

Three terrorists detected
F.P. Report
RAWALPINDI: Movement of three terrorists, trying to infiltrate Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was detected by security forces in Dir. The infiltrators were surrounded, effectively engaged and after an intense fire exchange, all three terrorists were sent to hell. Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of border.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-i-Sadr.

Islamabad police arrest Gohar, Raoof Hassan

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Islamabad police on Monday arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar and Secretary General Raoof Hassan on the allegation of encroachments. Sources said the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad police launched a joint operation against encroachments in G-8 sector, which resulted in the arrest of higher-ups of the PTI.

A contingent of Islamabad police besieged PTI's central secretariat and cordoned off the routes leading to the secretariat. Imran Khan's lawyer Ali Ijaz Butt claimed that PTI Chairman

Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Information Secretary Rauf Hassan had been arrested by the Islamabad police from the party's office.

"I just received a call from the party's office informing that 300 to 400 policemen arrived at the [party's] office and arrested PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar and Information Secretary Raoof Hasan," Butt wrote on X. The party condemned the move through its official X account and lambasted the Islamabad police.

"It's absolutely shameful how Islamabad Police continues to completely mock and disregard every law in this country," the party said. The PTI also shared footage on the X platform, showing several

police vehicles and police personnel outside the party's central secretariat.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad police have denied arrest of Barrister Gohar but said a team had arrested Raoof Hassan. They also denied arrest of four women and the claim that police took away a laptop and documents from the PTI Secretariat. Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmed Khan Bhicher condemned the police action in Islamabad. He said the party would hold a meeting to decide the future course of action. Barrister Saif also hit out at police for cracking down on the leaders without any reason. He said the action highlighted government's frustration.

KP CM orders arrest of armed men

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has ordered the immediate arrest of armed individuals impersonating government officials in the province.

In a statement, CM Gandapur revealed that some armed men are interfering in government and non-government matters and he had apprised the Apex Committee meeting of those individuals impersonating government officials. The chief minister noted that the provincial government, police, and public have reservations about these armed men. He directed the police to take action and arrest these elements, and appealed to the public to identify them.

Gandapur praised the resolution of the Bannu issue through dialogue with local elders, party leaders, and administration. He announced the formation of a committee to address the matter, which will meet with him tomorrow. The CM reiterated his commitment to serving the public, stating, "We are public representatives and will continue to support the people, address their concerns, and meet their expectations."

Azm-e-Istehkam a campaign against terrorism: DG ISPR

— any leverage to May 9 perpetrators will further foment chaos

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Inter-Services Public Relations Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry on Monday addressed an important press conference. The ISPR DG started his press conference by saying that the purpose of this communication was to clarify the army's stance on some important matters, adding that organised propaganda was being amplified by certain quarters who spread false and concocted news against the armed forces in recent times.

He said it had become necessary to speak about these issues from time to time. Briefing the media on the efforts of the security forces against rooting out terrorism, he said the security forces carried out 22,409 intelligence-based operations which resulted in elimination of 31 high-profile terrorists. He said 137 personnel embraced martyrdom during these operations. He said the security forces were conducting 112 operations on a daily basis.

Responding to a question regarding 'Operation Azm-i-Istehkam', he said it was unlike previous operations. "No one is going to be displaced this time round," he added. Elaborating on the Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, he said an announcement was made on June 22 last following a meeting headed by the prime minister in which all stakeholders were involved.

He said it was unanimously agreed in the meeting that the National Action Plan (NAP) of 2021 would be implemented in letter and spirit to cleanse Pakistan of terrorism. He further said as many as 16,000 seminars

were registered and 50 percent were not registered yet, adding that no one knew who was running these. He also touched upon the establishment of the anti-terrorism courts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan for uprooting terrorism. The army spokesman also lashed out at the "elements involved in illegal smuggling along the border of Afghanistan."

As for the May 9 perpetrators, Lt Gen Sharif said people who were responsible for attacking military installations were the ones stoking 'digital terrorism'. He criticised those who were falsely labelling these 'digital terrorists' as heroes, saying "no one knows how this sort of terrorism is being spread." "Any further leverage to the May 9 perpetrators will foment chaos. It has become necessary for us to take action against this kind of fascism," he made it clear.

He blamed foreign terrorists and digital terrorists in the same breath. Answering a question about the recent incident in Bannu, he said there were few armed men marching along with demonstrators in Bannu, adding that they were moving towards the Bannu Cantonment to attack security personnel, to which soldiers swiftly responded according to the standard operating procedures (SOP).

Incidents of terrorism have spiked in the past few days, prompting the government to urge Afghanistan to rein in militants. Last month, the government approved the launch of operation "Azm-e-Istehkam" to give a befitting response to terrorists launching attacks in the country. In a brazen attack, eight Pakistan Army



personnel embraced martyrdom as security forces effectively thwarted a terrorist attack at the Bannu Cantonment. The forces killed the 10 militants.

As many as 10 terrorists were killed in an attack after they tried to force their way into Bannu Cantonment, the ISPR said about the terrorism act targeting the military in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which has been witnessing a surge in violence. A statement said eight army men were martyred in the terror attack and noted that the swift action taken by security forces helped avoid massive destruction and loss of human lives.

The ISPR described the response given by security forces as valiant action which, it said, was an expression of military's resolve to fight terrorism. The ISPR also said the Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, currently operating from Afghanistan, was responsible for the latest attack and had acted in a similar way in the past too — one of the many terror outfits which are now based in the landlocked country with full support from Kabul.

Commission to probe Bannu incident: Omar Ayub

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders questioned that who was lodging FIRs against them, saying that "They are not digesting the Supreme Court's verdict."

"The civilian government should have addressed the press conference instead of the DG ISPR on Monday," said Opposition Leader Omar Ayub while addressing a press conference here on Monday. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and other PTI leaders were present there.

While talking about the DG ISPR's term of "digital terrorism", Omar Ayub said that he was giving examples of Syria, Iran and Libya. "These countries fell down just because of dictatorship," said the PTI leaders. He also said that the government led by PML-N failed and its failure pushed the DG ISPR to hold the press conference earlier in the day. He regretted that the FIRs were registered against the PTI leaders under terrorism charges.

The opposition leader also said that those who were involved in money laundering case like the case of Shehbaz Sharif should be brought to justice. He also mentioned Mitho, the close relative of former Army Chief, by saying that he

must be held accountable. He also questioned the smuggling in the country, saying that whose failure promoted smuggling.

Omar Ayub also went on to say that Wheat scandal must be investigated. He stated that the PTI is the most patriotic party in the country. The PTI leaders said that the comparison must be drawn between terrorism in the past and the present to find out the reality. "An independent judicial commission should be held to investigate Bannu incident," said Omar Ayub. The wrong politics of the present government damaged the country's economy, he added.

Rauf Hassan, Ahmad Janjua, Rizwan Ahmad, Ghulam Shabbir, Ata ur Rehman, Farid Malik, Muddassar Chaudhary, Malik Nauman Ahmed, Faizan Malik, Naseem Khaira, Professor Mazhar and Khalid Gujjar are forced disappeared persons.

"The laws that exist must be enforced. Six judges of IHC write a letter to the SJC. A judge of Sargodha ATC also mentioned interference into the judicial work. The rulers are the most corrupt and criminals," said Omar Ayub, adding that for the sake of God, must stop all this. Barrister Gohar said that the police let him go by

saying that there was no case against him.

Salman Akram Raja moves SC for restoration of election tribunals: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) legal czar Salman Akram Raja on Monday moved the apex court for the restoration of the election tribunals. Raja has filed an application to review the SC's July 4 judgment.

According to the petition, the applicant said that the Supreme Court had the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to consult with the Lahore High Court (LHC) chief justice for the appointment of judges to look into the applications of rigging, pointing that the SC had not issued any guidelines in its July 4 verdict.

Raja further said in the application that the LHC judges were right in the appointment of judges which must have been accepted by the ECP instead of raising objections over it. Evaluating the SC's decision of overruling the LHC judgment, Raja said that the apex court had not suspended the judges appointed to weigh-in on electoral rigging, adding that the ECP didn't have the right to oppose the LHC judgment. "Only LHC can decide the jurisdiction of the judges of election tribunals of Punjab," he added.

IHC angry with govt on 'forced disappearance'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday expressed its anguish at the working of the government in the missing persons' case observing that "people go missing and the state does not know anything about them."

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir gave these remarks while hearing the petition of Farhana Barlas, the wife of PTI's International Media Coordinator Ahmed Janjua, against his disappearance. Advocate Iman Mazari appeared before the court on behalf of Farhana Barlas, while Advocate General Islamabad represented the state.

The court was told that masked men in uniform forcibly took Ahmed Janjua away at 4 am on July 20. Advocate Mazari told the court some officials were in uniform on a query whether those police officials were in uniform. The court remarked that if need be the court will also summon the attorney general for Pakistan.

Justice Tahir observed that they [police] also have the CCTV footage. The police officials informed the court that an FIR has been registered. Justice Tahir remarked that it [forced disappearances] had been happening in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, now it has started in Islamabad. "The

state knows nothing. What the government is doing? How much time is needed to recover Ahmed Janjua?"

The court summoned the Attorney General at 12 noon and tell us what we should do and directed the additional attorney general to bring the complete details of the case. Justice Tahir warned the additional attorney general that don't tell the court that report would be submitted. "How much time you need to bring him [attorney general] in the court?" Justice Tahir questioned the advocate general that whether the IG police is doing his duty? Why not issue a show cause notice to him? Later, the court adjourned the hearing till 12 noon.

Tarar for planting maximum trees

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, on Monday emphasized to address the looming challenge of climate change highlighting the critical need to plant a significant number of trees for the sake of future generations.

During a ceremony held by the Capital Development Authority at Margalla Hills, in his address, Tarar highlighted the commitment of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistani government to maintain Islamabad's environment by promoting extensive tree plantation. He praised Islamabad as one of the nation's most beautiful cities, with Margalla National Park serving as a prized asset.

Tarar underscored that Islamabad enjoys superior air quality compared to other cities, asserting that planting more trees would further enhance the environment. He lamented that while Pakistan contributes only 2% of global carbon emissions, it bears 90% of the adverse effects of climate change. Calling for international cooperation, Tarar urged countries with high carbon emissions to collaborate with Pakistan in combating climate change impacts.

49 killed in Khan Younis amid fresh Israeli assault

GAZA (Reuters): Israel sent tanks back into the greater Khan Younis area and at least 49 Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire, Gaza medics said on Monday, after ordering evacuations of some districts it said had been used for renewed attacks by militants.

The Palestinians were killed by tank salvos in the town of Bani Suhaila and other towns fringing the eastern side of Khan Younis, with the area also bombed by air, they said. Residents of the densely built-up area of southern Gaza said the tanks advanced for more than two kilometers into Bani Suhaila, forcing residents to flee under fire.

"It is like doomsday," one resident, who only identified himself as Abu Khaled, told Reuters via chat app. "People are fleeing under fire, many are dead and wounded on the roads." The Gaza health ministry said the dead included several women and children and that at least 186 other people had been injured by Israeli

fire. The Gaza ministry does not distinguish between militants and civilians in its death tallies.

Around 400,000 people are living in the targeted areas and dozens of families have begun to leave their houses, Palestinian officials said, adding they were not given time to get out of harm's way before the Israeli strikes began. Some families fled on donkey carts, others on foot, carrying mattresses and other belongings. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said two of its clinics located in eastern Khan Younis had been knocked out of operation because of the new Israeli offensive.

