to November’s US election or its British Jewish voters.

If elections in the UK and elsewhere have taught us anything, it is how easy some cross-border campaigning can influence the composition of a parliament or a government. The losses of Labour, though minor this time, were largely the deeds of a campaign called “The Muslim Vote,” which claims on its website that it is working to support Muslim interests. And though some among the British Muslim community might feel satisfied and emboldened by the group’s success, the Labour Party remains the key address for Muslim and other minority voters.

In the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Muslim voters punished Labour, but their defection was not permanent. This time around, matters might be different, so Labour — if it is to consolidate its grip on power and pave the way for more than one term in Downing Street — must work hard to allay the fears of parts of the electorate in an increasingly volatile and interconnected world.

Amid Russian aggression, Ukraine is also facing a demographic crisis

Massimo Diana

MONDAY’S deadly attack on Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, which caused severe damage to the country’s largest children’s hospital and a healthcare centre for women, starkly emphasised the devastating impact of the ongoing war. Such assaults cause immediate tragedy but also ripple through the demographic fabric of the nation, exacerbating already critical population challenges.

The ongoing shelling across Ukraine has significantly impacted health services, including maternal and neonatal units. Hospitals have struggled to deliver adequate care due to strained resources, damaged facil-

ities and weakened energy supplies. The stress and trauma from constant bombardments, especially on the front lines, have also affected pregnant women. Doctors in the country have reported increased rates of pregnancy complications, premature deliveries and low-weight births.

Some suggest straightforward solutions like increasing child benefits to boost birthrates. While such measures might provide short-term gains, they fail to ensure long-term demographic stability. Financial incentives alone do not adequately address the underlying issues, such as caregiving challenges and limited developmental opportunities for children.

The experience of Balkan countries shows that increasing birthrates does not guarantee that these children will remain in their home country as adults. Social workers in Ukraine observed that increased

demographic strategy to address its population, social and humanitarian challenges and goals through the war and into the long term.

Addressing demographic challenges also means focusing on inclusivity. The rising level of disability due to the war requires full inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market, which involves both physical adaptations and policy formulation that considers their needs and capabilities. Additionally, the ageing population trend necessitates policies that improve older individuals’ access to the labour market, allowing them to continue contributing to economic growth and enhancing their quality

Countries around the world are experiencing demographic shifts. While some see their populations grow, others, like Ukraine, face depopulation and ageing. The birthrate in Eastern European countries ranges from approximately 1.3 to 1.8 children per woman, similar to other parts of Europe. However, unlike Western Europe, where immigration has stabilised or even increased populations, Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, has seen significant declines due to migration and very low birthrates. The full-scale invasion of Russia has deepened Ukraine’s demographic crisis: birthrates have dropped below 1.0 – becoming one of the lowest in the world – while Ukraine’s already extremely low life expectancy has further declined, especially among the male population, and migration patterns have dramatically shifted. The mass displacement of people within the country and abroad has depopulated certain regions and aged the nation, as most refugees are women, youth and children. Nearly 2.5 years into the full-scale war, Ukraine’s population has shrunk by more than 10 million, with almost five million people in territories now occupied by Russia. Without strategic intervention, this deep population decline may cause consequences for generations. Some suggest straightforward solutions like increasing child benefits to boost birthrates. While such measures might provide short-term gains, they fail to ensure long-term demographic stability. Financial incentives alone do not adequately address the underlying issues, such as caregiving challenges and limited developmental opportunities for children.

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As we mark World Population Day, we must explore whether there are solutions to these challenges and what global experiences might be useful for Ukraine.

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benefits in the early 2000s led to higher birthrates among low-income families, who then struggled to raise their children. A survey by the Institute of Demography and Social Research found that financial aid influenced the birthrate for only about 12 percent of parents, suggesting that most families would have had children, regardless of the benefits.

Global experience shows that effective solutions must consider the individual needs and capabilities of all population groups. Therefore, improving Ukraine’s demographic situation requires creating an environment where everyone has opportunities for self-realisation and can harmoniously balance career and parenthood.

For instance, Sweden’s family-friendly policies, implemented since the 1970s, demonstrate the long-term benefits of a family model where both parents can work. Higher family incomes increase children’s chances of accessing quality education, and responsible parenting systems support women in the labour market, encourage men to take parental leave, and promote gender equality.

Ukraine has made progress in this regard. In 2021, a law was adopted to ensure equal childcare opportunities for both parents, introducing a new type of leave for fathers upon childbirth.

Understanding the current population structure and its needs is essential for developing strong strategies to overcome demographic challenges. However, the last population census in Ukraine was conducted in 2001, and conducting one now, amid a full-scale war with millions in forced migration, is not practical – though the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has supported the Ukrainian government in developing a

of life and offering a more profound sense of purpose.

With many men conscripted into the war effort, Ukraine has also seen a rise in women-led households. This shift has created economic gaps that women must fill, highlighting the necessity for an inclusive economy that fosters skill-building and empowers women to take on roles traditionally held by men. In agriculture, for instance, Ukraine, known as the “breadbasket of Europe,” depends on women’s increased participation to sustain its vital grain production and maintain local and regional food production.

Ukraine’s path to demographic sustainability begins with assessing its demographic capital and investing in its development. As soon as the security situation allows, Ukraine should conduct a population census, which has not been done for more than 20 years. This will not only establish the number of people in the country but also identify their socio-demographic characteristics that will be crucial to planning for the country’s recovery and development. Political measures should be grounded in a thorough analysis of these demographic data, aiming to place human rights and opportunities at the forefront. While the ongoing war complicates these efforts, fostering gender-inclusive policies, overcoming stereotypes, and providing economic opportunities for all will drive human capital development.

Ukraine’s demographic situation is a multifaceted challenge that requires comprehensive, inclusive and long-term solutions. Only by addressing the root causes and creating supportive environments for all citizens can we navigate this crisis and build a sustainable future for Ukraine.

Latin America bets on the Asia-Pacific

DURING A visit to Indonesia in mid-June, Claudia Sanhueza, Chilean undersecretary for international economic relations, formally submitted the country’s request to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. The RCEP, signed in 2020, is the world’s largest trade agreement. Its 15 member countries represent 30 percent of the world’s population and 30 percent of the world’s GDP. It includes all 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, plus China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea.

It means that Chile, after several years of internal turmoil, is once again taking up the pioneering role it has played in fostering trans-Pacific trade and in building bridges between Latin America and Asia.

Chile was the first country in South America to establish diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China, as early as 1970 under the government of president Salvador Allende, preceding even former US president Richard Nixon’s visit to China in 1972. Later, Chile was the first country in the region to support China’s application to join the World Trade Organization, the first to recognize China as a market economy, and the first individual country to sign a free trade agreement with China, in 2005. In fact, since the signing of the Chile-China FTA, bilateral trade has increased eightfold to \$62.5 billion in 2023, and 39 percent of Chile’s exports now go to China.

But Chile’s highly successful international trade strategy since its transition to democracy in 1990 goes way beyond China. As Chile rejoined the international community after 17 years of isolation during

the Pinochet dictatorship, it needed a suitable approach to link up with the world economy. The one that was followed relied on two key components. One of them was that of a “lateral international trade policy”. It

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deploys free trade agreements as an essential tool to access world markets and propel Chile’s progress, whose own internal market was (and is) too small to sustain the sort of self-sustaining growth the country needs. With 30 FTAs signed with 65 countries, including some of the world’s biggest economies, covering 88 percent of the world’s GDP, Chile is today the country with the highest number of signed FTAs. From 1990 to 2007, Chile increased its exports near sevenfold to \$68.7 billion, a key factor fostering the country’s rapid growth, as the country relied on an export-led

Jorge Heine

economic model.

The other pillar of this approach was a certain diagnosis of the direction the world would take in the post-Cold War era, when globalization was taking

China in 2005;and a preferential trade agreement with India in 2006. For much of this period, Chile’s was the fastest-growing Latin American economy, something driven by the constant opening of new markets. In 2019,

A redesigned relationship with Europe based on a shared vision and security cooperation is likely to be the first step, even if the commercial benefits are to be streamlined later. And from this shared vision, diplomacy.

On Europe, Lammy said that the country needs “to put the Brexit years behind us,” following Starmer’s assurances that the UK will not rejoin the single market or customs union, despite the damage that Brexit has done to the UK economy and any future growth being heavily reliant on trade with Europe.

Chile ratified a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Indonesia. Today, 58.4 percent of Chile’s exports go to Asia. Nonetheless, Chile did not limit itself to the pursuit of bilateral trade agreements. Impatient with the slow pace of trans-Pacific trade liberalization within APEC, in 2004 Chile joined with Singapore, New Zealand and Brunei Darussalam to create the P4. This group eventually led to the formation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a mammoth inter-regional trade project that brought together 12 countries from Asia, Australasia and Latin



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq presiding over a meeting of executive committee of SCCI. Vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi also present in meeting.

SCCI’ executive committee meeting held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the executive committee of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry held under the chairmanship of SCCI’ President Fuad Ishaq.

The meeting was attended by vice president of the chamber Ejaz Khan Afridi, former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, former SCCI’ presidents Malik Niaz Ahmad, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former vice presi-

dent Haris Mufti as observer, and executive committee members Imran Khan Mohmand, Affaf Ali Khan, Faisal Afzal, Qurat Ul Ain, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Haji Ghulam Hussain, Monawar Khurshid, Naeem Qasmi, Pervez Khan Khattak, and Nadeem Rauf, Faiz Rasool, Saddar Gul, Fazal e Wahid, Ishtiaq Muhammad, acting secretary general of the chamber Muqtasid Ahsan, Secretary Sohail Anjum.

The participants thor-

oughly discussed six points on the agenda of the meeting and unanimously approved them.

During the meeting, the chamber president Fuad Ishaq apprised the meeting about his recent visit to Cambodia and activities at chamber level comprehensively.

Fuad Ishaq said his Cambodia visit was very successful.

He participated in an international training program organised by the Asian Productivity

Organisation (APO) for which more than 18,000 applications were submitted throughout the world, in which only 28 scholars, researchers and experts were participated.

He said he was also selected for the training program and represented Pakistan in the training program.

The SCCI chief informed the meeting regarding experience and important knowledge which he had gained during visit to Cambodia.

Pakistan needs to work with Indonesia to formulate trade pact

KARACHI (PPI): Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has stressed that Pakistan needs to work with Indonesia to formulate a free trade agreement (FTA) in order to rectify bilateral trade deficit of up to \$3 billion each year consecutively for the past many years.

“We should work on Brand Pakistan through single-country exhibitions, exchange of trade delegations, cultural & student exchanges and projecting soft-image of Pakistan in the Southeast Asia region,” he said in a statement on Thursday.