At Khan Younis' Nasser Hospital, some people stood outside the morgue to bid farewell to dead relatives. "We are tired, we are tired in Gaza, every day our children are martyred, every day, every moment," said Ahmed Sammour, who lost several relatives in bombings of eastern Khan Younis. "No one told us to evacuate. They

brought four floors crashing down on civilians... and the bodies they could reach, they brought to the refrigerator (morgue)," Sammour added.

There was no immediate Israeli comment on the strikes on the eastern side of Khan Younis, whose population initially fled their homes when Israeli tanks stormed in several months ago, before returning after they withdrew to rebuild their lives. In nearby Deir Al-Balah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering, an Israeli airstrike hit a tent used by local journalists inside Al-Aqsa Hospital, killing one of them and wounding two other people, the Hamas-run Gaza government media office said.

The new death raised the number of Palestinian journalists killed in the Israeli offensive to 163, it added. Earlier on Monday, the Israeli military said it had issued new evacuation orders due to renewed Palestinian militant attacks, including rockets

launched from the targeted areas in eastern Khan Younis. The orders did not include health institutions, Palestinians said. The military said it was adjusting the boundaries of a designated humanitarian zone in coastal Al-Mawasi — to the west of Khan Younis — to keep the civilian population away from areas of combat with Hamas-led Palestinian militants.

The Gaza Civil Emergency Services said Israel's new orders showed it had downsized the humanitarian-designated areas in southern and central areas, where 1.7 million people were sheltering, to 48 square km from 65 square km in the past. The Palestinians, the United Nations and international relief agencies have said there is no safe place left in Gaza.

Health officials at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis urged residents on Monday to donate blood because of the large number of casualties being rushed into the medical center. "A family, including children, were all torn to

PM flays attack, calls it inhumane act

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday vehemently condemned the Israeli forces' violent attack on Khan Younis in Gaza, describing it as an inhumane act, particularly following the evacuation of refugees. The prime minister, in a statement issued by PM Office, described the aggressive attack on the Khan Younis area of Gaza shortly after the instructions to the unarmed Palestinian refugees to evacuate as a mockery of humanity. The prime minister stated that it had become clear that the Israeli forces had been pursuing a genocidal agenda against Palestinians, noting that unarmed Palestinians had been denied the opportunity to evacuate. The prime minister emphasized that the Pakistani nation stands in solidarity with its Palestinian brothers and sisters. He called upon the United Nations to fulfill its responsibility in addressing the issue of Palestine.

pieces while they were sleeping," said one man who arrived at the hospital in an ambulance bearing the bodies. Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas after militants killed 1,200 people and took more than 250 hostages in a cross-border assault on Oct. 7, 2023, according to Israeli tallies.

The death toll among Palestinians in Israel's retaliatory offensive since then had reached at least 39,006 as of Monday, Gaza health authorities said. A ceasefire effort led by Qatar and Egypt and backed by the US has so far fallen short because of disagreements over terms between the combatants, who blame each other for the impasse.



Inflation unacceptable: CM

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a special meeting on increase in the price of chicken, said the price of chicken should not be beyond the reach of common man, rather it should be kept in check.

The CM said that inflation was not acceptable in any case, all relevant institutions should monitor in the field. She expressed great concern over artificial increase in the price of chicken, and got furious over continuous increase in the prices of chicken and poultry products in the province. She directed to set up a regulatory mechanism to determine the price of chicken.

CM Maryam Nawaz questioned that chicken was among the most consumed food items, where were the responsible institutions. She said chicken was widely used by people throughout the province, it was not

acceptable to increase its rate. She added do poultry business and earn legitimate profit, but do not over burden people with price hike.

The CM said: "Our people are aware, they cannot allow mafias to increase prices. We don't want anyone to suffer, but should we leave people at the mercy of mafias?" Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information & Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Ministers Bilal Yasin, Ashiq Hussain and MPA Salma Butt attended the meeting. Principal Secretary to CM Sajid Zafar Dal, Secretary & DG Industries and other officers concerned were also present.

CM meets PA Speaker, discusses assembly affairs: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan to discuss

affairs of Punjab Assembly and overall political situation in the country.

She also had a detailed discussion on various development projects of the government in the province. The CM said the Punjab government was focused on providing maximum relief to the poor people. She added, "We want to bottle up inflation and bury it forever."

Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan appreciated the steps taken by the Punjab government to rid people of artificial inflation. He congratulated the chief minister on the successful test flight of country's first air ambulance.

He highlighted that the projects like the first government cancer hospital, Nawaz Sharif IT City, e-bikes, solar panels and air ambulance were remarkable and exemplary. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb was also present in the meeting.

BISP reflects vision of Benazir to support women



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid, stated that the Benazir Income Support Programme reflects the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for the welfare of poor women in Pakistan.

She laid the foundation of this program during her exile in Dubai and implemented by President Asif Ali Zardari in 2008. Following the directives of the President of Pakistan and Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, it is

our duty to ensure the dignity and full disbursement of funds to deserving women without any deductions.

Senator Rubina Khalid further mentioned that under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif, scholarships are being given to children of deserving families.

The Benazir Nashonuma Program plays a crucial role in meeting the nutritional needs of women and children. She added that skill training programs for deserving women and their family members are also being initiated to help reduce poverty.

Chairperson Rubina Khalid emphasized that 8171 is the only official number from which payment receipt messages are sent; any message from other numbers is fraudulent. Upon receiving a message from 8171, beneficiaries should visit the payment center. There is no fee for the dynamic registry.

Senator Rubina Khalid also visited the BISP District Office in Pattan, Lower Kohistan, where she reviewed administrative matters and instructed the staff to provide better guidance and facilities to deserving women.

Govt facilitating religious minorities

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs, Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, visited Multan and attended a reception held at the local Poyam Church in Razaabad.

The provincial minister highlighted practical steps taken by the Punjab government to realize Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's vision of a "Minority-Friendly Punjab." He stated that for the first time, the Punjab government has increased minority funds by 200% in the recent budget, which will provide more resources for the welfare of minorities. He mentioned that the government had allocated a 5% job quota and a 2% quota in universities for minorities to provide employment and educational opportunities to the minority community.

Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora said that a significant amount has been allocated in the development fund for minorities in South Punjab, and the Punjab government is issuing special grants on occasions like Christmas, Easter, Holi, and Diwali. He emphasized that to ensure the protection of minority rights, it is essential to promote tolerance and love.

The government prioritizes providing a peaceful environment for all religions, including Hindu, Sikh, and Christian communities, to practice their worship and celebrate their festivals, he added. Pastor Ansab John, Pastor Shaukat Ashiq, Pastor Samar Shakeel, and Mubashir Khawar Gul were also present. They appreciated the initiatives of the minister and his commitment to the welfare of minorities.

12 held for profiteering

LAHORE (APP): Twelve people were arrested while nine cases registered against profiteers in various parts of the provincial capital during the last 24 hours.

Assistant Commissioners in their respective areas conducted a surprise inspections and got arrested 12 individuals involved in 64 profiteering activities while a fine totaling Rs 200,000 was also imposed. The district administration officers are currently mobilized in the field to enforce stringent measures against hoarding and ensure availability.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, chairs high level meeting on the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. —APP Photo

Deputy Speakers PA, SA call on Punjab governor

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Speakers Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal and Sindh Assembly Anthony Naveed called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the Governor's House here on Monday.

Pastor Daniyal Saleem also accompanied Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly (SA) Anthony Naveed. Both the deputy speakers congratulated Sardar Saleem

Haider Khan on assuming the office of the Governor of Punjab and expressed best wishes to him.

In the meeting, ways to promote inter-provincial relations was discussed. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said all stakeholders should work together to promote inter-faith harmony in the country.

He said everyone had to play a positive role in devel-

opment of the country. He said that the minorities were playing a pivotal role in development of the country.

He said the doors of the Governor's House were open for people. The governor said that the connections between the two provinces in various fields would not only bring development in the social sector, but will also provide opportunities to the youth to advance.

Medals awarding ceremony held to honour martyrs

KARACHI (PPI): A medals distribution ceremony was held today at Central Police Office Karachi to accord honor to the police martyrs of the Chinese Consulate attack that took place on November 23, 2018. ASI Ashraf Dawood and constable Amir had been martyred in the terrorist attack.

Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar as a special guest, Chinese Consul General in Karachi Yang Yundong, IGP Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon, Additional IG Karachi Javed Akhtar Odhu, all Additional IGs, all DIGs, other senior officers also attended the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the Sindh Home Minister said that martyrs of Sindh Police are our pride and the Sindh government had supported the

Sindh Police Department at every opportunity. Mr Lanjar said: "The credit of the establishment of peace goes to the sacrifices of the martyrs of the Sindh police. The successes of the police against crimes are due to the cooperation of the people.

Timely solution to the problems and difficulties of the heirs of police martyrs is my priority."

He said that taking care of the heirs of the martyrs was the first priority of the Sindh government. "I assure the Chinese of providing and continuing to provide foolproof security to them throughout Sindh. The Sindh Police Department is bound by the commitment made regarding the welfare and care of the heirs of its martyrs," he said.

He said: The sacrifices

of our martyrs are an asset while their deeds are a prominent beacon. We are grateful for the cooperation and support of the Chinese government with the Sindh Police. Protection of life and property of people is the job of Sindh Police. It is because of these martyrs that we are leaders today."

The Chinese Consul General said: "For us, the security measures adopted by the Sindh Police are a source of satisfaction.

We feel the pain of those who sacrificed life in the way of duty. The Chinese government will always take the lead in supporting and cooperating with the Sindh Police. At the end of the ceremony, the Chinese Consul General presented a commemorative medal to AIG Finance Sahay Aziz.

Karachi admin to launch tree plantation campaign

KARACHI (APP): In a bid to improve the environment of the metropolis, the Karachi administration will launch a tree plantation campaign in collaboration with Sindh Forest Department, municipal corporations and non-government organizations.

It was decided in a meeting, held here on Monday with Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi in chair, that 140,000 saplings will be planted across the city during the campaign set to start in the next two weeks, said a statement issued here.

During the campaign deputy commissioners of all the districts of Karachi division will make arrangements to plant 10,000 trees

in their respective districts with the help of local government institutions, private sector and industrial organizations.

The commissioner speaking to the meeting urged all relevant institutions to extend cooperation in the regard and make the campaign a success that will help improving the city's environment and aid in government's efforts aimed at addressing environmental issues.

The meeting was attended by representatives of various organizations, including the district administration, forest department, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, cantonment boards, DHA, LDA, KDA, Port Qasim Authority, Town Administrations, ABAD,

SITE Limited and Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

The Commissioner office has started identifying locations and spaces for tree plantation in consultation with relevant deputy commissioners, institutions and organizations, said that statement adding that only environment friendly trees will be planted during the campaign while avoiding Conocarpus plants.

The purpose of the tree plantation campaign is to improve Karachi's environment and support the government's efforts to address environmental issues, which will also help to beautify the city's roads, parks, green belts, and other areas, it concluded.

Electric vehicles mandatory to tackle environmental pollution

KARACHI (PPI) A meeting was held in the Sindh Secretariat under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharejo. The meeting took place with Yusuf Dewan Group.

In the meeting, Secretary Industries and Commerce Muhammad Yasin Shar Baloch, MD Site Ghazanfar Ali Qadri, Dewan Group representatives Hasan Zafar, Saad Murad Khan, Captain (retd) Kashif Riaz and Saleha Hassan were also present, according to a statement issued today.

Dharejo said that elec-

tric vehicles were the need of the hour to cope with environmental pollution. "Pakistan is one of the most polluted countries in the world and the use of these vehicles will help in dealing with environmental pollution," he said.

He said that the manufacturing of electric vehicles at the local level would not only save foreign exchange but also create employment opportunities at the local level. Dharejo added: "Small size fire trucks are also the need of the hour as these trucks can easily move through narrow streets and

slum areas to extinguish fire in case of fire."