Sauqib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, maintained that ASEAN countries could be a huge export market for Pakistan as it had a population of over 600 million with a very

strong middle-class. Their collective GDP in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) had well surpassed \$10 trillion, he added.

Aman Paracha, VP FPCCI, stated the importance of diversifying imports from Indonesia beyond palm oil and exploring opportunities for Pakistani exports in diverse sectors. He announced FPCCI’s plans to organize single-country exhibition in Indonesia to promote trade and address the imbalance.

Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, explained that Pakistan needs to think out-of-the-box to work with the friendly country of Indonesia in transfer of technology, investments and joint ventures as both the countries are strong in textiles production. We

can emerge as strong complementary economies through interdependence, he added.

Hanif Gohar, former SVP & Convener of FPCCI’s Central Standing Committee on Diplomatic Affairs, highlighted the trade statistics; which are currently standing at only \$400 million in exports from Pakistan and \$3.5 billion in imports from Indonesia – largely due to the heavy import of palm oil from Indonesia.

It is pertinent to note that Dr June Kuncoro Hadiningrat, Consul General of Indonesia in Karachi, emphasized the need to strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Indonesia during a meeting with the FPCCI Central Standing

Food crisis looms large as flour millers go on strike

LAHORE (INP): The flour mills were eventually shut down on Thursday for an indefinite period in various parts of the country after the government failed to redress concerns of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) against imposition of withholding tax on the flour, says in media reports.

According to the PFMA, more than 1500 flour mills have halted wheat washing and flour supply followed by recent announcement of taking to strikes if its demand of uncapping the withholding tax on the flour.

It further said that small

scale flour dealers were also joining the chorus of millers in lodging their protest against the government. In line with PFA’s orders, as many as 73 flour mills in Gujranwala and more than 60 mills in Multan ceased their operations.

PFMA spokesperson said that closure of flour mills would result in suspension of supply of 200,000 flour bags per day. Besides, millers in Faisalabad, Khushab, Peshawar and Quetta also complied with instructions of PMFA by locking their mills. Food crisis in the offing as flour millers announce nationwide shut-

down.

The Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) on Wednesday announced strike against imposition of withholding tax by shutting down the mills for an indefinite period. PFMA Punjab Chairman Asim Raza announced the decision of closure of flour mills, saying imposing tax on flour was unfathomable and unacceptable as it was an essential edible item used in every household of the country.

He said the flour millers would never become tax agents for the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

According to sources, wheat washing in more than 1,500 flour mills of

the country has been halted. Flour packing and supply will also be stopped from July 11.

PFMA Central Chairman Chaudhry Amir Abdullah had announced suspension of flour mills’ operations after persistent deadlock with the government for not lifting the withholding tax on the flour.

“Instead of taxing the common man’s roti, the government should announce withdrawal of this unnecessary withholding tax,” he said. He lambasted the FBR for being unable to meet grinding tax targets and leaving the masses burdened with excessive taxes.

Public Notice

It is published through this notice that I, Ahmed Afzal Khayal S/o Khayal Afzal R/o KDA, District Kohat, presently R/o (Dubai UAE) is the owner of Plot No. 20, Sector E-3, Size 5 Marla, Phase-II, KDA, Kohat, has appointed nephew Syed Abdullah Mehmood S/o Mehmood Afzal R/o Wrasta, District Hangu through special deed No. 94, Bahi No. 04, dated 07-02-2022, which is registered in the office of Kohat of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar. The attorney holder now wants to transfer the above said plot. If, any bank/institution/firm/person has any objection about the transfer, he should contact the Housing Officer UADA within 15 days in writing with proofs, otherwise, plot will be transferred and no objection will be accepted. (Director Urban Area, KDA, Kohat)

Public Notice

It is published through this notice that I, Jameel-Ur-Rehman S/o Mir Nawaz Khan Resident of Daggar Kala Logara, District Karak, is the owner of Plot No. 179-D, Size 5 Marla, Sector E-3, Phase-II, KDA, Kohat has requested that the original allotment order of the said plot has been lost somewhere and now issuance of duplicate papers is desired the plot is not mortgaged. There has been appointed no attorney and not sold to anybody, if, any bank/institution/firm or person has any objections, he/she should contact the Housing Officer UADA, Kohat within 15 days of publication of this notice in writing with proof. Otherwise, duplicate allotment letter will be issued and no objection will be accepted. (Director Urban Area, KDA, Kohat)

Lost and Found

I, Raj Muhammad Khan S/o Abdul Sattar Khan have lost my original Allotment Letter for Plot No. 3-D/1-138-1K, Regi Model Town. If, found please contact on this No. 0333-9962356.

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian stocks on Thursday tagged along with a Wall Street rally that saw another round of record highs as bets on a September interest rate hike surged following comments by Federal

Reserve boss Jerome Powell.

The advances also saw Hong Kong and Shanghai push higher after struggling in recent weeks over worries about the Chinese economy, with investors awaiting a key Communist Party meeting next week.

On a second day of testimony to lawmakers, Powell said decision-makers would not wait until inflation had hit the bank’s two percent target before loosening monetary policy, adding: “If you waited that long, you’ve probably waited too long.”

His remarks came before the release of the latest consumer price

SNGPL: 43 connections disconnected in crackdown

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces and Islamabad, disconnecting another 43 connections and impose Rs 0.7 million fine.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 10 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.18 against the gas theft cases.

In Multan, the team disconnected 17 connections on illegal use of gas while another 02 on the use of a compressor.

The regional team of Faisalabad disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.06 million against gas theft cases. I

n Bahawalpur, the team disconnected 04 connections for the illegal use of gas and another 03 for the use of a compressor.

The regional team of Gujranwala disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.45 million against gas theft cases.

In Sahiwal, the team disconnected 02 connections on the illegal use of gas.

In Sheikhupura the team imposed a fine of Rs 0.02 million against gas theft cases.

Government committed to boost cotton production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday reiterated the government’s commitment to promote the cotton industry.

He said this while addressing the meeting of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee’s governing body, said a news release.

The Federal Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain stressed that Pakistan’s economy heavily relies on cotton production and textile industry growth is linked to good cotton yields.

“The textile industry has been granted Rs 10 per unit subsidy on electricity, which will significantly alleviate its financial burdens and alleviate its difficulties to a great extent,” he added.

He said that research and development must be prioritized, and the government is committed to providing comprehensive support to farmers, ginners, and all relevant stakeholders.

The Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain said the country’s annual cotton production currently stands at 8.4 million bales, aiming to increase 15 million bales by 2025.

The yield per acre can be increased with modern agricultural practices and technology.

In light of the Food Agricultural Organization report, recommendations are sought for the restructuring of PCCC.

The next meeting will meet again next week.

Committee discusses release of IMT Spectrum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Finance Minister, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday chaired the meeting of Advisory Committee on ‘Release of International Mobile Telephony (IMT) Spectrum for Improvement of Next Generation Mobile Broadband Services in Pakistan’.

According to press release issued by finance ministry, the meeting was attended by Minister of State for IT and Telecom, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication

Authority (PTA) and senior officials from relevant ministries and departments.

The key stakeholders from the telecommunication sector and regulatory authorities briefed the minister on strategic plans for the allocation and utilization of the IMT spectrum.

It was mentioned that the release of this spectrum is expected to significantly improve connectivity, enhance Internet speeds, and meet the increasing demand for high-quality data services.

The auction process,

technical specifications and the time-line for the spectrum release were discussed in the meeting.

The Advisory Committee also considered the way forward to promote technological advancements and create an environment conducive to investment and growth in the telecommunications sector.

This meeting underscores the government’s commitment to advancing digital infrastructure and supporting the country’s economic growth.

Pakistan Stock Exchange gains 150 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 150.80 points, a positive change of 0.19 percent, closing at 79,992.35 points against 79,841.56 points on the last working day.

A total of 389,024,310 shares were traded during the day as compared to 495,910,236 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 20.924 billion against Rs 22.116 billion on the last trading day.

Around 445 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 181 of them recorded gains and 212 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 52 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Agritech Limited with 22,041,367 shares at Rs 24.24 per share, Hub Power Company with 18,624,585 shares at Rs 163.75 per share and Air Link Communication with 16,815,350 shares at Rs100.64 per share.

Excide Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 77.94 per

share price, closing at Rs 898.32, whereas the runner-up was PIA Holding Company Limited with a Rs69.20 rise in its per share price to Rs 797.67.

Data Agro Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 47.09 per share closing at Rs 448.58, followed by Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with a Rs39.00 decline to close at Rs 1,301.00.

Rupee sheds 09 paise against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee witnessed a devaluation of 09 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs 278.60 against the previous day’s closing of Rs 278.51.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 279.50 and Rs 281.25 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 72 paise to close at Rs 302.01 against the last day’s closing of Rs 301.29, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.72, whereas

an increase of Rs 2.17 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 358.57 as compared to the last day’s closing of Rs 356.40.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal also increased by 03 each to close at Rs 75.85 and Rs 74.28 respectively.

Gold rates up by Rs.1,200 per tola to Rs.246,800

The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,200 and was sold at Rs.246,800 on Thursday against its sale at Rs. 245,600 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1,029 to Rs.211,591 from Rs. 210,562 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.193,959 from Rs. 193,016, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,900 and Rs.2,486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$10 to \$2,382 from \$2,372, the Association reported.

Saudi plane’s landing gear catches fire at BKIA



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The landing gear of a passenger plane of Saudi Arabia caught fire after landing at the Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA) Peshawar on Thursday.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, soon after the landing of Saudi

Flight 792, fire erupted in its left landing gear.

The Air Traffic Control, after witnessing sparks and smoke in the landing gear, immediately informed the firefighters and rescue services.

The firefighters and rescue workers approached the plane immediately and after some efforts doused the

fire, saving the plane from a big mishap.

All the 276 passengers and 21 staff members came out of the plane through an inflammable slide safely.

The flight landed at Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA) Peshawar after reaching from Riyadh city of Saudi Arabia.

Asian markets track Wall Street records after Powell hints at rate cut

index reading on Thursday, which is expected to show a further slowdown.

Traders ramped up bets on the Fed reducing borrowing costs in two months’ time, with analysts saying Powell was telegraphing to markets that the decision had been made.

The comments soothed recent fears among investors that officials might keep rates at their two-decade high for some time owing to a still strong labour market and inflation staying stubbornly above two percent.

The S&P 500 ended with a sixth straight

record, while the Nasdaq also finished at an all-time peak.

And the upbeat mood filtered through to Asia, where Hong Kong jumped two percent, while Tokyo, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Wellington, Taipei, Manila, Bangkok and Wellington also rose.

London, Paris and Frankfurt all rose at the open.

Eyes are also turning to the start of China’s Third Plenum gathering on Monday, where top officials including President Xi Jinping are expected to discuss ways to kickstart the world’s number two economy in the face of an

ongoing property crisis and geopolitical issues.