The minister said that more and more charging stations needed to be installed to make electric vehicles successful. Mass publicity is also needed to encourage the common man to use electric vehicles, he added.

Dharejo assured the representatives of Dewan Group that Sindh government would play its full role to promote the automobile industry, adding he would talk to the relevant departments that the use of electric vehicles should be promoted in the government departments.

Suspect arrested for harassing girl

LAHORE (APP): The Virtual Women police station on Monday arrested an accused involved in an attempt to assault a girl.

An elderly hostel warden tried to harass a student residing in a private hostel in Thokar Niaz Baig.

The girl's brother filed a harassment complaint on the police 15 helpline. The elderly hostel warden tried to assault and harass the girl. On information, the Virtual Women police reached the scene and took the suspect into custody.

The safe cities spokesperson said that the Virtual Women police station was committed to ensuring women's protection. Women may obtain immediate assistance by calling 15 or through the Women Safety App.

LESCO claims of no load-shedding

LAHORE (APP): While terming the transformer burning ratio as exaggerated by some sections of media, the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has claimed that there is no unannounced load-shedding in any area of its region.

According to the company's spokesperson here Monday that unannounced load-shedding was not being done in any area of LESCO region, due to the increase in heat and humidity, the incidents of transformers being damaged but its ratio being projected in news reports is not based on fact.

He clarified that there was no truth in the news of two to three transformers breaking down on a daily basis in all subdivisions.


During the last nine days, he added, only 51 burnt transformers were replaced in time, apart from this, a minor technical fault occurred in the transformer in some areas, which was rectified in time by the LESCO field staff. The LESCO staff is engaged in immediate redressal of customer complaints while staff shortage was also being managed in an optimal manner, he mentioned.

LDA razes several illegal constructions

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Monday demolished several structures besides sealing another 14 constructions during its ongoing campaign against rule violators and commercial fee defaulters.

On the direction of Director General LDA Tahir Farooq, the teams, demolished illegal floors at the Architect Engineering Society. They razed illegal commercial buildings at Plot No. 11, Lahore Avenue Society. Furthermore, they removed illegal shutters at Johar Town Block H and Hamza Medical Complex on Jan Muhammad Road.

Additionally, they sealed unauthorized shops at Plot No. 186, Qayyumabad Town. In a crackdown against fee defaulters, the LDA teams imposed fines on 14 properties. Chief Town Planner Azhar Ali and Director Town Planning Zone IV Ali Nusrat supervised the operation. Prior to the operation, multiple notices were issued to the properties concerned. The enforcement wing and heavy police contingents also participated in the operation.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

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

Details:			
Branch	Haripur	Branch code	0017
Auction Date	24 th July-2024	Time	11:00 AM

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Aliya Arshad	13302-8218362-2	Bandi Sher Khan, P.O Bagra, Haripur	30.170	4 Chorian, 1 Angothi
Tahir Mehmood	13302-1747536-5	Gari Serian, P.O Bagra, Haripur	15.520	1 Nath, 1 Tika, 2 Jori Kanty, 1 Jori Balian
Abid S/O Taj Gul	13301-2891056-5	Sirikot, P.O Ghazi, Haripur	11.99	4 Angothian, 1 Locket Chain, 1 Jori Tops
Nazrana Bibi	13302-2388187-0	Kundal, P.O Bandi Mian Peerdad, Haripur	12.81	4 Balian, 4 Angothian, 2 Kanta

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

Mobilink Bank



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Agriculture Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal witnessing the MoU signing between Akora Seed Company and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government.

Police fail in arrests of drug manufacturers, suppliers: CJ PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim observed that police is arresting small drug peddlers while failed in apprehending of major suppliers and manufacturers, on Monday.

The chief justice also expressed concern over the escalating drug menace and the police's inability to apprehend the key players in the drug trade.

PHC's Chief Justice observed these remarks in a bail plea filed by Noor ul Amin, who was arrested by the Swabi police on June 9, 2024, with 447 grams of Ice-drug. The accused's lawyer argued that the police had falsely implicated his client and that the evidence presented was not credible.

Additional Advocate General Nauman Kakakhel argued that the drug was a dangerous substance that had ravaged society, and those involved in the drug trade did not deserve leniency.

The Chief Justice annoyed over the police's failure to arrest the main culprits, stating that they only arrest small-time drug peddlers to demonstrate their performance. He emphasized the need for the police to target the root of the drug trade, namely the suppliers and manufacturers.

PHC rejected the accused's bail application and directed the prosecution to submit the challan within 15 days. The court also instructed the accused's lawyer to approach the session judge if the challan was not submitted within the specified time.

Government to encourage private seed companies: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony was held at Secretary Agriculture committee room between the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and private seed company Akora Seed Company here on Monday.

Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Siddiq on behalf of Akora Seed Company, while Secretary Agriculture Javed Marwat on behalf of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government signed the memorandum of understanding.

Provincial Minister Major Retired Sajjad Barkwal participated in the ceremony as a chief guest.

On this occasion, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's special Assistant for Industries Abdul Karim Tordhir and senior officials of the Agriculture Department were also present.

Talking to the representatives, Provincial Minister Major Retired Sajjad Brakwal assured them that the government will provide all the facilities to the seed companies in the supply of quality seeds.

He further said that private seed companies have a very important role in providing quality seed.

Quality seed supply is not possible without the positive role of seed companies. private seed companies should play a role with the government to supply quality seed and prevent adulteration and illegal trading of seed in the market.

On this occasion, the representatives of the private seed companies assured the Minister Agriculture that they will play their role alongside the government against illegal business and adulteration of seeds.

While discussing the memorandum of understanding, the Minister for Agriculture said it will provide opportunities for companies to work together with government agricultural institutions and private seed companies will benefit from innovative research.

Similarly, the government and private seed companies will jointly provide farmers with modern and high-productivity sources of commodity varieties through faster methods, which will significantly increase agricultural production and farmers' income.

The provincial government's priorities include increasing agricultural production and providing facilities to farmers.

Appreciating and expressing the hope that such initiatives under the auspices of the provincial government will play a role in the development of agriculture, he informed the Minister of Agriculture about his problems.

Federal Institute for Seed Registration and Verification Provincial Director Inayatullah Khan was also present on this occasion.

Goods Carriers Association threatens strike over police attitude



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Shaheen Peshawar Goods Carrier Association has threatened to go on an indefinite strike from July 25 if their demands are not met.

The association is protesting against police extortion, arbitrary weight restrictions, and harassment by customs authorities.

Addressing a press conference at the Peshawar Press Club On Monday association president Haji Gul Wahid Mohmand alleged that police are extorting money from goods carriers in the name of fines and challans.

He demanded a uniform axle load system across the country and an end to arbitrary weight restrictions.

Mohmand also accused the motorway police of issuing challans without reason and demanded that the government provide security to goods transporters.

He warned that if their demands are not met, the association will start protest demonstrations.

The strike threat has raised concerns about potential disruptions to the supply chain and economy.

The association's demands have been echoed by other goods carriers' associations in the region, indicating a wider discontent among the industry.

PML-N has a history of spearheading campaigns against judiciary: Saif

PESHAWAR (INP): Responding to a scathing verbal attack by Federal Information Minister Atta Tarar, in which he termed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) behind the recent turmoil in Bannu, Saif said that the PML-N has the precedent of doing politics on dead bodies, adding that the Model Town killings could not be forgotten.

He hit out at the PML-N by saying that the PML-N's policy was to spread chaos in the country. He recalled the attack launched by the PML-N workers on the Supreme Court in 1997.

"This fake government is afraid of rising popularity of Imran Khan and the PTI. The ministers of this fake government speak without thinking as they don't have anything to their credit," he remarked.

Newly-wed bride dies of consuming poisonous food

PESHAWAR (APP): A newly wed bride died due to consuming of some poisonous food in Sarband area on the periphery of Peshawar while the groom is admitted in critical condition at hospital.

According to Police, the couple belongs to Afghanistan and had got married last night on Sunday.

On Monday morning, the newly married couple were not opening the door of room. On breaking the bolt of the room, both bride and groom were found lying unconscious.

On reaching Hayatabad Teaching hospital, the bride was declared dead, while the groom is admitted in precarious condition, police added.

Investigation is in progress while any clue about consuming of poisonous food would be found after interviewing of the groom who is currently fighting for life, police informed.

Tarakai directs EMA to focus on facilities provision in schools



PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education, Faisal Khan Tarakai has directed the authorities of the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) to focus on the provision of facilities, including the attendance of teachers, students and ongoing academic activities in schools.

He issued these directives while presiding over a review meeting on the Education Monitoring Authority here on Monday. Besides, Special Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Asfandiyar Khattak, Additional Secretary Jahangir Azam and officials of the Education Monitoring Authority also attended the meeting.

He said that according to the data of the authority, policy level decisions are made for schools and students and the achievement of all important goals has been ensured due to the excellent performance of the monitoring authority.

The provincial minister that the monitoring of double shift schools programmes and complete details of the girls' community schools and monthly visits to schools have also been entrusted to the authority.

He said that all the employees of the authority have worked very diligently in provision of furniture free textbooks to schools, details of enrolment campaign and vacancies, which is appreciable.

However, keeping in view the requirements of future, measures will be taken to develop the authority on modern lines including equipping the employees of the authority with modern training and IT equipment.

In their briefing, the monitoring authority officials told the provincial minister that the authority monitors a total of 34633 schools, including schools in the merged districts, 192141 teachers and 57522 non-teaching staff and 5840403.

The teams of the authority monitor schools from primary to higher secondary level, saying due to the best measures taken by the Education Monitoring Authority, the absenteeism of teachers has been reduced while the number of temporarily closed schools is also very less and the provision of water and other facilities in schools have also been identified for which the department has taken practical steps.

The provincial minister said that they appreciate the performance of the Education Monitoring Authority and assured that all the problems of the employees of the authority will be resolved.



PESHAWAR: Vendor verifies UPS battery acid levels before sale at Shobha Bazar at Shobha bazar.

Qasim for intensification of anti-dengue activities

PESHAWAR (APP): Health Dr. Irshad Roghani, representative of district administration, UNICEF, WHO, and officials from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among other relevant authorities.

Syed Qasim Ali Shah expressed satisfaction with the anti-dengue measures taken so far and instructed the distribution of mosquito nets in affected areas and the launch of targeted campaigns in hotspots to prevent future outbreaks.

Director Public Health Dr. Irshad Roghani presented an overview of the current dengue situation. He noted the necessity of monitoring water storage due to load shedding and reported that mosquito nets have been distributed in affected areas, with further distribution ongoing.

Dr. Roghani highlighted that dengue cases are at a historic low compared to the previous year, with only 69 cases reported so far, of which only five are active, all under home quarantine.

Dr. Roghani further detailed that over 1,700 awareness walks and more than 92,000 awareness sessions have been conducted, educating millions about dengue prevention.

He explained that upon detection of a positive dengue case, WHO protocols are followed, including fogging and IRS spraying in the affected area to eliminate mosquito and larval reservoirs.

Regarding entomological surveillance, Dr. Roghani informed the meeting that continuous surveillance of anti-dengue activities is ongoing, with 1.5 million homes checked so far, resulting in the elimination of dengue larvae in over 500 homes.

"Over 4,000 dengue breeding sites inside homes and 640 positive larvae sites identified during external surveillance have been eradicated" he added.

In Punjab, 133 cases, and in Balochistan, over 6,000 dengue cases have been reported. Analysis over the past three years indicates that the dengue season begins in August, with the highest number of cases in September.

This year, only 17 cases have been reported from Peshawar Division, and 21 cases from Malakand Division.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah presiding over a meeting on Dengue situation in province.



In brief

Two injured in grenade attack F.P. Report

BARA: Two people were injured after some persons hurled a hand grenade at a petrol pump in Barra, district Khyber. Both the injured were shifted to a hospital in Peshawar. Police said that several vehicles were also damaged in the incident, while the area had been cordoned off in order to search for the assailants. Incidents of terrorism are on the rise in some parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan for the last several months, prompting the government to launch a military operation in these areas.

Two killers of ANF men killed

JHELUM (INP): Two persons, allegedly responsible for the killings of three personnel of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), were killed reportedly in an encounter with the police in Jhelum. Police said they were taking the suspects for recovery when they came under attack by their accomplices. An encounter ensued in which both the suspects were killed after they were hit by bullets fired by their accomplices, the police said, adding that the deceased had been identified as Syed Qasim Ali Shah and Bilal Haider. Soon after the incident, a heavy police contingent reached the area and started the search operation. The police said that around a month and a half ago, both suspects did not stop their vehicle for checking at a check-post near a toll plaza. The ANF personnel chased them and stopped them at Domeli. But the suspects opened fire at them, resulting in the martyrdom of three personnel namely Gulzar Ahmad, Mazhar Hussain and Zeeshan, the Force elaborated. The police further said that the assailants, who managed to flee from the spot, were arrested at Gwadar while they were on their way to Iran. The police said that the deceased were wanted in connection with different cases registered against them at different police stations.

Joint meeting arranged F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: A joint meeting held regarding the security of Tehsil Complex Takhtbhai in which Additional District and Sessions Judge Arbab Muhammad Kashif, president Takhtbhai Bar Association Saifullah Khan Advocate, Haq Nawaz Khattak, Tehsil Security in-charge Abdullah Khan participated, on Monday. Security was reviewed in the meeting, suggestions were also made to improve security, deployment of more security personnel to secure Tehsil security, it was decided to increase the number of BDS personnel at the gate of Tehsil Complex so that they keep an eye out for suspicious persons in and around the main gate.

Fund released F.P. Report

SHAH DADKOT: Deputy Commissioner Qamber Shahdadkot to pay the remaining compensation to the staff appointed by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) for census in Sindh as government release funds in this regard, on Monday. The education department appointed staff of Education Department of Qamber Shahdadkot district. Despite the fact that almost 2 years have passed. It has not been found until now, due to which the situation of starvation has arisen in the homes of these teachers.

Pakistan tourism industry to change socio-economic dynamics

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The Ambassador of Czech Republic Ladislav Steinhubel said that Pakistan tourism industry has the potential to change regional dynamics both economically and socially, on Monday.

This he said while talking to media personnel during a visit to Swat valley along with his wife Dagmar Steinhublova on invitation of Commissioner Pakistan Boys Scout Association Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate. He said that it is true testament to the beauty and hospitality of the region. Over the course of three days, the esteemed guests were treated to an array of unforgettable experiences.

The guests warmly welcome in Chakdara, followed by a delightful lunch at a local hotel before setting out for Malam Jaba. The scenic route to Malamjaba offered breathtaking views of winding roads and forested hills, culminating in a visit to one of Swat's most beautiful hill stations. After a relaxing time with high tea at the resort, the day concluded back at the hotel in Saidu Sharif.

The following day saw an early start for Ushu, with a picturesque drive passing through Madyan, Bahrain, and Kalam before reaching the destination. A memorable lunch at the famous Ushu Hotel by the river-



side, featuring fresh trout from the river, provided a truly delicious experience. The day ended with serene moments by the riverbank, capturing precious memories before returning to Saidu Sharif.

On the third day, a visit to the Mingora shopping market allowed the guests to explore local handicrafts and dry fruits, adding cultural experiences to their itinerary. This was followed by a tree plantation event at Gujjar House Kanju, where a Cake Cutting Ceremony celebrated the Pakistan - Czech Republic friendship. The Ambassador's generous gesture of gifts for the

host's family will be cherished for years to come.

On route to Chakdara, a stop at Manyar provided a glimpse of Buddhist history with the viewing of a Buddha statue, underscoring Swat Valley's rich heritage. The journey concluded with fond farewells as the guests made their way back home, marking the end of a remarkable visit that showcased the charm and cultural depth of Swat Valley. Such an enriching experience deserves to be shared in media papers, highlighting the unique bond between nations and the treasures of Swat Valley.

Imposition of heavy tax on imports of fruits played

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: In fiscal year 2024-25, the federal government of Pakistan has increased tax on imports of fruits and vegetables from Afghanistan up to three times that will suffer bilateral business relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, traders said.

Traders said that enhancing the tax on Afghanistan import groceries will certainly decrease business as consumption of the imported goods will reduce due to price hike of the commodities because of additional import tax. Shah Jehan Shinwari, an importer, said that a threefold increase in tax on Afghan imported groceries was equal to halting import of it.

Earlier, there were many problems being faced by the Pak-Afghan businessmen and the recent development would prove the last nail in the coffin of bilateral trade. As per custom official in Torkham, these days tomato, cucumber and apricot import to Pakistan, this will be followed by various types of fruit and vegetables.

Previously, an importer had to pay Rs.13000 per ton of apricot and with increase of tax on import, one has to pay Rs 52000 per ton. Similarly last time,

import duty on grapes was Rs.19000 per ton that would be paid as Rs. 78000 per ton.

Rise in tax, definitely suffered import of groceries and it decreased to three times as compared to last time, he added. Another trader Qari Nazeem Gul said that although 80% export to Afghanistan had decreased but still trade of fresh fruits and vegetables continued between the two countries.

Increase in tax on import of fruits and vegetables will decrease imports from Afghanistan that not only suffer bilateral trade but will also have a negative impact on national exchequer. He regretted that the anti-trade policies would surely discourage Afghan businessmen and there would be left no option for them but to turn towards Iran and Central Asia countries for trade.

The businessmen community feared that the enhancement of import tax on Afghan groceries would incite the Afghan government to follow them in near future by imposing additional tax on Pak export fruits like Kinoo (citrus fruit) and vegetables. It is to be stated here that in November 2023, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan imposed 34%

tax on import of Kinoo from Afghanistan.

When former President of Sarhad Chamber of Industry and Commerce Zahidullah Shinwari was asked for his expert view on the introduction of increase in import tax he said that the budget of the 2024-25 had been formulated on the dictation of International Monetary Fund (IMF) therefore instead of facilitating citizens of the country, the incumbent government imposed extra- taxes to meet conditions of the Fund.

He maintained that Pak-Afghan business had been already facing multiple challenges and the recent unjustified increase on import of fruits and vegetables from Afghanistan would further experience mutual trade loss. With a burden of additional import tax on groceries from Afghanistan, will cause price hike of the commodities will be equal to deprive the laymen of the consumption of Afghani fruits and vegetables at reasonable prices, he remarked. Traders associated with bilateral trade said that in 2012-13 Pak-Afghan trade had touched a figure of three billion dollars annually that has dipped to eight hundred million dollars in a year in recent years.

SULC, NDMA sign LoC to work together on disaster management

HYDERABAD (PPI): In a significant step towards enhancing disaster management capabilities, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Sindh University Laar Campus (SULC) Badin have signed a Letter of Cooperation (LoC) to ensure robust cooperation in the field of disaster management.

According to the university information on Monday, the agreement was signed by Pro-Vice Chancellor Sindh University Laar Campus Professor Dr. Khalil-Ur-Rehman Khoumbati representing the University of Sindh and the Director General National Institute of Disaster Management M. Tanveer Piracha on behalf of NDMA.

According to the letter of cooperation, it is aimed at strengthening coordination and building institutional and technical capacity to effectively manage natural and human-induced disasters. Recognizing the critical importance of disaster management in safeguarding human lives and property, both parties have

committed to various areas of cooperation as outlined in the agreement.

The agreement further said that the parties will exchange knowledge on past disasters, early warning systems and innovative practices, creating synergy through shared platforms. Efforts will focus on enhancing the capabilities of government agencies and local communities to handle geo-physical and climate-induced hydro-meteorological disasters such as floods, earthquakes, droughts, tsunamis, GLOFs, heat waves and cyclones.

According to LoC, advanced technologies and innovative practices like remote sensing, GIS mapping and risk-based spatial planning will be employed to bolster emergency response systems. Training experts, professors, scientists and other disaster management staff will engage in exchanges, joint workshops, conferences, seminars, drills and training courses. Both parties will collaborate on scientific research and practical surveys related to disaster management and climate

change adaptation.

The LoC does not create legally binding rights or obligations but represents a mutual commitment to collaborate and support each other's disaster management efforts. Any amendments to the LoC will require mutual written consent. Disputes arising from the application or interpretation of the LoC will be resolved through negotiations and consultations.

Both parties have agreed to safeguard confidential information exchanged during the implementation of the LoC. No party will disclose classified information to third parties without prior written consent. According to the agreement, the LoC enters into force upon signature and remains valid until terminated. Either party will terminate the LoC by providing a six-month advance written notice. This cooperation marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's disaster management efforts, promising enhanced preparedness and resilience against future disasters.

PML-N lawyer forum hold protest F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Lawyer Forum protested against Supreme Court of Pakistan verdict regarding provision of reserved seats to Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) despite Sunni Itiham Council as an appellant as the independent lawmakers joined SIC, on Monday.

PML-N Lawyer Forum leaders including Ali Sher Khan and Naeem-u-Din advocates termed the verdict as surprise and rejected this decision as ridiculous. They argued that when the appeal was from the Sunni alliance about the reserved seats, the court decision to give the seats to PTI is beyond judicial history and understanding.

They added that such court decisions are not acceptable in any case. They accused the opposition political parties of sabotaging the process of development and prosperity in the country.

PML-N lawyer forum further said that there is a fear of increasing political tension due to the judicial decisions beyond the understanding of the lawyers and public, which will trigger unrest that would cause irreparable damage to the important institutions of the country and the country itself. There is an apprehension of reaching, therefore Muslim League Lawyers and Muslim League-Nawaz party leadership and workers are not in favor of this decision and utter their free reaction to this decision in front of the people, to play due role, they concluded.

Dual appointment issue resolved F.P. Report

LARKANA: The dispute over the appointment of two Medical Superintendents (MS) at the same time at Chandka Medical College Hospital, the largest in northern Sindh, was ended with the intervention of the union leaders.

The newly appointed medical superintendent Dr. Niaz Ahmed Dahar took charge. According to the details, a few days ago, differences arose between Dr. Mubasher Kolachi and Dr. Niaz Ahmed Dahar on the MS Ward chair of the Larkana Hospital.

Because of this, the patients and their relatives were facing problems due to the incompetence of the officials. Shah, Dr. Mahmood Ali Wagan, along with the leaders of paramedical association, Shahi Khan Jagirani, Zulfiqar Ali Sahto, and others intervened, and Dr. Niaz Ahmed Dahar was given the charge of the medical superintendent, and the disorder created in the hospital was ended.

Shopkeeper electrocuted

FAISALABAD (INP): A shopkeeper was electrocuted in his shop in the area of Jhang Bazaar police station. A Rescue 1122 spokesman said that 35-year-old shopkeeper Irfan was busy cleaning his shop on Jhang Road near Lakkhar Mandi when he accidentally touched electricity wires. As a result, he received a fatal electric shock and died on the spot. The body was handed over to his relatives for burial after completing necessary formalities, he added.

Meanwhile, Punjab food Authority (PFA) unearthed a beverage factory and seized over 1,900 liter substandard juices and other material, here on Monday.

Academia join hands with forest's dept for plantation

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Director Administration Ansi Degree College Mohammad Naseer Afridi said that the college, in collaboration with Forest Department formally launched a comprehensive plantation campaign to combat climate change and promote environmental sustainability.