However, while there is hope for some sort of major policy announcement, commentators remain cautious.

Andrew Batson, of Beijing-based consultancy Gavekal Dragonomics, told AFP he did not expect a “fundamental departure from the course Xi has already laid out”, in which technological self-sufficiency and national security policy outweigh economic growth.

Nomura’s Ting Lu added that the meeting was “intended to generate and discuss big, long-term ideas and structural

reforms instead of making short-term policy adjustments”.

Economic growth in the first quarter of the year came in above forecasts and is tipped to top the government’s five percent goal for April-June, but the meeting comes amid ongoing concerns that officials are not providing enough support.

Taylor Nugent at National Australia Bank warned: “Further monetary policy easing is constrained by a reluctance to allow further depreciation in the renminbi, and expectations are low for any big policy shift at the Third Plenum.”



In brief

Núñez clashes with fans

NEW YORK (BBC): Liverpool footballer Darwin Núñez was involved in an altercation with spectators after his national team Uruguay were beaten on Wednesday evening. The striker was seen physically confronting Colombia fans in the stands after the final whistle in the Copa America semi-final. According to Uruguayan outlet El País, disorder broke out close to where friends and family members of the Uruguay team were located. Núñez is yet to comment publicly on the incident. TV cameras and fans captured images of Núñez climbing up railings and making his way into the crowded stands of the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina. He could then be seen confronting Colombia fans as others tried to restrain him. Other Uruguay players were reportedly involved in the incident, Uruguay captain José María Giménez said the players were trying to defend their families, describing the situation in the crowd as a "disaster". Reuters reported. He continued: "There was no police and we had to defend our families. This is the fault of two or three people who had a few too many drinks and don't know how to drink." Núñez was seen hugging his son on the pitch after the altercation. South American football's governing body Conmebol "strongly condemned" the incident and said it would launch an investigation. "There is no place for intolerance and violence on and off the field," it added. The brawl happened after Uruguay slumped to a 1-0 defeat against Colombia in the last four match, denying them a place in Monday's Copa America final. Shortly before the crowd disorder began, players and coaching staff had clashed on the pitch after the match ended. Núñez started the game up front for Uruguay but could not convert one of his four attempts on goal. Liverpool signed the forward for an initial £64m from Portuguese side Benfica in June 2022.

F1 announces six venues

LONDON (BBC): Formula 1 has announced the six grands prix which will host events in the sprint format in 2025. The races, which feature a shorter race on the Saturday before the main event on the Sunday, start with the second grand prix of the season in China on 21-23 March. The others are Miami on 2-4 May, Belgium on 25-27 July, the US Grand Prix in Austin on 17-19 October, Brazil on 7-9 November and the penultimate race in Qatar on 28-30 November. China, Miami, Austin, Brazil and Qatar are also sprint events on this year's schedule. Belgium hosted a sprint previously in 2023. The 2025 F1 season starts in Australia on 14-16 March. F1 has also released data to demonstrate that audiences are higher for sprint events than for grands prix run to the standard format, which sees two practice sessions on Friday, followed by one on Saturday before qualifying and then the race. A statement said that live audience figures for the sprint in qualifying and sprint in China this year were 40% higher across F1's top 15 markets compared to the average practice sessions for the opening two races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

ICMS stun Shama Club to become champion in PCB Inter-Club Cricket

PESHAWAR (APP): ICMS Cricket Club stunned stars studded Shama Club led by Pakistan's star batsmen Muhammad Rizwan and Iftikhar Ahmad and got the Championship title of the PCB Inter-Club Cricket played here Shama Cricket Ground on Thursday.

The champion ICMS team of District Peshawar in Pakistan Cricket Board

Inter-Club Tournament defeated Shama Cricket Club by 120 runs in the final.

The star performers of the final, was Abbas Ali, who took two wickets with an innings of 118 runs and won the player of the final award. In the final, ICMS batted first and scored 301 runs in the allotted 40 overs.

Abbas Ali scored a magnificent century and

scored 118 runs with the help of four fours and eight towering sixes. Abbas Afridi was the second best batsman with his cracking 49 runs, his innings included five sixes and two fours.

Arafat Khan scored 47 runs with the help of five fours, Muhammad Amir, Kashif Ali and Iftikhar Ahmed from Shama club dismissed two players. The Shama club team was

bowled out for 181 runs. Abdullah Khan scored 45 runs, Mohammad Rizwan scored 29 runs and Abrar Ahmed scored 23 runs.

Gibran Khan took 3 important wickets. Abbas Ali and Obaidullah dismissed two players. The match was umpired by Kofhar Alam and Shehzad Shah while Nadeem Akhtar performed the duties of the scorer.



LONDON: Italy's Jasmine Paolini celebrates winning against Croatia's Donna Vekic during their women's singles semi-final tennis match on the eleventh day of the 2024 Wimbledon Championships.

England beat Netherlands to reach Euro 2024 final

BERLIN (AFP): Ollie Watkins struck a stunning injury-time winner as England beat the Netherlands 2-1 on Wednesday to set up a Euro 2024 final showdown with Spain in Berlin.

It was an incredible finish to an evening that began badly for England, as Xavi Simons gave the Netherlands an early lead in the semi-final in Dortmund.

However, England were soon level through a Harry Kane penalty following a contentious VAR call by German referee Felix Zwayer, and the match looked set to drift towards extra time until Watkins struck.

On for Harry Kane, Watkins received a pass from fellow substitute Cole Palmer in the first minute of stoppage time, turned and fired low into the far corner to leave the Netherlands completely stunned.

It has rarely been a convincing campaign from Gareth Southgate's England side, but they are through to their second consecutive European Championship final as they dream of finally winning a first major trophy since 1966.

To do that they will

surely have to perform better than at any point so far in Germany as they face an outstanding Spain team.

Spain will also have had an extra 24 hours to prepare for the final, having defeated France 2-1 on Tuesday.

The Netherlands had been hoping to repeat their triumph at the last Euros held in Germany, in 1988, but their current side lacks anyone with the star quality of Marco van Basten or Ruud Gullit.

A victory for them would have seen this Euros conclude with the same final as the 2010 World Cup. Instead they now go home. England had got to this stage despite not winning any of their last four matches in 90 minutes, and having been taken to extra time by Slovakia and Switzerland.

That might have given the Dutch an edge physically, after the Oranje shrugged off finishing third in their group to brush aside Romania and then see off Turkey.

England welcomed back Marc Guehi in defence after suspension, while Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman opted to start Donyell Malen in attack in the ground where he plays club football for Borussia

Dortmund.

The Westfalenstadion is a special place for the Dutch, as the scene of their 2-0 win over Brazil that took them through to the 1974 World Cup final.

Contentious penalty They went ahead here after just seven minutes thanks to a stunning goal by Simons, who robbed Declan Rice 35 metres from goal and advanced before sending a rasping drive beyond Jordan Pickford.

The Dutch players ran off to celebrate with their fans behind that goal, as England found themselves behind for the third game running. Just like against the Swiss in the quarter-finals, however, they reacted swiftly.

Kane forced a save from Bart Verbruggen and moments later sent a volley over the bar, and was caught by Denzel Dumfries on the follow-through.

It seemed totally innocuous but Zwayer was summoned across to review the images and gave a penalty. Kane, whose missed spot-kick against France cost England dear in the 2022 World Cup, made no mistake, slotting low into the bottom-left corner.

It settled into an open and entertaining game,

with Dumfries redeeming himself by clearing off the line from Phil Foden.

Dumfries crashed a header off the bar from a Simons corner, but Foden responded by curling a superb shot from range off the top of the post.

England's midfielders were being given too much time on the ball, and Koeman used an injury to Memphis Depay to reinforce the centre, replacing the forward with Joey Veerman.

Another change followed at the interval, with Wout Weghorst — superb in previous rounds — replacing Malen.

Yet the game became more cagey as the minutes went on and the fear of making a mistake grew.

Pickford denied Virgil van Dijk on 65 minutes and the Netherlands began to take control as England's leading players started to tire.

England did have the ball in the net on 79 minutes when Bukayo Saka turned in a Kyle Walker cutback, but the latter was just offside and the flag cut short the celebrations.

Southgate then decided to remove Kane and Foden, with Watkins and Palmer entering the fray to devastating effect.

England on 'brink of history': Lineker

LONDON (BBC): Former England striker Gary Lineker says Gareth Southgate's side are on the 'brink of history' after reaching the Euro 2024 final.

The Three Lions beat the Netherlands 2-1 in Dortmund on Wednesday night to book a spot in Sunday's final against Spain.

It is the first time the men's side have reached a final outside England after playing the 1966 World Cup final and 2021 Euro final at Wembley, while the women's Euro victory in 2022 came on home soil.

England's men have never won the European Championships, with their World Cup win in 1966 their only major silverware, while Spain are three-time European champions.

"I think it's hugely significant for English football," Lineker, who will present BBC One's coverage of the final on Sunday, told BBC Sport.

"They were in a final, they were in the last final of the Euros, of course, and that was at Wembley, and that ended up in huge disappointment [losing to Italy on penalties].

"This is going to be tough, it's going to be difficult, but they're on the brink of history. No English team in football has ever won a major tournament abroad."

The closest England team have come to winning a major tournament outside of England was in 2023, when the Lionesses were beaten by Spain in the World Cup final in Australia.

Xavi Simons gave the Netherlands an early lead in Dortmund on Wednesday but Harry Kane equalised from the penalty spot midway through the first half before Ollie Watkins scored the winner in the 90th minute.

Watkins' winner was England's fourth goal of the tournament scored past the 80th minute, including extra time.

GB's Hewett into semis despite shoulder injury

LONDON (Yahoo Sports): Britain's Alfie Hewett continued his quest for an elusive Wimbledon men's wheelchair singles title, despite being hampered by a shoulder injury as he reached the semi-finals.

Second seed Hewett outplayed Frenchman Stephane Houdet to win 6-1 6-4 on a sweltering court three.

But he did need a medical timeout at 4-1 in the first set to treat his already heavily strapped shoulder, and had repeated problems with his first serve.

Hewett has won eight Grand Slam singles titles and has won every major across singles and doubles - except the Wimbledon singles title.

He was broken in the opening game by 53-year-old Houdet, a three-time doubles winner at Wimbledon.

But the 26-year-old won the next six games to take the first set despite being restricted by his injury.

In a much tighter second set the pair twice traded breaks before Houdet was broken at 4-4 and Hewett was able to serve out for the match.

Hewett faces either Argentine third seed Gustavo Fernandez in the semi-finals or the Netherlands' Tom Egberink.

He also plays again on Court One in the doubles later on Thursday, partnering fellow Briton Gordon Reid. The defending champions, who have won 19 major titles together take on Spain's Martin de la Puente and Joachim Gerard of Belgium.