The initiative aims to engage students in the noble cause of planting and nurturing trees, to ensure a greener future for generations to come. The campaign is part of the college's com-

Kundi stresses on upholding law and ethics for national progress

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi Monday emphasized the critical role of law and ethics in national advancement during a convoca held at a private college Abbottabad.

Governor Kundi highlighted the escalating challenges posed by the disregard for legal and ethical standards, attributing them to increasing immorality. The convocation was attended by Vice-Chancellor Hazara University

Professor Dr. Mohsin Nawaz and Vice-Chancellor Abbottabad University of Science and Technology Professor Dr. Majid.

Underscored the significance of the day for students and the institution alike. Faisal Kareem Kundi urged graduating students to embrace heightened responsibilities, stressing that safeguarding the supremacy of law and constitution is paramount for national progress and prosperity.

He emphasized that democracy hinges on the enforcement of law, cau-

tioning that nations forsaking legal integrity risk losing their identity. Furthermore, Governor Kundi lamented the consequences of eroding confidence in the judiciary, asserting that it is the collective responsibility to bolster faith in the justice system. He called upon Pakistanis to champion the cause of legal supremacy, urging a spirit of sacrifice for the nation's welfare. Acknowledging the post-pandemic surge in online activities, he highlighted the growing importance of the digital sector.

Residents living on mercy of outlaws

F.P. Report

KARAK: Takht Nusrati is administratively paralyzed, water, treatment, trust, everything is at stake, administration and political pundits are missing in Takht Nusrati lower and upper, thieves have forbidden the rest of the residents for a long time, solar energy plates and Batteries have become favorite thefts, people are not safe in their homes because ice addiction is increasing day by day and there is no prevention.

Similarly, the problem of clean drinking water has become the problem of Kashmir which is not being solved. The problem is becoming more and more serious, but the political and administrative structure is completely paralyzed.

Nor in other places, because the contractors of Aman themselves are not safe, they are begging for Aman themselves and the people are forced to live a miserable life, all the problems that the people are facing now are all the fault of the political pundits and There is evidence of the incompetence of the honorable (CSS) and (PMS) officers, the scope of which is

getting narrower day by day on the people and there are many other problems which are yet to be cried out but we are the unlucky people who need to be woken up.

Teachers urged returns of finances to students: Khairullah Hawari, the former president of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Teachers Association and the voice of the oppressed, has said that crores of rupees received from students for exams during the corona virus should be returned with profits by 31 July 2024. He has warned that if this is not done, a writ will be filed in the Peshawar High Court through the mediation of Nawab Ali Noor Advocate in August 2024. All the preparations for filing the writ have been completed. Khairullah Hawari said:

"This money was collected for exams, and when the exam is not held, it is the responsibility of the concerned institutions to return this trust to the students. Moreover, due to the existence of various banks, the profit of crores of rupees is also the right of the students.

It added: "We will not tolerate any injustice or

delay on this matter and all possible legal action will be taken to protect the rights of the students." We are determined and we will raise our voice for the rights of students at every forum.

Alleged gambler held: Police arrested alleged gambler while recovered gambling equipment including money. According to the details, Nusrati Falak Nawaz Khan Bangash under DSP Tehsil acted along with the police party on intelligence reports and raided the gambling base where the gamblers were engaged in gambling without fear.

SHO of Yakub Khan Shaheed police station Tariq Khan, PASI Umar Nawaz Khan and other police were also accompanied by DSP in the operation. The police raided a gambling club in the suburbs of Nusrati and arrested five gamblers red-handed while playing gambling. The police seized 26 thousand rupees, cards and other gambling devices including the gambling money. The police transferred the arrested gamblers to the police station and registered a case under the Gambling Act.

Paragliding event held at famous Laram Top in Dir



F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A total of 19 Paragliders from various districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad showcased their flying talent from the Laram Top in Lower Dir here the other day. Local tourists, area elders and motorcycle riders watched the event and enjoyed it.

The Laram Top also known as Laram Sar is located at a distance of 30 kilometers from Chakdara some 8,500 feet high above sea level. The location is famous for cold weather coupled with natural beauty especially in summer during which local and outside tourists visited this scenic spot to beat the heat. According to a local tourist guide Syed Liaquat Mulk, hundreds of tourists also visit the Laram Top in the winter too to enjoy continuous snowfall.

Rasheed Ahmad from Talash, one of the Sunday Paragliders, told this reporter that Pakistani

Paragliders had the ability to excel in world competitions but they lacked government interest and priorities. He said that there were several attractive and suitable sites in the Lower and Upper districts for world-class paragliding but they needed adequate exploration.

The Dir Flying Club, a group of five paragliders from the area arranged the Sunday paragliding event with no help from the government, to attract world tourists and encourage Pakistani paragliding pilots to take part in international events. The Dir Paragliding Club's founder Mr Aminul Haq said that 19 paragliders including 5 from Dir, 4 from Islamabad, 3 from Swat, 4 from Mardan and one each from Karak, Peshawar and Katlang took part in paragliding. He said that his club provided the visiting paragliders with pick and drop services, stay and food on the top. Mr Aminul Haq thanked the district police officer

Lower Dir Mazhar Iqbal for providing the best security and welcome to the participants. He said the pilots equipped with their parachutes, flying suits, helmets, harness, safety kits, reserved parachute, gloves reached the location last night to take part in the event. He said that Shuib Khan, Sanaullah, Farman, Dilawar and Rasheed from Lower Dir, Shaukat from Karak, Haidar from Mardan and Jehangir from Katlang were among the participants. He said the Swat Motorcycle Riders' club also reached the spot to encourage the paragliding pilots.

Ibrash Pasha, a social activist from Lower Dir, said the minister for tourism and regional bureaucrats should be engaged to arrange such paragliding galas or a festival to boost tourism in Dir. He asked the lawmakers from Dir to arrange meetings with the minister for tourism and chief minister in this regard.



GAZA: A Palestinian family going towards their destination near destroyed building in Khan Younis.

Colombia's president pushes for health and labor changes

BOGOTA (AP): Colombia's government will propose legislation aimed at overhauling the health sector and will pursue changes to labor laws, President Gustavo Petro said as he inaugurated a new session of congress. Petro, Colombia's first left-wing president, has pushed an ambitious set of economic changes that includes changing the pension system, raising the minimum wage and redistributing land to farmers affected by Colombia's armed conflict.

He managed to get the minimum wage boosted last year and his pension plan approved by congress earlier this year, but he has struggled to persuade legislators to adopt his ideas on labor laws and the health system. The coalition of political parties that joined Petro's government at the beginning of his term has broken up due to ideological differences. Meanwhile, numerous corruption scandals involving government ministers and the president's eldest son have decreased Petro's popularity. Leftist parties loyal to the presi-

dent have their highest number of legislative seats in Colombia's history, but they lack the 50% majority needed to pass legislation on their own and have been forced to bargain with parties on the center and the right. For health care, Petro wants a government agency to be in charge of collecting billions of dollars in insurance fees from Colombians, sidelining the private insurance companies that currently manage much of the health system.

For the labor sector, he wants to make it harder for companies to hire workers on temporary contracts and also require employers to pay workers full wages on rest days. He also proposed that legislators reduce the work week from 47 hours to 40, arguing that could increase employment and spur productivity. Petro told congress that increasing the minimum wage by 16% last year helped to reduce poverty, which decreased 10% in 2023 and is now at similar levels seen in 2019, according to the national statistics department.

"We are fulfilling our promises" to reduce inequality, the president said. Petro is nearing the halfway point of his four-year term, which ends in August 2026. Critics say his government has struggled to contain inflation and collect taxes. In his speech to congress, Petro urged Colombia's central bank to reduce interest rates as a way to boost economic growth. He suggested congress could help curb inflation by "controlling speculation" in real estate rentals and reining in electricity fees.

Petro also said his government will propose a bill that would enable congress to speedily approve legislation related to Colombia's 2016 peace deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. He said implementation of the accord is lagging in areas such as land distribution and economic development projects for rural communities. Critics have expressed concern about efforts to expedite legislation, arguing that such mechanisms could be used to give the president more power and eliminate term limits.

Russia claims it intercepted US fighter jets over Arctic

MOSCOW: Russia says its warplanes have prevented two bomber aircraft belonging to the United States from crossing its border over the Barents Sea in the Arctic. "The crews of the Russian fighters identified the aerial target as a pair of US Air Force B-52H strategic bombers," Russia's Defence Ministry wrote on the social media platform Telegram.

The ministry said the Russian military scrambled MiG-29 and MiG-31 fighter jets, which identified the US planes as "F-52? strategic bombers." "As the Russian fighter jets approached, the American strategic bombers adjusted their flight course ... and subsequently turned away from the state border of the Russian Federation," the ministry said.

The Russian warplanes carried out the flight in compliance with international rules on the use of airspace over neutral waters, it added. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to Russia's claims. Russia has reported similar incidents before when its planes have confronted military aircraft from NATO countries flying close to its border at a time of acute tension over the war in Ukraine.

The US regularly conducts drone flights over the Black Sea, asserting that these operations occur in neutral airspace and comply with international law. In March 2023, a Russian Su-27 fighter jet damaged a US MQ-9 Reaper drone, causing it to crash into the Black Sea – the first direct clash between Russian and US forces since the Cold War, according to The Associated Press. In June this year, Russia accused the US of using its reconnaissance drone flights over neutral waters in the Black Sea to help Ukraine strike the Russian-annexed Crimean Peninsula. It said that the flights increased the risk of a "direct confrontation" between NATO and Russia, and that its army had been instructed to prepare an "operational response".

Last week, NATO leaders pledged to deliver at least \$43bn in military aid to Ukraine within the next year to strengthen its defences against Russia. They also formally declared that Kyiv was on an "irreversible path" towards membership in the Western military alliance. — Aljazeera

Wildfires in Alberta

OTTAWA (Reuters): Wildfires raging through the northern part of Canada's Alberta have forced evacuations of three communities, a provincial body said, as the oil-rich province continues to fight five different 'wildfires of note' in separate areas. A wildfire of note is often considered to be of significant threat to public safety, communities and critical infrastructure. The evacuation orders have been issued across John D'Or, Fox Lake and Garden River communities in northern Albert, covering close to 62,000 hectares and comprising 5,000 inhabitants. No threat to oil sands production was mentioned.

Alberta is in the grip of 158 wildfire events of which 55 are out of control, which means a fire is expected to continue growing and a perimeter has not yet been established. Not all out of control wildfires require evacuation of people. "Fire activity is expected to remain intense throughout the weekend as the hot and dry weather continues," said the Alberta government's wildfire service in a statement. There are over 200 firefighters and support staff, 10 helicopters and 43 pieces of heavy equipment working on this complex, it said, adding the fire was caused by lightning.

Meanwhile in neighboring British Columbia, where up to 319 active wildfires are burning, evacuation orders have been issued due to an uncontrolled wildfire blazing between two lakes, BC Wildfire Service said on social media platform X. B.C. has had 58 new wildfire incidents in the last 24 hours with three 'wildfires of note' in the southern region - the Shetland Creek, Aylwin Creek and Komonko Creek.

Leaders react to Biden dropping out of race

WASHINGTON: World leaders have offered their reactions to United States President Joe Biden's decision to end his faltering reelection campaign after weeks of pressure driven by concerns over his age and fitness.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog expressed gratitude to Biden for his "friendship and steadfast support for the Israeli people over his decades long career". "As the first US President to visit Israel in wartime, as a recipient of the Israeli Presidential Medal of Honor, and as a true ally of the Jewish people, he is a symbol of the unbreakable bond between our two peoples," Herzog said in a post on X.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country respected Biden's "tough but strong decision" and was grateful for his "unwavering support" as it fought to repel Russia's invasion. "We will always be thankful for President Biden's leadership. He supported our country during the most dramatic moment in history, assisted us in preventing Putin from occupying our country, and has continued to support us throughout this terrible war," Zelenskyy said in a post on X. "The current situation in Ukraine and all of Europe is no less challenging, and we sincerely hope that America's continued strong leadership will prevent Russian evil from succeeding or making its aggression pay off."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Moscow was more focused on winning the war in Ukraine than the outcome of the US election. "For us, reaching the goals of the special military operation [against Ukraine] is a priority, rather than the outcome of the US elections," Peskov told state media.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he respected Biden's decision and looked forward to working with him during the remainder of his presidency. "I know that, as he has done throughout his remarkable career, he will have made his decision based on what he believes is best for the American people," Starmer said on X. Canadian Prime Minister Justice Trudeau hailed Biden as a "great man" whose every action was "guided by his love for his country."

"As President, he is a partner to Canadians — and a true friend. To President Biden and the First Lady: thank you," Trudeau said on X. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese expressed thanks to Biden for his leadership and "ongoing service". "The Australia-US Alliance has never been stronger with our shared commitment to democratic values, international security, economic prosperity and climate action for this and future generations," Albanese said on X. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said his "friend" Biden had achieved a lot "for his country, for Europe, for the world". "Thanks to him, transatlantic cooperation is close, NATO is strong, and the USA is a good and reliable partner for us. His decision not to run again deserves recognition," Scholz said on X.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Biden had made a "brave and dignified decision". "Thanks to its determination and leadership, the US overcame the economic crisis after the pandemic and the serious assault on the Capitol and has been exemplary in its support for Ukraine in the face of Putin's Russian aggression," Sanchez said on X. "A great gesture from a great president who has always fought for democracy and freedom."

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk praised Biden for taking "many difficult decisions thanks to which Poland, America and the world are safer, and democracy stronger". "I know you were driven by the same motivations when announcing your final decision. Probably the most difficult one in your life," Tusk said on X.

Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said Biden's decision was that of a "statesman who has served his country for decades". "It is a responsible and personally difficult step, but it is all the more valuable. I am keeping my fingers crossed for the USA that a good president emerges from the democratic competition of two strong and equal candidates," Fiala said. Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris praised Biden as a "voice for reason, effective multilateralism and shared solutions". "Joe Biden, in all the offices he has held, has always been an unwavering voice and passionate worker for peace on the island of Ireland and our country owes him a great debt for this," Harris said in a statement. — Aljazeera

Veteran anti-whaling activist held in Greenland

GREENLAND (AFP): Anti-whaling activist Paul Watson has been arrested in Greenland under an international warrant issued by Japan, authorities and his foundation said. Mr Watson, star of the reality TV show Whale Wars, was arrested when his ship docked in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, a police statement said.

The arrest is believed to be related to an Interpol Red Notice issued for Mr Watson's previous anti-whaling interventions in the Antarctic region, the Captain Paul Watson Foundation said. The 73-year-old will be brought before a district court with a request to detain him pending a decision on his potential extradition to Japan, police said.

Footage posted by his foundation on X showed officers handcuffing Mr Watson on the John Paul DeJoria ship, putting him inside a police van and driving him away. His foundation said it was "completely shocked, as the Red Notice had disappeared a few months ago". "We were surprised because it could mean that it had been erased or made

confidential. We understand now that Japan made it confidential to lure Paul into a false sense of security," Locky MacLean, ship operation's director for the foundation, said in a statement.

"We implore the Danish government to release Captain Watson and not entertain this politically-motivated request." Greenland is an autonomous Danish dependent territory with self-government and its own parliament. A Red Notice was issued against Mr Watson in 2012, with Interpol stating he was wanted by Japan on charges of causing damage and injury in two incidents in the Antarctic Ocean in 2010 against a Japanese whaling ship.

Japan's government has made no comment but a spokeswoman for the Japanese coastguard told the AFP news agency it was aware of the arrest. Mr Watson's foundation said he was on his way to "intercepting Japan's newly-built factory ship, the Kangei Maru, in the North Pacific". The ship, which set off from Japan in May, butchers whales

caught and killed by smaller vessels.

Activists targeted the Kangei Maru's predecessor before 2019, when Japan hunted whales in the Antarctic and North Pacific for what it said were "scientific" purposes. Japan left the International Whaling Commission in 2019 and now only conducts commercial whaling in its own waters, and on what it calls a sustainable scale. However, Mr Watson's foundation believes Japan is planning to resume high-seas whaling in the Southern Ocean and North Pacific as early as next year.

In a statement, the group said the "reactivation" of the Red Notice against Mr Watson "is politically motivated and coincides with the launch of a newly-built factory whale processing vessel". Mr Watson has gained supporters from across the world due to his decades of activism, but has also received criticism and faced legal issues due to his aggressive tactics. Some of that criticism has come from Greenpeace, which Mr Watson claims he was a co-founder of despite the group denying this.

'Catastrophic toll' as Sudan's warring sides refuse to budge

NEW YORK: Civilians face violence and killings and health workers and medical facilities are suffering persistent attacks amid severe violence being perpetrated by both warring sides in Sudan, Doctors Without Borders has said in a new report.

The NGO, known by its French initials MSF, warned in the report issued on Monday that protection of civilians has collapsed, with entire communities "facing indiscriminate violence, killings, torture and sexual violence amid persistent attacks on health workers and medical facilities". Both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and their supporters are "inflicting horrendous violence on people across the country", the report, entitled "A war on people – The human cost of conflict and violence in Sudan", reads.

More than 10 million people have been displaced since the war started in April 2023, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) of the United

Nations. The war has wrought a catastrophic toll with hospitals attacked, markets bombed, and houses razed to the ground, the MSF report adds.

MSF said it treated an average of 26 people per day between August 2023 and the end of April 2024 at just one of the hospitals it supports in Omdurman, most for injuries caused by explosions, gunshots and stabbings. It also notes that throughout the war, hospitals have been routinely looted and attacked. In June, the World Health Organization said that only 20 to 30 percent of health facilities in hard-to-reach areas remain functional, and even then at minimal levels.

The Sudanese army and the RSF have not responded to the report yet. They have previously denied any intentional harming of civilians, and have accused each other of committing crimes and destroying Sudan. The SAF, led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary RSF, headed by Mohamed Hamdan (Hemedti) Dagalo, have refused to give up their quest to control the country,

despite the devastation, regional and international mediating efforts, and condemnation of the violence being wrought on the civilian population.

The MSF findings indicate "shocking" instances of sexual and gender-based violence, especially in Darfur, where the RSF – born out of ethnic Arab militias with a history of violence – has long been accused of "ethnic cleansing". A survey of 135 survivors of sexual violence treated by MSF teams between July and December 2023 in refugee camps in Chad, close to the Sudanese border, found 90 percent were abused by an armed perpetrator, 50 percent were abused in their own homes, and 40 percent were raped by multiple attackers.

"These findings are consistent with testimonies from survivors still in Sudan, demonstrating how sexual violence is being perpetrated against women in their homes and along displacement routes, a characteristic feature of the conflict," the Geneva-based organisation said. An MSF patient said two young girls

from their neighbourhood in the city of Gadarif in eastern Sudan disappeared in March 2024.

"Later my brother was abducted and when he came back home, he said that the two girls were in the same house where he was detained and that the girls had been there for two months. He said that he was hearing bad things done to them, the kind of bad things they do to girls," the patient said. The report also contains testimonies detailing "targeted ethnic violence" in Darfur, where RSF militias have been committing violence against Masalit and other people of non-Arab ethnicities.

MSF notes that humanitarian and medical organisations have been frequently blocked from providing support to civilians. "The violence of the warring parties is compounded by obstructions: by blocking, interfering and choking services when people need them most, stamps and signatures can be just as deadly as bullets and bombs in Sudan," said MSF General Director Vickie Hawkins. — Aljazeera

Marcos addresses nation, economy, Duterte rift loom large

MANILA: Over the last decade, the arrival of guests at the annual State of the Nation address in the Philippines has come to resemble a Hollywood premiere. Lawmakers and officials showcase flashy ensembles and gush over their designers as they head inside the halls of Congress to hear the president's report. Opposition lawmakers and figures have often used the occasion to brandish dissenting slogans and images on their clothing. But ahead of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's third address on Monday, the House of Representatives has banned any such attire. "It is not a day of protest," House Secretary-General Reginald Velasco, who is tasked with enforcing the orders and decisions of the chamber, told reporters earlier this month.

As Marcos Jr makes his address, tens of thousands of demonstrators are expected to march on

Congress in the torrential July rains. Some 22,000 police officers are being deployed to keep protesters away from parliament. While Marcos Jr is expected to tout the progress he has made in implementing an economic agenda focused on infrastructure construction and attracting foreign investment, the protests come amid rising public discontent over inflation and slow wage growth.

In an opinion poll released by Pulse Asia Research earlier this month, 72 percent of Filipinos said that controlling the rising cost of basic goods should be the number one priority for the government, ahead of low wages, poverty and joblessness. In the same poll, Marcos Jr's trust rating fell five percentage points compared to March, to 52 percent. The address itself has also drawn criticism due to its cost. The government has earmarked 20 million Philippine pesos

(\$342,000) for the preparations, which includes food for more than 2,000 guests, the highest ever for a State of the Nation address. Renato Reyes Jr of BAYAN, the activist coalition leading the protests, criticised the event's "tone-deaf pageantry". "The real State of the Nation is not what's being said on that stage but what's felt in the streets, from the viewpoint of ordinary people," Reyes told Al Jazeera. Marcos Jr has pushed infrastructure spending and foreign investment as the key levers to lift the economy. He has touted his administration's record of launching 185 flagship infrastructure projects worth \$162bn and securing foreign investment pledges worth \$14.2bn.

He has pointed to the International Monetary Fund's economic growth projections for 2024 and 2025 – of 6 percent and 6.2 percent, respectively –

which are significantly higher than those of neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia. Economic analysts have given Marcos Jr a mixed scorecard. "The Marcos administration was quick to act and I believe we have made a strong start these past two years," National Economic Development Authority Chief Arsenio Balisacan said last week.

On the other hand, the Makati Business Club last week called for the fast-tracking of reforms in skills development, governance and energy infrastructure to "turn these investment pledges into [a] reality". The Ibon Foundation, a think tank, has argued that the economic metrics touted by the government flatter to deceive, with greater infrastructure spending and foreign investment coinciding with manufacturing falling to a 75-year low of 18 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). — Aljazeera

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The cyber breakdown shows a weak spot

THE Friday outage in the computer systems that snapped all communication and the computers went blank across airport terminals across the world, and in banking systems caused the inevitable disruption. It gave a fairly good hint of what happens when the computer systems that have become our lifeline go terribly wrong.

The explanations have emerged slowly. We have been told that this was not a cyber-attack, this was not a case of hacking. It was an error in a software update. No one seems to have checked the code of the software update properly enough. The software is that of the cyber-security company, CrowdStrike, and it struck the Microsoft's Windows system, which is almost universal.

The cause of the breakdown at a global level seems to be due all the computers using the same cyber-security software. If there had been different software systems, not all of them would have snapped together. This has been put succinctly by an assistant professor of engineering at Cornell University, Gregory Falco, "This is the function of a very homogenous technology that goes into the backbone of all of our IT infrastructure. What really causes this mess is that we rely on very few companies, and everybody uses the same folks, so everyone goes down at the same time."