Sicknote Wimbledon and the data that shows tennis has reached tipping point

This sicknote Wimbledon continued on Wednesday with the withdrawal of Alex de Minaur from what he described as "the biggest match" of his career against Novak Djokovic.

De Minaur — who had torn hip cartilage on the final point of his previous

win — became the 11th singles player to pull out before a match at this tournament, thus extending a sequence that included British legend Andy Murray - on the first Tuesday.

Add in the eight players who have failed to complete their matches, and the result is Wimbledon's highest tally of withdrawals and retirements since the start of the Open era.

"It has sometimes felt like a battle for survival," said Pam Shriver, the former Wimbledon semi-finalist who has coached Croatia's Donna Vekic to the semis of this year's tournament.

"It's not the All England Club's fault, with the appalling weather of the past 10 days, but we've been dealing with heavier balls, more time sitting indoors and a lot of stress for everyone. I've seen a few players slipping and falling under the show court roofs, but it's not easy for the less famous names on the outside courts either, with all the stopping and starting."

Notable as they are, our statistics do not even tell the whole story, because several high-profile matches — including Taylor Fritz's quarter-final against Lorenzo Musetti — have finished in regular defeats for an incapacitated player.

Jannik Sinner suffered from dizziness on Tuesday, while Danielle Collins pulled something at the back of her leg on Monday, and Alexander Zverev limped out of the tournament the same day.

Emma Raducanu may not have been injured, exactly, but her loss to Lulu Sun on Sunday featured a fall and an 11-minute medical delay that drained her momentum at exactly the wrong time. Then, when Sun came up against Vekic in the quarter-finals, she was so exhausted that she began to suffer from cramp late in the second set.

If we include players suffering psychologically

rather than physically, the numbers swell further. World No 1 Iga Swiatek told reporters after her third-round defeat: "My tank of really pushing myself to the limits became suddenly, like, empty."

It was a slightly different story for defending champion Marketa Vondrousova, who admitted after her first-round defeat that she had felt hugely nervous about opening the schedule on Centre Court. But we should also note that she had fallen heavily in Berlin a couple of weeks ago. "I was a bit scared because of my leg, too," she acknowledged.

Admittedly, such scenes are not unprecedented. In 2013, so-called "Wacky Wednesday" saw a record tally of seven retirements and withdrawals, plus the defeats of seven former world No 1s, including defending champion Roger Federer.

There have also been periods — notably in 2017 and 2018 — when all of the top men seemed to be injured at once, prompting Rafael Nadal to comment during the 2018 Australian Open: "They [the ATP] have to think a little bit about the health of the players."

But there is increasingly a sense that an already arduous sport is reaching a tipping point.

The build-up to this year's Wimbledon was dominated by health chat, whether it revolved around Djokovic's miraculous recovery from knee-menisceus surgery or Murray's spinal cyst.

When Telegraph Sport offered our pre-tournament favourites, we had to caveat three of the leading women on the basis that Vondrousova's hip was an unknown, Elena Rybakina had withdrawn from several events this season because of sickness, and Aryna Sabalenka had arrived carrying a "rare" problem in a shoulder muscle that didn't allow her to serve.

Frontier College for Women win inter-college games

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Frontier College for Women clinched the overall trophy by securing 17 points while Mehkan Yousaf of Girls College City Gulbahar declared as best athlete for the year-2024 in the 12th Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Inter-College Games, which concluded on Thursday at the University premises here.

Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University claimed 15 points by taking second position and City Girls College Gulbahar got third position.

Adviser to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jehan was the chief guest on this occasion. Vice Chancellor Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Professor Dr. Safia Ahmad, President Sports Committee Professor Aliya Mustafa, Principal Yaka Ghund Girls College, Mohmand District, Miss Rabia Sikander Vice President and Principal Sports Committee, Directress Sports Miss Najma Qazi, Shazia Ayub, Gul Sanobar, Sadia Gul, Uzma, Roheena, Miss Huma, Miss Salma Faiz, Deputy Director Sports SBBWU Miss Mariyah Samin, players and spectators were also present.

Speaking on this occasion, Advisor Fakhar Jehan lauded the performance of the women players who excelled at national and

international levels. He said like male players it is a very clear policy of the government to equally treat female players as well and support them, both financially and facilities wise.

He said the provincial government will give interest-free loans up to Rs. 10 million to provide employment opportunities to the youth and earn their livelihood in a dignified way. Providing equal facilities to women in the field of sports and promoting female sports are among the priorities of the government, he said.

He said that sports create the spirit of courage and curiosity to stand on the field, which is necessary not only for men but also for women. He said an U16 talent hunt program is being started in the province very soon and talented players would get a monthly stipend. This selection will be made on merit without any preference or disfavor, in which the government will provide support and sponsorship to the selected talented players in future.

Regarding the government's initiatives for the youth, he said that the government is starting the Ehsaas youth employment scheme for the youth, in which girls can also get an interest-free loan from Rs. 1 million up to Rs. 10 million for any business in the form of a cluster.

He said that our aim is to work on youth development, in which we are taking effective steps and pro-

viding sports facilities for women in Peshawar and other districts. He said that a team will be sent to review the repair of the university grounds.

He said that the provincial government is taking practical steps for the promotion of sports and now the sports fields will be settled again. He said the playing fields would be developed accordingly for the female players at SBBWU.

He said that to find the future legends, a talent hunt program will be started soon for this. In the end, he announced a reward of Rs. 20,000 would be given to the winner team and Rs. 10,000 for the runners-up and Rs. 5000 in cash prize for the third position while Rs. 20,000 cash prize for the player of the Games Miss Mehkan of City Girls College Gulbahar who grabbed four gold medal in the athletic event including 100m, discuss throw, 200m, 400m, and teamed up for 4X100m relay for winning gold medal.

In her welcome address VC SBBWU Professor Dr. Safia Ahmad highlighted the aim and objective of the Directorate of Sports SBBWU. She said the students of various colleges and other universities benefit from the sports facilities and often women's sports competitions are organized in the said university, which is commendable. She also requested Syed Fakhar Jehan for taking steps in making the playing fields inside the University playable.

Girmay sprints to third Tour de France stage win

PARIS (BBC): History-maker Biniam Girmay sprinted to his third victory at this year's Tour de France but overall contender Primož Roglic lost significant time after a late crash on stage 12.

Eritrean Girmay became the first black African to win a Tour de France stage with his opening win on stage three and also triumphed on stage eight.

Girmay, 24, beat Wout van Aert and Arnaud Demare in a frantic bunch sprint in Villeneuve-sur-Lot, with Mark Cavendish boxed in in fifth.

Tadej Pogacar retained the leader's yellow jersey and remains one minute six seconds ahead of Remco Evenepoel, with defending champion Jonas Vingegaard a further eight seconds behind.

But podium contender

Roglic, who finished with a ripped jersey and bloodied shoulder, dropped from fourth to sixth in the general classification after he lost two minutes 27 seconds on the leaders after being caught up in a late crash.

Pogacar was also held up behind a crash in the peloton early in the stage, and required a bike change, but re-joined the main group without issue.

The 203.6km route from Aurillac to Villeneuve-sur-Lot offered one of the few remaining opportunities for a bunch sprint - assuming the sprinter's teams could control any potential breakaway.

A four-man group featuring Groupama-FDJ riders Valentin Madouas and Quentin Pacher, Jonas Abrahamson of Uno-X Mobility, and TotalEnergies' Anthony Turgis

managed to open up a three-and-a-half-minute advantage over the peloton.

But that move was shut down with more than 40km remaining to set up a long-inevitable dash to the line, in which Girmay prevailed to further assert himself as the fastest sprinter at this year's race.

In doing so he also extended his lead in the green jersey points battle, opening up a likely unsailable 111-point advantage over Jasper Philipsen.

A rare moment of calm in the peloton was interrupted with 12km remaining when Alexey Lutsenko crashed and took down Slovenian Roglic.

The Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe rider had been one minute 31 seconds adrift of the podium but that deficit now stands at three minutes 28 seconds.





In brief

FIA arrests eight women

ISLAMABAD (INP): Two teams of eight women were offloaded at the Multan Airport for going to beg in Saudi Arabia. According to the details, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) immigration team at Multan Airport successfully thwarted an attempt by eight women to travel to Saudi Arabia for the purpose of begging. The channel reported that these women were offloaded from two different flights bound for Saudi Arabia at the Multan Airport. The suspects are identified as Sobia Bibi, Khadija Bibi, Aasiya Bibi, Saira Bibi, Sajida Bibi, Salma Bibi, Samina Bibi, and Naghma Bibi. Initial investigations revealed that these women had Umra visas on their passports, and they intended to beg under the pretence of performing Umrah. All these women were residents of the district of Bahawalnagar and were carrying 200 Saudi riyals each. The FIA spokesperson stated that the suspect women have been handed over to the FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle in Multan for further investigation and legal action.

296,700 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 296,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 349,300 cusecs. According to the data released by Indus River System Authority (IRSA), water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1520.06 feet and was 122.06 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 174,000 cusecs and 135,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1193.45 feet, which was 145.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 40,600 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 201,400, 178,800, 142,400 and 70,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 67,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 35,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Salamat's death anniversary held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 23rd death anniversary of one of the greatest maestros in classical music, Ustad Salamat Ali Khan was observed on Thursday. Born in 1934 in Hoshiarpur, Salamat Ali Khan burst onto the classical music scene with his elder brother Nazakat Ali Khan under the guidance of their father Ustad Vilayat Ali Khan at a tender age of five. In 1977, the government of Pakistan awarded him the Pride of Performance. Ustad Vilayat Ali Khan was also given Sitara-e-Imtiaz for his services in the field of music.

Qateel Shifai remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Death anniversary of renowned Urdu poet Qateel Shifai was observed on Thursday. Born on December 24, 1919 in Haripur, his real name was Muhammad Auranzeb but he adopted Qateel Shifai as his pen name. He wrote over 20 collections of poetry and more than 2500 songs for films. Qateel Shifai was awarded Pride of Performance in 1994.

Ayaz for further strengthening Pak-Germany ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday emphasized further strengthening Pakistan-Germany bilateral ties, particularly through expanding cooperation between parliamentary friendship groups and the exchange of parliamentary delegations.

He made these remarks during a meeting with the Parliamentary delegation from Germany, who called on him here. Both sides discussed a wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues.

They expressed contentment over the current state of bilateral relations, including parliamentary ties, and reaffirmed their joint resolve to further expand and diversify mutu-

ally beneficial cooperation.

The NA Speaker said Pakistan and Germany enjoy a multifaceted friendly relationship marked by shared interests and a common stance on various regional and international issues.

"It is high time to further strengthen parliamentary, cultural, economic, and people-to-people connections between the two countries to attain a shared goal of sustainable development," said the NA Speaker.

While discussing trade and economic cooperation bilaterally and in European context, Sadiq mentioned Pakistan's proactive efforts in creating a conducive environment for economic and trade activities, providing friendly countries with

significant investment opportunities and mutual benefits.

The delegates expressed gratitude to the NA Speaker for the warm welcome and his sentiments for country and its people.

They reiterated that Germany views Pakistan as an important regional stakeholder and is committed to further strengthening linkages in all areas of mutual interest, in addition to fostering parliamentary and cultural exchanges.

German delegation comprised of Members of German Parliament; Michael Müller, Christoph Schmid and Derya Türk-Nachbaur, Parliamentary officials and representatives of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a group photo with parliamentary delegation from Federal Republic of Germany at Parliament House.

Chairman CDA wants completion of Islamabad Expressway

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa Thursday made a detailed inspection of the ongoing work on various packages of the Islamabad Expressway, emphasizing the need for rapid progress and high standards.

During his visit, Randhawa highlighted the importance of starting plantation and landscape work around the expressway.

He instructed that the plan for the landscape should be submitted immediately to ensure that the area not only functions efficiently but also looks aesthetically pleasing.

"Work on this project was completed at a record speed during the last two months," Randhawa stated.

He urged that the remaining construction work should be completed by maintaining the same brisk pace, ensuring timely delivery.

The Islamabad Expressway project, like many other projects in the city, had experienced delays.

However, due to personal interest and continuous monitoring by Chairman CDA, the project is now on its way to completion, signaling a new phase of development for Islamabad's infrastructure.

Committee formed to investigate H-9 blaze

ISLAMABAD (APP): A nine-member high-level committee has been formed on Thursday to investigate the fire incident that broke out at the H-9 Sunday market on Wednesday.

The committee, led by the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, has been tasked with completing the investigation within seven days.

Additional Deputy Commissioner will serve as the Secretary to the Committee.

The Senior officials from the Islamabad Police, the Capital Development Authority (CDA), and other relevant departments are included in the committee.

These include the Deputy Inspector General of Operations, the Assistant Inspector General of the Special Branch, and the Director of Municipal Services.

The committee's responsibilities include assessing the damage caused by the fire, determining its cause, and evaluating whether any protective measures were in place.

The committee is expected to submit its findings within a week.

Govt to resolve passport delays issue soon

ISLAMABAD (INP): The nationwide issue of passport delays in Pakistan is nearing resolution as the government ramps up its efforts to address the crisis.

In a significant move, the government has decided to import additional passport printing machines to eliminate the backlog. The Director General of Passports and Immigration has prepared and submitted the requisition to the Ministry of Interior.

According to sources, the new machines, set to arrive from abroad in September, include six desktop and two e-passport machines, each capable of printing 1,000 passports per hour. Passport officials stated that the delays, which have plagued the country for over a year, are due to a shortage of paper and the limited capacity of outdated machinery.

Muharram security: Capital admin bans religious sermons by 27 Islamic scholars

ISLAMABAD (INP): To ensure security during Muharram-ul-Haram, the Islamabad administration banned religious speeches and sermons by Islamic scholars from different schools of thought within the city on Thursday.

According to media reports, the administration has imposed restrictions on a total of 27 scholars following the recommendations of the Islamabad police.

As per the channel report, the ban includes prominent figures such as Maulana Abdul Aziz, Maulana Abdul Razzaq,

Qari Waseem Abbasi, Rizwan Saifi, Allama Shifa Najafi, Allama Tahir Ashraf, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, and Abdul Khaliq.

It is also pertinent to mention here that the federal government has already given its approval to deploy Pakistan Army troops in the capital territory and all four provinces of the country during Muharram.

The government in order to ensure foolproof security in Muharram has invoked Article 245 of the Constitution for the deployment of Army soldiers in all the provinces. The decision was taken on the requests

of all provinces seeking Army deployment to assist the civil armed forces and police.

Army soldiers will also be on Muharram guard in Islamabad, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan. The Interior Ministry also issued a notification regarding the deployment of Pakistan Army soldiers.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi called a special meeting to review the security arrangements for Muharram last Monday, and Islamabad IGP Ali Nasir Rizvi will brief the meeting about the security plan for the federal capital.

Saudi delegation calls on IIUI president

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Saudi delegation of industrial experts called on the President of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, on Thursday and appreciated the high level of professionalism of the institution.

The objective of the visit was to conduct spot hiring for civil engineering-related positions at the university, according to a news release.

The delegation included Mansou Al Shaghab, ACES Regional HR Manager, and Eng. Ayman Tanninah,

Branch Manager for the Tabuk Region.

They informed the IIUI President about their visit to Pakistan to hire Civil Lab Engineers, Lab Technicians, Civil Surveyors, HSE Officers, and Geotechnical Drillers.

Dr. Alotaibi briefed the delegation on the accreditations and achievements of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET), highlighting the recent activities and milestones achieved under the newly implemented strategic plan.

He emphasized that the IIUI has been witnessing encouraging results, with

FET playing a pivotal role in achieving academic excellence and fostering industry-academia linkages.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Khaz Zeb Jadoon, Dr. Rashid Farooq, and other relevant officials.

During the visit, alumni from the Department of Civil Engineering and candidates from other universities submitted their CVs, and offer letters were awarded to the selected candidates.

Later, the delegation toured the labs of the Department of Civil Engineering.

ICT admin cracks down on price gougers, 10 held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has launched a strict campaign against traders violating the official price of essential commodities in the Federal Capital.

In a recent operation directed by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, Magistrate Saddar Zone, Mir Yamin led a price inspection of essential goods in the area covered by Police Station Tarnol, said the spokesman of ICT's administration.

During the inspection, Magistrate Saddar Zone visited fruit and vegetable shops, dairy stores, and grocery outlets.

The focus was on ensuring that shopkeepers adhered to the official pricing of essential commodities.

The magistrate arrested 10 shopkeepers while heavy fines were also imposed on the violators. These traders were found guilty of not displaying the official prices and were involved in wholesaling without proper authorization.

They were handed over to Police Station Tarnol for further legal action.

The district administration has made it clear that it would continue its rigorous checks and actions against any vendors found violating the established price norms.

It is pertinent to mention here that operations are going on against price hikes, professional beggars, illegal petrol filling agencies, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) filling stations, and others on a daily basis.

Met Office forecast heavy rain across country

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Met Department has forecast heavy rain in several parts of the country bringing relief from the intense

heat. Rain is expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Potohar region, upper Punjab, and northeast Balochistan.

The capital city, Islamabad, is expected to experience partly cloudy conditions with a likelihood of rain in and around the city.

In Lahore, residents can anticipate rain this afternoon in different areas of the city. The Met Department has indicated that dark clouds will form and rain is expected to follow. The minimum temperature in Lahore on Thursday is predicted to be 27 degrees Celsius, while the maximum temperature will reach 38 degrees Celsius.

The anticipated rain is

expected to alleviate the current heat, making the weather more pleasant for residents in the affected areas. The Met Department advises residents to stay informed about weather updates and to take necessary precautions during heavy rain, especially in areas prone to flooding.

Currently, the temperature in Karachi stands at 32 degrees Celsius, with a maximum likely to reach 37 degrees and a minimum recorded at 30.5 degrees. The humidity level is at 76%, and north-south winds are blowing at 16 kilometres per hour.

There is a possibility of drizzle and light rain today. The hot and humid conditions are expected to persist for the next 24 hours.

Excise Dept brings vehicle registration

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to make essential services more accessible, the Excise Department will be setting up a mobile facility at Trail 3 in the federal capital on Thursday.

This initiative is part of the ICT (Islamabad Capital Territory) Doorstep initiative. From 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., excise staff will be stationed at the parking lot to assist residents with various civic needs.

Residents of the surrounding areas can take

advantage of these services through a dedicated van. This mobile unit aims to simplify the process of obtaining fuel permits, whether for domestic or commercial use and to facilitate seamless motor vehicle registration. The on-ground service will make these processes quick and straightforward.

The initiative is designed to streamline vehicle-related procedures such as registration, transfer, and token tax payment.

Beyond these, the

mobile Facilitation Center will offer additional services including the issuance of domicile certificates, birth certificates, power of attorney documents, international driving permits, and fuel permits for both domestic and commercial purposes.

By bringing these services directly to the community, ICT aims to ease the public's access to essential civic facilities and reduce the need for multiple visits to government offices.

Pirzada hands over apartment keys

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Thursday handed over the keys to the allottees of the I-16/3 apartments in a ceremony held here at the project site.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister appreciated the efforts of Pakistan Housing Authority (PHA) officials for the successful completion of the project and for carrying out the best construction work for the apartments. Pirzada expressed concern over the shortage of housing in the country and directed PHA's Foundation management to start work on launching more housing projects to provide shelter to lower-income groups.

The minister said that

providing quality and affordable housing to federal government employees was the priority of the government and hoped that the issue of govt employee's plots and apartments would be resolved by September 2024. He directed the PHA foundation officials to complete the plantation of trees at the site and made arrangements for the supply of daily-use items in the newly growing residential area.

On the occasion, the Chief Executive Officer of PHA Foundation Shahid Hussain briefed the minister that PHAF had formally launched the Multi Stories project on 17 acres of land provided by the Capital Development Authority in 2015. He briefed that the

project consisted of 672 sq feet of B-type and 912 sq feet of E-type apartments for the general public and federal government employees.

Moreover, he briefed that that possession of 1063 apartments had been handed over to the owners while 33 families had been shifted. The project has 51 commercial shops of which 23 had been sold through an open auction, he said and added that the project has also 462 parking sites of 290 sq ft for B type and 172 sq ft for E type and was offered on a first come first served basis on the payment of Rs 395,000.

The CEO informed that 247 parking had been sold while the process of 115 was remaining.

CCP okayed merger within consumer care market

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a merger within the consumer care market.

The approved transaction entails the acquisition of certain assets of M/s Procter and Gamble Pakistan (Pvt.) Ltd (P&G) by M/s Nimir Industrial Chemicals Ltd (Nimir) under the Asset Purchase Agreement (APA), according to a press release issued here on Thursday.

P&G is a company incorporated in Pakistan with extensive business footprint in the production and sale of various household products including

the manufacturing of its brand of toilet soap i.e. Safeguard.

Nimir is a publicly listed company established in 1964 and has a diverse product portfolio along with toll manufacturing of aerosol, soap products, home, and personal care products.

In view of the terms set out in APA, Nimir intends to acquire certain assets of P&G relating to its manufacturing facility of toilet soap, 'Safeguard', and its real estate property located in Hub, Balochistan.

The relevant product market as identified in CCP's Phase I competition

assessment is 'Personal Care – Hard Soap'. The assessment also confirmed that the proposed transaction will not result in the dominance of Nimir in the relevant market, post-transaction, given its small share.