This seems to be a pretty good summing up of the problem. It looks like that in matters of high technology with far-from-certain research outcomes, a handful of companies will remain in the field, with a monopolistic stranglehold. It was inevitable that the outage had impacted the markets and shares fell on Friday at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), with CrowdStrike's shares falling 11.1 per cent. Jeff Kleintop, chief global investment strategist at Charles Schwab, said, "Today's (Friday) outage reminds us that services can have supply chain disruptions too. While not a cyberattack, the outage is a worrisome reminder of how our systems are deeply integrated."

There would have been less puzzlement and more righteous anger if this had been a cyberattack because there would be someone to blame, to demonise. When the glitch emerges from inside the system, and there is no 'enemy' behind the disruption, it becomes a difficult issue.

People operating the system – this involves Microsoft Windows and the cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike – have to ponder on how to make the systems more immune, and also eliminate the glitch in the code – and those depending on the system, which includes airlines, banks, healthcare systems, and millions of ordinary people, have to grapple with the fact that there could be unintended slipups which could cause a huge disaster, and it would take time to get back to normal functioning.

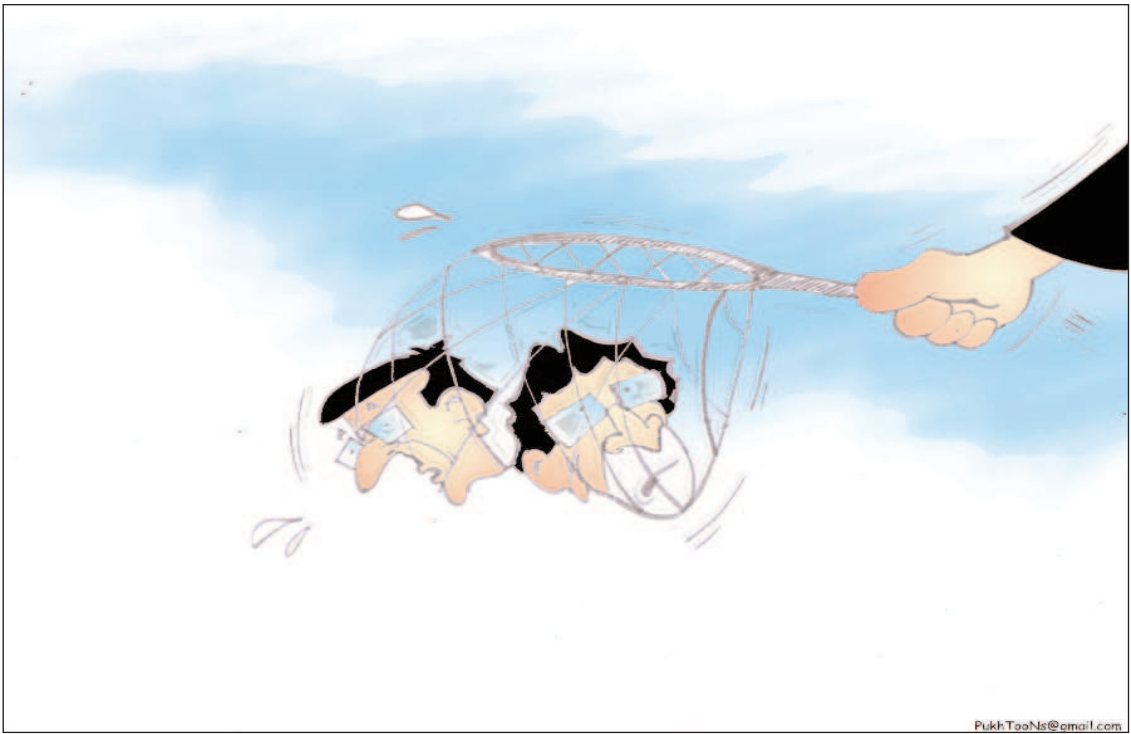
In some ways, this could be compared to the power grid snapping and a whole region is plunged into darkness, and it will take hours to repair the lines and restore power. These are breakdowns in systems created by human beings.

It would be impossible to get off the computers, the software and the global integration that has taken place through the Internet. The systems would be restored and people are going to function as though there was no breakdown. It might be said that there is no alternative. The system when it fails has to be corrected and then there has to be business as usual.

Cyber companies are going to work extra hard to plug the loopholes much better. It is like the snag in Boeing's Starliner spacecraft which has stranded the American astronauts in the International Space Station (ISS). Work is on to set right the problem. We have to get used to the fact that there would be mechanical failures like a car breaking down on the highway. You just have to do the repair work and get it running again.

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‘Call this address if you want to put out the fires in the Middle East’

Ghassan Charbel

ALL of this is happening for the first time. Israel has been waging a multifront war for almost 10 months, a war it does not have the capacity to decide. Lebanese Hezbollah has been waging a "support war" for the same time and it claims this war will only end once the Israeli assault on Gaza stops. A Palestinian organization has been fighting Israel throughout this period. And for the first time, drones and missiles launched from multiple locations, including Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon, have hit Israel.

The Middle East has never seen anything like this before. It is no exaggeration to say that we entered a new phase of the conflict when a Houthi drone exploded near a US Embassy branch office in Tel Aviv, killing one Israeli and injuring others.

For the first time since the Al-Aqsa Flood operation, Israel responded with airstrikes that targeted sites in Hodeidah, Yemen. The attack deliberately created a massive fire that Israeli officials claimed could be seen by all the peoples of the Middle East, not just Yemenis.

Like Hezbollah, the Houthis have also been waging a support war, targeting what they claim to be Israeli ships or those heading to Israeli ports, as well as occasionally announcing that they have targeted sites in Israel itself.

It was clear that the US had previously pressured Israel not to hit back against the Houthis so that escalation could be avoided, especially after the US and UK launched measured reprisals to Houthi actions.

It seemed that Washington had succeeded in diverting the trajectory that had been leading the region to a broader war.

The exchange of direct strikes between Iran and Israel was quickly halted and Hezbollah ensured that the "rules of engagement" were not broken during this conflict, with Israel behaving in similar fashion.

Suddenly, these strikes broke the restrictions of

the old rules of engagement. The Houthis bombed Tel Aviv directly, which naturally drew an immediate Israeli response. Israel disregarded the commitments it had made to the Americans and launched its attack on Hodeidah, seemingly deciding to retaliate to what it considered an "Iranian message."

My interest in the regional thread of the Houthi story was aroused by a question President Ali Abdullah Saleh had asked me at the end of an

Like Hezbollah, the Houthis have also been waging a support war, targeting what they claim to be Israeli ships or those heading to Israeli ports, as well as occasionally announcing that they have targeted sites in Israel itself. It was clear that the US had previously pressured Israel not to hit back against the Houthis so that escalation could be avoided, especially after the US and UK launched measured reprisals to Houthi actions. It seemed that Washington had succeeded in diverting the trajectory that had been leading the region to a broader war.

interview I conducted with him in 2008. Smiling, he asked: "What does Hezbollah want from the Houthis?" I asked him to clarify what he meant. "We have definitive reports that small groups of Houthis are traveling to Damascus, where they are received by Hezbollah, which then escorts them into Lebanese territory and has them enter without having their passports stamped at the Syrian-Lebanese border. Hezbollah trains them in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon and they then return to Damascus the same way they had come to Lebanon, before returning to Sanaa," he told me. The president had also received reports indicating that some young Houthis were studying in Iranian seminaries.

In that same year, Gen.

Qassem Soleimani was weaving the threads of the resistance axis's regional tapestry. He continued to drain the American military forces in Iraq, after having supported the 2006 war on Israel launched from Lebanon.

This war overturned the formulas that had been in place in Lebanon following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanese territory.

In a 2009 interview, I trine, Twelver Shiism, instead of the Zaidi or Shafi'i doctrines that are prevalent in Yemen. They received donations from parties, organizations or associations in regional states and used them to buy these arms. Arms dealers and regional powers who were helping the Houthis, to promote their own agenda, also smuggled weapons to them by sea."

I asked him if the Houthi problem could be understood as part of a sectarian struggle in the region. "No. It is not a Sunni-Shiite conflict, but rather an effort to promote a new doctrine in the region to preoccupy it, preoccupy Yemen and to preoccupy Saudi Arabia in particular, as well as to send messages to small or large regional countries that had played a role in this regard," Saleh said.

Saleh did not hide the fact that he was not willing to make the dispute with Iran and Hezbollah public. Years later, "Saleh deluded himself into thinking that he could form a temporary alliance with the Houthis to contain them before confronting them. He paid with his life to play this game, because he forgot that the project the Houthis are part of is regional before being local," as an official who had worked with him put it.

Saleh's remarks help us understand the latest chapter and the conflict between the Houthis and Israel.

There are many questions. Why have the frequency and scope of the strikes expanded to reach Tel Aviv and Hodeidah? Did Iran want to suggest that a regional war was on the cards in order to impose a ceasefire during Joe Biden's term? Or is it preparing to welcome Donald Trump, if he is reelected, with new facts on the ground in this unprecedented conflict? Did Iran want to send a message to the new president: call this number if you want to put out the fires in the Middle East and discuss roles, interests and influence? Does Iran seek a leading role in the region, the bomb, or both? Does it want an acknowledgment of its right to hold the keys to four Arab countries?

But as an Eco-Business report points out, while there has been considerable excitement around AI-based weather forecasting in India, the problem is lack of credible data. The report adds that amid the surge of extreme weather events globally, billions of dollars are pouring into developing cutting-edge weather forecasting models based on AI and ML. Leading tech giants, such as Google and IBM, are spearheading

Meena Janardhan

India turns to AI in weather forecasts

been established in the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

As the Reuters report points out, weather agencies around the world are focussing on AI, which can bring down cost and improve speed, and which Britain's Met Office says could "revolutionise", opens new tab weather forecasting, with a recent Google-funded model found to have outperformed, opens new tab conventional methods. Accurate weather forecasting is particularly crucial in India, a country of 1.4 billion people, many impoverished, and the world's second-largest producer of rice, wheat and sugar. The IMD provides forecasts based on mathematical models using supercomputers. Using AI with an expanded observation network could help generate higher-quality forecast data at lower cost.

In India, climate scientists have begun experimenting with AI. In December 2023, Kiren Rijju, a minister at the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), said the department had established a virtual centre dedicated to developing and refining various AI and ML techniques for enhanced weather predictions. Earlier this year, the IMD had highlighted that India's weather scientists have started harnessing the power of artificial intelligence and machine learning to enhance weather forecasts. The IMD has deployed a network of 39 doppler weather radars that cover 85% of the country's land-mass and enable hourly forecasts for prominent cities. This advanced radar data, with a resolution of 350 meters per pixel, enables the detection and

simulation of convective clouds, significantly enhancing forecast accuracy for extreme events like heavy rainfall and cyclones. The IMD has also digitised weather records for the country dating back to 1901 and artificial intelligence could be used to sift through this plentiful information to generate knowledge about weather patterns.

But as an Eco-Business report points out, while there has been considerable excitement around AI-based weather forecasting in India, the problem is lack of credible data. The report adds that amid the surge of extreme weather events globally, billions of dollars are pouring into developing cutting-edge weather forecasting models based on AI and ML. Leading tech giants, such as Google and IBM, are spearheading

Biden is out of the election, but American plutocracy carries on

Belén Fernández

AND so it has come to pass. United States President Joe Biden has dropped out of this year's presidential race, bowing to pressure from fellow Democrats who feared that his train wreck of a performance in the June presidential debate with Republican candidate Donald Trump – among other episodes – would render the octogenarian less than appealing to the US electorate. So much for Biden's decree that only the "Lord Almighty" could convince him to withdraw from the race. Or maybe the Lord had a hand in it, after all.

To be sure, Biden's Democratic colleagues did have a point – not that Trump or any other option, Republican or Democrat, is preferable in a committed plutocracy where ballot choices generally range from the transparently sociopathic to the less transparently so.