With this approval, CCP expects improved operations with Nimir's state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities that comply with international standards and quality assurance, thus, contributing towards developing innovative industrial chemical solutions as well as national economic prosperity.

Land record digitization in Islamabad on cards

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Punjab Land and Revenue Authority (PLRA) signed accords for digitization of land record in the federal capital.

Under these agreements, all sites in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) will be digitized within three months, with 25 ICT sites set to go live by August 14, 2024.

According to CDA spokesperson, the PLRA will undertake the digitization of 130,000 land and property files of the CDA. Out of these, 20,000 files

will be digitized by the same August deadline.

The complete digitization of CDA's land and property files was expected to be accomplished within four months.

Furthermore, GIS mapping of all files and properties will be implemented, accompanied by the creation of a comprehensive project management system.

Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized the importance of this initiative, stating, "This is an important step

towards making Islamabad a smart city according to the vision of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the instructions of the Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi."

He also expressed his gratitude to the Punjab Land and Revenue Authority for their support in this endeavor.

This landmark agreement marks a crucial stride towards enhancing the efficiency and transparency of land and property management in Islamabad, aligning with the broader vision of a digital and smart city.

Construction of road kicks-off

KABUL (Pajhwok): The construction work of Lashkargah-Kandahar Road in southern Helmand province has kicked off at the cost of over 19 million afs, an official said on Thursday. Lashkargah City Mayor Mawlawi Abdullah Rohani said the construction work of the road would be completed in three months and funds for the project would be provided from the development budget. The project included the expansion and asphalt-ing of 11 kilometres road, he added.

Father-in-law arrested

MAIMANA (Pajhwok): A man has been arrested for allegedly beheading a teenage boy in northern Faryab province, an official said on Thursday. Anti-crimes branch director Mufti Mohammad Ismail Forqani told Pajhwok Afghan News a 19-year-old boy was beheaded by unknown men in Nishar area of Belcheragh district. He said: "It is not yet clear why the boy was killed. A friend of the victim was sleeping next to him, when the boy was beheaded".

\$16 million worth of exports made to Iran

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) reported that Afghanistan's exports to Iran from the beginning of the current solar year to the 10th of Saratan amounted to approximately \$16 million, while imports from Iran were valued at \$740 million.

Abdul Salam Javad Akhundzada, the ministry's spokesperson, adds that both Afghanistan's exports and imports with Iran have increased compared to the previous year.

The ministry's spokesperson said: "Afghanistan's exports to Iran from March 20 to June 30 of 2024 were about 16 million dollars, and imports from Iran during the same period amounted to 740 million dollars."

At the same time,

Iranian media reported a \$123 million increase in the country's non-oil exports to Afghanistan in the first three months of the current solar year.

The deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Industries and Mines emphasized increasing tariffs on imported goods and working on marketing Afghan products in foreign markets.

Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, the first deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "We can align our exports to increase at least our minimum exports. Additionally, the goods produced in Afghanistan should increase, and the tariffs on imported items should be raised so that domestic products can replace imported goods."

Some experts consider Iran a significant economic and trade partner for Afghanistan and believe that increasing trade and transit exchanges with Iran benefits the country's economy.

Abdul Zahoor Madbar, an economic expert, said: "One of Iran's advantages for Afghanistan is its shorter distance and longer border. Having proper economic and strategic relations with Iran also facilitates the use of Chabahar Port."

According to reports, Afghanistan is recognized as an excellent market for Iranian products, and traders from both countries are working to increase the volume of trade exchanges, especially the export of Iranian goods to Afghanistan.

WFP facing a massive budget crisis

KABUL (Ariana News): The World Food Program (WFP) says it faces a "massive funding crisis" to continue its operations in Afghanistan. The organization told the media that it needs \$600 million dollars to advance its activities in the next 6 months.

Based on a statement, the damages caused by the recent devastating floods in more than 10 provinces of Afghanistan require more urgent assistance.

"While the World Food Program is facing a massive budget crisis; But it uses its available resources to respond to the urgent situation," the statement read.

The World Food Program has also said that it is currently distributing food packages to 125,000 flood victims on a monthly basis.

This organization says that the aid is mostly distributed in the provinces of Baghlan, Faryab, Ghor, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar; the provinces that have seen the most damage from the recent floods.

Muttaqi and Turkmen envoy commit to speeding up TAPI project

KABUL (Ariana News): The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi, met with the Turkmen ambassador to Afghanistan, Hoja Ovezov, to discuss the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas line project.

According to the ministry, both parties agreed to strengthen bilateral relations and advance this crucial regional energy initiative.

Regarding the TAPI project, Amir Khan Muttaqi and Ovezov discussed extending the pipeline within Afghan territory, enhancing the capacity of the Torghundi station, and advancing the work on the Nooruljihad power substation in Herat.

In his remarks, Muttaqi said the Islamic Emirate would work diligently to resolve the remaining issues



concerning the TAPI project within Afghanistan and commence practical work on the pipeline initiative.

Further emphasizing their commitment, Muttaqi said that the relevant

Afghan authorities are finalizing all legal documents related to the TAPI project to facilitate the commencement of work.

In conclusion, Muttaqi noted that Afghan authori-

ties are working on constructing the infrastructure related to the railway at Torghundi port and will inform the Turkmen side on developments in the near future.

Afghan Minister urges resumption of flights



KABUL (TOLONews): Hamidullah Akhundzada, the acting minister of Transport and Civil Aviation (MoTCA), emphasized the importance of resuming flights between Kabul and Almaty during a meeting with the Kazakhstan ambassador in Kabul.

Imamuddin Ahmadi, the ministry spokesperson, said that Akhundzada was invited to participate in a conference on establishing a six-party air corridor among Afghanistan,

Pakistan, Belarus, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. This conference is scheduled for the 19th and 20th of this month in Kazakhstan.

Economic experts believe direct flights between Kabul and Almaty will facilitate transportation and increase trade between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan.

Economic expert Abdul Basir Turki said, "Visa facilitation is necessary for us to travel and transit through Central Asian

countries. We can obtain visas from three to four countries, but not all."

Economic expert Shamsur Rahman Ahmadzai said, "If these connections expand, it can positively impact transportation and transit relations and benefit both countries."

Flights between Kabul and Almaty were suspended in 2017, but airlines like Fly Dubai, Air Arabia, and Turkish Airlines have resumed their operations in Afghanistan.

OCHA appeals for funding

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned that the economic crisis in Afghanistan will intensify if sufficient funding is not provided.

OCHA said vital programs such as health care, shelter, food and education are at risk due to severe funding shortages.

The UN organization published a statement on Wednesday stating that without the required funds, six million people will not have access to health services and another 4.5 million people will not have access to protective services.

OCHA has warned that if adequate funding is not received, almost five million children will face an increased risk of infectious diseases due to lack of access to clean water.

The organization also wrote that "300,000 children who are currently enrolled in educational classes will be denied access to primary education."

Cardiac Surgery Dept opened

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): A cardiac surgery department has been inaugurated for the first time at a private hospital in Herat province.

Deputy Governor Maulvi Hayatullah Mohajir hailed the opening of the heart surgery department at the Luqman-i-Hakim Navid Hospital as good news for citizens, especially residents of western Afghanistan.

He urged residents to fully trust their doctors and refrain from travelling abroad to treat their patients, something costing a huge amount of money.

Meanwhile, Dr Ghulam Ahmad Hanafi, deputy director of public health, said hundreds of people had to go abroad every year for the treatment of heart issues and spent a lot of money.

PANJSHIR (TOLONews): The first Emerald Export Development Exhibition has been inaugurated by a private company in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Panjshir province.

In this two-day exhibition, more than one hundred booths, including Panjshir emeralds, are dedicated to local products and handicrafts.

The purpose of this exhibition is said to be marketing for precious and semi-precious stones in the country.

Officials from local companies are urging the interim government to hold more exhibitions inside and outside the country to promote and support local products.

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum stated that they will organize more

exhibitions inside and outside the country to market precious stones, especially Panjshir emeralds.

Mohammad Agha Hakim, the governor of Panjshir, said: "This exhibition in Panjshir is held to showcase Panjshir emeralds. We have invited national and international traders to come and see the world's top-grade Panjshir emeralds up close."

Humayoun Afghan, spokesperson for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, said: "This was the first exhibition held in Panjshir. In the future, more exhibitions will be held in the capital and other provinces, especially in the eastern provinces where we have precious stone mining."

The Acting Minister of Rural Development stated that along-

2 water schemes worth 14m afs being built



MAHMOOD RAQI (Pajhwok): Two clean drinking water supply networks are being constructed in Tagab district of central Kapisa province at a cost of 14 million afghanis.

Eng. Latifullah Fazli, an official of the provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development department, told Pajhwok Afghan News

the projects included drilling of two wells, construction of three water storages with each having the capacity to store 50 to 40 cubic meters of water.

Installing 70 solar panels and extending a 18521-meter pipeline were also part of the projects that would benefit 638 families in Miakhel and Shinki

Khanan villages of Tagab district.

According to him, funded by UNICEF, the projects would take six months to complete and provide job opportunities to 700 people.

Rice cultivated on 3,000 hectares

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): Rice crop has been cultivate on about 3,000 hectares of land, 10 percent up compared to last year, in northern Balkh province of Afghanistan, officials said on Thursday.

Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock director Mohammad Hussain Azimi told Pajhwok Afghan News rice was cultivated in Sholgara, Kishindi, Kaldar and Shor Tepas districts on 3,000 hectares of land.

He said his department in partnership with a number organizations taught new agricultural methods to farmers and also distributed chemical fertilizers and improved quality seeds to some.

Sarajuddin, a farmer, told Pajhwok the government had so extended them no support and he bought fertilizer and improved quality seeds with his own money.

6 Ex-KPF members return from US to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan Personalities Contact Commission has announced that several members of the Khost Protection Force (KPF) from the previous government have returned to Afghanistan at the commission's invitation from the United States.

The commission for contacting Afghanistan personalities announced on Wednesday, July 10th, that six members of the KPF from Khost, including Nawaz Khan, Yousef Bahar, Kashmir Khan, Fulad, Mohammad Zaman, and Azat Shah, have returned to the country as a result of the commission's efforts from the United States.

The commission released a photo of at least six members of these forces in Khost and stated that one officer, three soldiers, and two technical staff members were among them. These personnel were trained by US military personnel during the previous government.

KPF Khost was a unit of approximately seven thousand special forces personnel in Afghanistan's previous government, trained by the Central Intelligence Agency. Following the regime's collapse, these forces were relocated to the United States.

Reports from Khost indicate that over 70 former members of an Afghan special forces unit are currently held captive under Taliban intelligence in Khost.

These forces, who underwent training in the United States during the previous government, returned to Khost to visit their families after completing their training. According to the reports, they were then detained by the Taliban.

Additionally, it's reported that Taliban forces have demanded ransom from these detained personnel and their families to avoid harm.

Rights watchdog calls for Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to ease back on moral policing

KABUL (Ariana News): Amnesty International called for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to roll back on moral policing.

Responding to a new report by the United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) in Afghanistan on the violations of human rights by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV), Amnesty International said the moral policing has had a decaying effect on human rights in the country.

Zaman Sultani, regional researcher for South Asia at Amnesty International, said: "This report lays bare

the role of the Taliban's MPVPV in violating various human rights and fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan.

"Its arbitrary, inconsistent and ambiguous record of morally policing the people of Afghanistan, with an institutionalized system of discrimination that disproportionately impacts women and girls, has had a decaying effect on human rights in the country."

Healso stated that "the arbitrary, inconsistent and ambiguous record of morally policing the people of Afghanistan, with an institutionalized system of discrimination that disproportionately impacts women and girls, has had a decay-

ing effect on human rights in the country."

Sultani went on to say that Amnesty International shares the UN's call to the Islamic Emirate to guarantee the rights of freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to health and work, among a host of other fundamental rights and freedoms as guaranteed under the international human rights treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party.

"The prevalent impunity for the Taliban's gross violations of human rights and crimes under international law must come to an end," he said.

He also called for the

United Nations to establish a dedicated independent international accountability mechanism to investigate crimes under international law and other serious violations in Afghanistan as well as to collect and preserve evidence for future accountability efforts and prosecutions.

"They must also ensure that gender justice is prioritized and the involvement of women human rights defenders and civil society stakeholders remains central in all engagements with the Taliban on the future of Afghanistan. To fail to do so would be to turn our backs on the victims and their rights to truth, justice and reparation."

This comes after United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) released its report titled, De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, earlier this week.

The report outlines the negative impact that the activities and expanding role of the MPVPV has had on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in various aspects of private and public life for people living in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Emirate meanwhile said Wednesday the claims by United Nations Assistance Mission were unfounded and that all rights were respected in

accordance with Sharia.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the IEA's spokesman said that the rulings recommended by the MPVPV are well-known Islamic rulings.

He said United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) was trying to compare Afghanistan's policies against those of the West, which was not "the right thing to do".

He added that under the IEA, the rights of all citizens are secured in accordance with Sharia.

"All men and women are dealt with according to Sharia, Sharia rulings are enforceable as laws, and in this case, no one is oppressed or violated," said Mujahid.

Shehbaz vows to expand pro-poor education network

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday vowed to expand the Daanish Schools network to Balochistan, AJK, Gilgit Baltistan and Islamabad as he met Ayan Kashif, a student of Daanish School Mianwali, who clinched the first position in the matriculation examination of BISE Lahore.

The prime minister invited the student to the Prime Minister's House to personally meet him and extend greetings on his achievement despite being an orphan with a humble financial background. The prime minister congratulated the student, his mother and the school principal, also accompanying him, and said such talented youth could guarantee Pakistan's progress as the government was also focusing on their skill and vocational training to make them employable and boost the country's agriculture and industrial production.

He said that the government would build four Daanish schools in Balochistan and also establish the facility in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Ex-FATA districts and Islamabad. For the Islamabad campus, the land has been identified and the budget allocated, he added. Ayan Kashif paid tribute to the prime minister for his vision of Daanish Schools which enabled him to excel in his studies.

As the prime minister questioned, he appreciated the facilities of the dormitory, uniform, food and stationery being provided there without any charge as his mother also applauded the professionalism and support of the school's teaching staff. "Daanish is a proud moment for us as children with low-income backgrounds with some being single orphans or double orphans are studying there. For the double orphans, Daanish schools prove to be their only support," the prime minister said before giving away a a cheque of Rs1 million and a laptop to the student.

The prime minister told the gathering, also comprising federal ministers and senior government officers, that he got the idea of Daanish Schools as "it always pinched me that on one side the huge iron fences of

Aitcheson College are obstructing the entry of poor students for the facility being limited to the children of elite class, landlords and senior officers. The poor can't think of enrolling their children there."

"I think this position goes to you sir," the student said and arose to offer his medal to the prime minister which he returned affectionately amidst the clapping by the participants. Prime Minister Shehbaz said the government was investing in skill and vocational training of youth to enhance their productivity and employability in multiple fields, like agriculture, information technology, export-based industry, SMEs and freelancing.

To the suggestion of Ayan of elevating the Daanish Authority to the university level, the prime minister assured to convey it to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz whom he also lauded for carrying forward the vision effectively. Ayan's mother also thanked the prime minister and said the credit for his son's achievement and her happiness went to the Daanish School and its highly professional faculty.

The prime minister said Daanish School offered market-competitive salaries to the teachers to ensure quality education to the students, despite protests at that time. "The Aitcheson, Grammar Schools, Lawrence College, Convents and other private institutions charge huge fees from students and their parents can afford that. But if the students from poor families, who might be even more intelligent, remained deprived of quality education just for lacking resources, it would be nothing but the state's failure," he remarked. In his comment, the school principal also said that at Daanish Schools, the prime minister's vision was being materialised in a befitting manner.

PM stresses using technology for effective enforcement of customs duties: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the importance of taking comprehensive measures to eliminate corruption in customs operations. He stressed the need to remove unnecessary hurdles and utilize modern technology, including artificial intelligence and advanced

equipment, to ensure the full enforcement of customs duties.

Chairing a meeting focused on the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Pakistan Customs, the prime minister described the customs sector as the backbone of the country's economy. He stated that reforms within the FBR and complete digitization would secure economic stability. Prime Minister Shehbaz instructed the relevant authorities to ensure a third-party audit of reform initiatives in the FBR and other departments, consolidating all such projects under a single framework.

He directed efforts to increase revenue collection through enhanced enforcement measures and called for the establishment of a project management unit dedicated to reforms in the customs sector. Addressing issues related to mis-invoicing, he stressed the need to resolve these problems and eliminate under-invoicing to protect Pakistan's industries and products. He also requested detailed reports on revenue collection resulting from enforcement actions and called for the establishment of a regulatory framework for the operations of the shipping industry.

The prime minister emphasized the need for a third-party audit of the web-based one-customs system (WeBOC). During the briefing on customs operations, it was reported that Pakistan Customs had fully automated its operations and engaged internationally renowned experts to implement reforms featuring modern AI-based systems.

It was noted that approximately 72.4 percent of imports and exports were cleared through the green channel. Pakistan Customs collected an additional Rs240 billion in revenue through valuation controls from July 2023 to June 2024, representing an 80% increase over the previous year's collection. Federal cabinet members Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Ali Pervaiz Malik, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan, Attorney General Mansoor Awan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, Member of the National Assembly Barrister Aqeel Malik, FBR Chairman Zubair Tiwana, and other senior officials attended the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Saudi plane's landing gear catches fire at airport

Kashif Ullah

PESHAWAR (APP): The landing gear of a passenger plane of Saudi Arabia caught fire after landing at the Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA) Peshawar on Thursday. According to the Civil Aviation Authority, soon after the landing of Saudi Flight 792, fire erupted in its left landing gear.

The Air Traffic Control, after witnessing sparks and smoke in the landing gear, immediately informed the fire-fighters and rescue services. The fire fighters and rescue workers approached the plane immediately and after some efforts doused the fire, saving the plane from a big mishap. All the 276 passengers and 21 staff members came out of the plane through an inflammable slide safely. The flight landed at BKIA Peshawar after reaching from Riaz city of Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, the Colombo-bound plane made an emergency landing at the Jinnah International Airport Karachi in the wee hours of Thursday after a passenger's health worsened mid-air.

According to sources, the flight was going to Colombo from Dubai, when the health of the woman passenger worsened after a heart attack. The pilot of the flight sought permission for an emergency landing at the Karachi airport from the ATC. After getting clearance, the flight made an emergency landing at the Karachi airport. The medical team during the check-up found the passenger was already dead, CAA sources said. The deceased passenger was identified as Paloni, 57, who lost her life due to heart attack. The health officer issued the death certificate of the passenger and later plane with the body departed for Colombo.

Submission of Forms 45 ordered

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Tribunal has directed the Returning Officer to submit Forms 45, 46, and 47 in the alleged rigging case of NA-46.

The Islamabad High Court's Election Tribunal, presided over by Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, heard the election petition filed by PTI candidate Amir Mughal against Anjum Aqeel Khan concerning alleged rigging in NA-46.

During the hearing, the Election Commission's lawyer stated that they had submitted Forms 45, 46, and 47 but had not received copies of the petitions.

The court instructed the petitioner to provide copies to the Election Commission and ordered the Returning Officer to submit the necessary forms. The Returning Officer's lawyer requested additional time, citing that he was added to the case only the previous day. Anjum Aqeel Khan argued that Amir Mughal's petition was inadmissible as it did not meet the necessary requirements.

The court asked Amir Mughal's lawyer to respond to Anjum Aqeel Khan's objection and inquired about the date of the gazette notification confirming Anjum Aqeel Khan's victory.

G7 denounces Israel's settlement in West Bank

ROME: Foreign Ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) major democracies on Thursday denounced Israel's move to expand its settlements in the occupied West Bank, saying it was "counterproductive to the cause of peace".

Israel announced last month that it was going to legalise five outposts in the West Bank, establish three new settlements, and seize huge swathes of land where Palestinians seek to create an independent state. The G7 - which includes the United States, Britain, Canada, Japan, France, Germany and Italy - condemned the move and urged Israel to reverse its decision. "We reaffirm our commitment to lasting and sustainable peace ... on the basis of the two-State solution," the statement said. The G7 foreign ministers also called on Israel to release all remaining withheld tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority, saying maintaining economic stability in the West Bank was "critical for regional security".

Meanwhile, Hamas said in a statement on Thursday that mediators have not yet provided the group with any updates regarding Gaza ceasefire negotiations.

It also accused Israel of "stalling" to gain time and thwart the current round of talks. "The occupation con-

tinues its policy of stalling to buy time to foil this round of negotiations, as it has done in previous rounds," the Islamist faction added. The Hamas comments come as Qatari and Egyptian mediators, backed by the United States, have stepped up efforts this week to conclude a ceasefire deal aimed at ending the nine-month war in Gaza and releasing Israeli hostages held by Hamas and many Palestinians jailed in Israel.

Meanwhile, Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Wednesday that 60 percent of Hamas fighters had been "eliminated or wounded" in the Gaza war since the militant group's October 7 attacks. Gallant reaffirmed in a statement to parliament on the first nine months of the conflict that Israel was "determined" to meet its war goals of eradicating Hamas and bringing all hostages back from Gaza.

The minister praised Israeli soldiers for "performing their work with dedication, sacrifice and success" and said "the achievements are many." Israel has launched major new offensives in Gaza City in the north and around Rafah and Khan Yunis in the south, even as it also embarks on contacts with international media-

tors on conditions for negotiating a truce with Hamas.

"We have eliminated or wounded 60 percent of the Hamas terrorists" and "dis-mantled" most the Palestinian group's 24 battalions, Gallant said. The minister did not give figures for the casualties and the Israeli military said it did not immediately have statistics. The October 7 attack on southern Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,195 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

The militants also seized 251 hostages, 116 of whom remain in Gaza, including 42 the military says are dead. Israel's military retaliation has killed at least 38,295 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. While many countries expressed solidarity with Israel after the October 7 attacks, the government has also faced a wave of criticism for its military campaign that has devastated Gaza. Gallant insisted Israel would stick to its aims. "We have returned half of the hostages and we are determined to return the rest," he said. "The security establishment, and myself heading it, are determined to achieve the goals of the war and complete them." — Arab News

Focus on to reduce price of electricity: Awais

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari has apprised the National Assembly Standing Committee on Energy (Power Division) that the Power Division was making concerted efforts to reduce the price of electricity by intensifying anti-theft campaigns and reducing line losses.

The committee which met with Muhammad Idress in the Chair and was attended by MNAs; Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, Raja Qamer ul Islam, Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed Abbas, Rana Muhammad Hayat Khan, Khurshid Ahmed Junejo, Syed

Waseem Hussain, Junaid Akbar, Malik Anwar Taj, Sher Ali Arabab, Haji Imtiaz Ahmed Chaudhry, Ali Afzal Sahi and Muhammad Iqbal Khan. The senior officers from Ministry of Energy (Power Division) and its attached departments also attended the meeting.

The Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Power Division) briefed the Committee on working and performance of the Ministry and its attached departments. The Secretary informed that the Power Division dealt with the matters relating to development of power resources of the country, electric utilities, liaison with international engineering organization in

power sector, federal agencies and institutions for promotion of special studies in power sector etc.

He further apprised that the Ministry had plans for development of large scale alternative renewable energy (ARE) projects including hydro power projects, local manufacturing of solar panels and solarization of agriculture tube-wells. Discussing the matter raised by Muhammad Iqbal regarding the disconnection, over-billing and unannounced load shedding of electricity in erstwhile FATA, the Minister for Power Division apprised the Committee that subsidy of Rs 65 billion has been granted to the erstwhile FATA in the current budget.

Pak-Azerbaijan

(Continued from Page 1)

Preferential Trade Agreement between the government of Azerbaijan and the government of Pakistan was signed by Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Deputy Minister of Economy Azerbaijan Sahib Mammadov. Similarly, an MoU on the cooperation between the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Privatization of Pakistan in the field of privatization of state property was signed by Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan and Deputy Minister of Economy Azerbaijan Sahib Mammadov.

Another agreement on Transit Trade between the governments of Azerbaijan and Pakistan was also signed between the two countries. The two sides also agreed on a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan and Minister of Law and Justice of Pakistan. The MoC was signed by Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tatar and Azerbaijan Minister for Defence Industry Vugar Mustafayev.

An Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the government of Pakistan and Azerbaijan on cooperation in the field of mineral resources and geology was signed by Petroleum Minister Dr Musadik Malik and Azerbaijan Minister of Energy. Cultural Exchange Program between Pakistan and Azerbaijan for the year 2024-2029 was signed by Minister for Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tatar and Azerbaijan Minister of Foreign Affairs Samir Sharifov.

Likewise the two sides also signed an MoU between the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication of Pakistan on cooperation in the fields of information and communication technologies. An MoU on cooperation between Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting (CJSC) and Pakistan Television Corporation (PTVC) was signed by Secretary Information Shahera Shahid and Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov. The two sides also

signed an MoU on establishing of twinning links between the city of Baku and Islamabad, and another MoU between Small and Medium Business Development Agency of Azerbaijan and SMEDA Pakistan. An agreement between Government of Pakistan and Government of Azerbaijan for scientific and technological cooperation was also signed between the two sides.

An agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism between government of Azerbaijan and Government of Pakistan was signed by Secretary IPC Nadeem Irshad Kayani and Azerbaijan Minister of Defence Industry. An MoU on cooperation in the field of literature between the institute of literature named after Nizami Ganjavi of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) and Pakistan Academy of Literature (PAL) was signed by Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters Prof Dr Najeeba Arif and Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov. Air Services Agreement was also signed between the governments of Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Draft of KP LG (Property Lease) Rules, 2024 prepared

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Thursday, chaired an important meeting of the Local Governments Department, which deliberated upon various reform initiatives and made important decisions to this effect.

Minister for Local Governments Arshad Ayub Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Special Secretary to Chief Minister Waqar Ali Khan, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments and other relevant high ups attended the meeting.

As an important step to enhance the revenue collection of the provincial government by effectively utilizing Local Governments properties, the meeting has finalized the draft of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Governments (Property Lease) Rules, 2024, which would be tabled before the next meeting of the provincial cabinet for final approval.

Briefing about the salient features of the newly drafted property lease rules, it was informed that the property lease period for large-scale investment, has been proposed to extend up to 90 years. According to the details; Initial lease period for investment larger than Rs 500 million, shall be determined 66 years extendable to the period of further 33 years.

Similarly, Initial lease period for investment upto Rs. 500 million,

shall be determined 33 years extendable to the period of further 33 years. Investment plan upto Rs. 200 million would have an initial lease period of 33 years, which would also be extendable to further 15 years. It was further informed that in case of death of the lease holder, the lease rights shall be transferable to the legal heirs for the remaining lease period. The local government's properties would be leased out through a lease committee to be chaired by the deputy commissioner of respective district.

The Chief Minister on this occasion has directed the concerned quarters to introduce online leasing mechanism so that investors from abroad can also benefit the opportunities easily. "The ultimate purpose is to increase the revenue stream of the province by strengthening the prevailing system as well as facilitating the investors in potential sectors of the province", he remarked.

It was decided in the meeting to establish fruit and vegetable markets across the province under the auspices of Tehsil Municipal Administrations, further deciding that the private sector investors would be encouraged for this purpose. The main objective of establishing new fruit and vegetable markets is to optimally facilitate the people, and that's why it is also indispensable to regulate the markets already available in the province, he said and added that increasing number of markets will not only be helpful to improve the

quality but to stabilize the prices as well.

The Chief Minister also agreed to the proposed plan for digital transformation of Local Governments Department, under which Integrated Citizen Services, Reporting, Compliance & Monitoring System would be established. Other salient features of the proposed digitalization plan include; Revenue Generation, Digital Payments, Public Service Delivery, Integrated Portal, Performance Management and a Dashboard for Central Oversight. The chief minister has directed the authorities concerned to immediately start work on the proposed digitalization plan, and made it clear that complete record of department's employees, properties, leases, payments, revenue collection, performance and other important matters should be available on dashboard.

He also directed that all kinds of TMA transactions must be made through bank accounts, adding that TMAs workers are working on front line; we have to disperse the negative perspective about them. He maintained that the local governments department has a very wide scope as it is working across the province even at the gross road level. "It is imperative to strengthen all the subsidiaries of the department thereby improving the services delivery system and utilizing its properties in a benefiting manner for increasing the revenue stream of the province, he concluded.

IHC reserves decision

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has reserved its decision on a petition raising questions over Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri's education credentials.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq took up the plea where the petitioner, advocate Mian Dawood, requested verification of Justice Jahangiri's educational credentials and urged to halt his judicial activities. During the proceedings, Justice Farooq questioned the admissibility of challenging the Judicial Commission and queried why it was included as a party in the case.

The petitioner responded that he sought to summon records from all parties except Justice Jahangiri, emphasising that no writ was sought against the Judicial Commission or the federation. The chief justice questioned if a writ against a high court judge was indeed admissible, in light of the Registrar's objections. The petitioner reiterated his plea for an inquiry into the eligibility of the honourable judges, citing the 1998 Supreme Court decision in the Sajjad Ali Shah case and referring to ongoing public debate fueled by university letters circulating on social and mainstream media.

Nepra okays up to Rs7.12 hike in base power tariff

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Thursday approved the federal government's request seeking up tp Rs7.12 per unit hike in electricity base tariff for domestic consumers already reeling under rising cost of living.

The power regulator issued its decision of approval on the federal government's application proposing hikes in electricity tariffs for domestic, commercial, general services, bulk, and agricultural consumers. Media obtained a copy of Nepra's 52-page decision which was sent to the federal government to implement the power tariff hikes after the latter proposed uniform tariff for all power distributions companies (Discos) and K-Electric.

With the new move, the Centre has been given a go-ahead by the power regular to notify its individual decisions "issued in the matter of each XWDISCO along with the decision of Power Purchase Price (PPP) forecast for the FY 2024-25 dated 14.06.2024". The base tariff has been increased for domestic consumers by

Rs48.84 per unit.

However, domestic consumers up to 200 units per month would be exempted from the recent hike for three months from July to September 2024. The renewed electricity tariff for the consumers using 201 to 300 units per month would be charged Rs34.26 per unit with an increase of Rs7.12. Similarly, the base tariff for those consuming between 301 to 400 units, will be Rs39.15 per unit after an increase of Rs7.02, while those using 401-500 units would face a hike of Rs6.12 with per unit reaching Rs41.36.

On the consumption of 501 to 600 units, Rs42.78 per unit would be charged after an increase of Rs6.12 and for those who fall in the category of 601 to 700 units, Rs43.92 per unit would be charged with an increase of Rs6.12. The per unit cost of electricity would be charged at the rate of Rs48.84 for those using more than 700 units after an increase of Rs6.12. Furthermore, per unit cost of electricity would be increased in accordance with the tax slabs.

The tax slab would remain unchanged for lifeline consumers using up to 50 units

per month at the price of Rs3.95 per unit and Rs7.74 per unit for other lifeline consumers using 51 to 100 units a month. In the same decision, the power regulatory authority approved tariff hikes for commercial, agriculture, general services and bulk consumers.

The base tariff for commercial consumers was hiked by Rs8.04, which would reach up to Rs77.15 per unit from July. Following the hike, the base tariff for agricultural consumers has hit Rs46.83 per unit with an increase of Rs6.62 per unit and Rs61.03 per unit for general services after a hike of Rs6.98 per unit from July. Whereas, after an increase of Rs5.51 per unit, bulk consumers would pay Rs59.96 a unit from July. However, the cabinet maintained the base tariff of electricity for industrial consumers.

The latest hike in power rates came after the Ministry of Energy sought the elimination of government subsidies, except for lifeline, industry or agriculture consumers, to bring financial sustainability to the energy sector via recovery of full cost of service through introducing efficient tariff structure.