But Biden's recent verbal gaffes – including such assertions as that he is the "first Black woman to serve with a Black president" in the US – did suggest that he was perhaps not properly positioned to continue as the commander of the global superpower, linguistically or otherwise.

Objectively speaking, too, his function during the past nine months as abettor-in-chief of Israel's genocide in the Gaza Strip is decidedly less than charming. But in his July 21 presidential race withdrawal post on the social media platform X, Biden preferred to look on the bright side, assuring his "Fellow Americans" that the US had "made historic investments in rebuilding our Nation, in lowering prescription drug costs for seniors, and in expanding affordable health care to a record number of Americans".

This may be news to many Americans still struggling with medical bills and

\$14,579.01 for a single month's supply of Xtandi.

Anyway, that's US capitalism for you – which regrettably is not anything that can be cured via a democratic electoral charade.

Biden's likely replacement in the presidential race is his current vice president, Kamala Harris. While pundits debate her merits on mainstream media, the one main question is precisely what will become of all of the money raised on behalf of one plutocrat rather than another.

As an Al Jazeera article published in the aftermath of Biden's withdrawal notes: "With no precedent for the current situation, questions have swirled over the fate of Biden's war chest. In the US, after all, election spending can run into millions, if not billions, of dollars".

With so many millions and billions swirling around, then, there is obviously not much chance for literal democracy. This despite Biden's sentimental claim in his X post that "none of this could have been done without you, the American people. Together, we overcame a once in a century pandemic and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We've protected and preserved our Democracy".

While Biden is retreating from his re-election bid, he is not stepping down from the office of the presidency. He has made clear that he considers serving the rest of his term to be "in the best interest of my party and the country" and that he will be focusing on his "duties as President".

Among his top "duties" that presently require fulfilling is receiving on Tuesday Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House – since genocide is surely in the "best interest of my party and the country".

As Americans process the whole electoral

This may be news to many Americans still struggling with medical bills and overpriced prescription drugs. One of them would have been my own father, a Texas-born US citizen who died of prostate cancer in the nation's capital Washington, DC, in August 2023 at the age of 72, after being lured into lucrative chemotherapy treatments by his doctors which did nothing but accelerate his demise.

overpriced prescription drugs. One of them would have been my own father, a Texas-born US citizen who died of prostate cancer in the nation's capital Washington, DC, in August 2023 at the age of 72, after being lured into lucrative chemotherapy treatments by his doctors which did nothing but accelerate his demise.

My dad had additionally been prescribed the prostate cancer drug Xtandi, a medication that had been developed with US taxpayer money but not for the purpose of, um, "lowering prescription drug costs for seniors" – as was evident from my parents' bill of no less than

switcheroo, they would do well to contemplate the plutocratic panorama of their country.

In his goodbye missive, Biden signed off with the words: "I believe today what I always have: that there is nothing America can't do – when we do it together. We just have to remember that we are the United States of America."

And that's what everyone should remember in the end: that the US is the US no matter who is at the helm and there is "nothing America can't do" in terms of inflicting global agony.

Biden may be out of the race but American "democracy" – that is, plutocracy – carries on.

Why does India hate Arundhati Roy?

AFTER they unexpectedly lost their parliamentary majority in this year's election and were forced to enter into a coalition government, I predicted that India's governing Hindu nationalists would scale up their attacks on their critics to try and reassert their hegemony over Indian politics.

Regrettably, it did not take long for my prediction to be realised.

Just days after the election, an official from the new BJP-led government allowed the Booker prize-winning Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy to be prosecuted for remarks she made at a panel discussion back in 2010 suggesting that Kashmir was never an integral part of India.

The prosecution was granted under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), which is often used against individuals the Hindu Nationalist government deems antinational, unpatriotic and sympathetic to terror groups.

This latest attack on Roy is indicative of the growing insecurities of the BJP leadership after a less-than-stellar election performance. But the acclaimed author is not being punished simply because she happened to say or do something that challenged the BJP's authority. She is not just an ordinary critic who spoke her mind and happened to upset a party heavyweight.

Roy is being targeted because she has an inherent ability to speak to some of the most foundational corruptions that underlie the socioeconomic and political pillars of the Indian state. And while it is on the back foot electorally, this ability deeply frightens the BJP.

It is no coincidence that the comments Roy is being prosecuted over are related to Kashmir. The vehement denial of Kashmiri rights as well as the violent suppression of the Kashmiri liberation movement has long been the hallmark of muscular Indian nationalism. As Nazia Amin wrote recently, "Kashmir is one of the sites where the tyrannical core at the heart of Indian nationalism gets expressed in its most blatant and persistent form."

This tyranny has been on display for decades. Between the late 1980s

and early 2000s, for example, the Indian armed forces are believed to have forcefully disappeared between 8,000 – 10,000 Kashmiri men. They have been missing for years, but cannot be officially declared dead. The wives of these men,

Roy is being targeted because she has an inherent ability to speak to some of the most foundational corruptions that underlie the socioeconomic and political pillars of the Indian state. And while it is on the back foot electorally, this ability deeply frightens the BJP. It is no coincidence that the comments Roy is being prosecuted over are related to Kashmir. The vehement denial of Kashmiri rights as well as the violent suppression of the Kashmiri liberation movement has long been the hallmark of muscular Indian nationalism. As Nazia Amin wrote recently, "Kashmir is one of the sites where the tyrannical core at the heart of Indian nationalism gets expressed in its most blatant and persistent form." This tyranny has been on display for decades. Between the late 1980s and early 2000s, for example, the Indian armed forces are believed to have forcefully disappeared between 8,000 – 10,000 Kashmiri men. They have been missing for years, but cannot be officially declared dead.

known as "half widows", and their children, are left with little legal protection and often struggle with poverty and even homelessness.

In the 1990s, Human Rights Watch reported (PDF) that the Indian armed forces in Kashmir were routinely using rape as a weapon of counterinsurgency. It was being used to target women "accuse[d] of being militant sympathisers". By raping these women, Indian forces wanted to "punish and humiliate the entire community". Reportedly, rape was also a tool of reprisal, used against civilians living in areas where fighters had ambushed the armed forces.

In the 2010s, the security forces started using pellet guns as a "non-lethal" weapon for crowd control. Yet, in 2016, this nonlethal weapon led to what has been described as "mass blinding" – ie, hundreds of eye injuries from the more than a million pellets that were fired on protesters in the Kashmir valley.

Equipped with legislation that gives them emergency powers for maintaining public order, the Indian forces have a well-documented history of torturing and even killing detainees from Kashmir. Since the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomous status in

Somdeep Sen

2019 – a key Hindu nationalist campaign promise – the Indian state has also intensified its arbitrary detentions and arrests of opposition politicians, journalists and activists.

At the same 2010 panel where she claimed that Kashmir wasn't an integral part of India, Roy had also said, "Kashmiris cannot inhale and exhale without their breath going through the barrel of an AK-47". Elsewhere, in her writings, Roy has been uncompromising in her call for Kashmiri liberation. In various speeches, essays and statements, Roy has levied existential attacks on the deep corruption that underlies Indian presence in Kashmir, shed light on the tyranny of the Indian nationalist claim of sovereignty over the valley and, by calling for Kashmiri independence, unsettled a taken-for-granted understanding of the geographical limits of the Indian state.

Roy has also levied a similarly existential attack on India's model of economic growth and development, which, in the eyes of many, requires that some suffer for the greater good of national progress. This logic was written into the very foundations of the country. When India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the Hirakud Dam over the Mahanadi River in 1948, he said to the villagers whose lives and livelihoods would be adversely affected by the project that "if you have to suffer,

you should do so in the interest of the country." Nehru had also famously described dams as modern temples, "necessary for the nation's economic progress".

Roy pointed to the fallacy of this ethos of national progress in a

1999 essay in which she supported the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) – the movement protesting the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada River due to its detrimental impact on the environment and the lives of farmers and tribal communities.

She wrote: "Big Dams are obsolete. They're uncool. They're undemocratic. They're a Government's way of accumulating authority (deciding who will get how much water and who will grow what where)... They're a brazen means of taking water, land and irrigation away from the poor and gifting it to the rich. Their reservoirs displace huge populations of people, leaving them homeless and destitute.

Ecologically, they're in the doghouse. They lay the earth to waste." In later years, Roy has described the significance of the struggle over the Narmada Valley as a struggle over modern India where the powerful are pitted against the powerless. It was, as she describes, "a peg, or a keyhole, to use to open a very big lock" that involves not just a river, but complex questions of development, the environment, the caste system and class in a modernising postcolonial state.

The dam eventually went up and this logic of national progress continued unabated. Yet, the prescience of Roy's assessment of the ills of this model of progress is all the more apparent today – and the BJP is undoubtedly aware of this.

As she rightly points out in Capitalism: A Ghost Story, an emergent India is also a place where the ultra-rich and ever-growing middle class live alongside "dead rivers, dry wells, bald mountains, and denuded forests; the ghosts of 250,000 debt-ridden farmers who have killed themselves, and of the 800 million who have been impoverished and dispossessed to make way for us. And who survive on less than twenty Indian rupees a day."

Of course, Roy acknowledges, there is no space for a conversation on land or wealth redistribution. Those eager to make India a global force would deem this "undemocratic" or even "lunatic". Yet, the same people don't seem to notice the lunacy of say the millions left landless, living in abject poverty, in slums in towns and cities. Presumably, they are the ones who must suffer for the nation's progress.

Roy was recently awarded the PEN Pinter Prize. The prize is reserved for writers who "cast an unflinching, unswerving gaze upon the world" and display a "fierce intellectual determination ... to define the real truth of our lives and our societies".

Roy's unflinching, unswerving gaze is undoubtedly needed as politics in Modi's India is a heady concoction of religious nationalism, authoritarianism and capitalism. Her fierce intellectual determination to speak truth to power is a welcome anomaly at a time when critical voices are so easily silenced. This is why, in the aftermath of its election upset, the BJP is so eager to target and silence her at this moment. But Roy's voice of dissent is not just valuable today. The significance of her writings and advocacy is timeless, as Roy speaks for freedom and justice for the most marginalised in a way that finds relevance and transcends, far beyond the current, dismal political moment.

— Aljazeera

US foreign policy fails again, this time against the Houthis

ON July 20, the Israeli air force attacked the Yemeni port of Hodeidah, controlled by the Yemeni militia, Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthis. Local media reported a large explosion at a fuel storage facility and a power plant and the death of at least six people. The air raid came in retaliation for the long-range drone launched from Yemeni territory that struck Tel Aviv on July 19, killing one person.

The Houthi attack achieved a technological and symbolic victory, as the group managed to penetrate Israeli territory, dodging the Israeli air defence system and inflicting damage for the first time since the start of the hostilities in October 2023. Israel's decision to retaliate against civilian infrastructure instead of military targets is a sign that the tensions in the Red Sea region may escalate into an all-out conflict.

These developments demonstrate not only the failure of the United States' bombing campaign to deter and degrade the Houthis' capability of attacking Israel and Red Sea shipping, but also the US's inability to prevent a regional war – its declared top diplomatic priority since October 2023.

A Houthi victory

The Houthis' attack on Israel came at the nine-month mark of the start of their intervention on the side of Hamas and other Palestinian resistance groups fighting the Israeli occupation forces. On October 19, they launched a salvo of missiles and drones towards Israeli territory, demanding an end to the Israeli invasion of Gaza. The projectiles failed to reach their target as they were intercepted by the Israeli Arrow missile defence system. Shortly afterwards, the Houthis expanded their attacks to include ships that they consider linked to Israel or any of its foreign allies, thus disrupting one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world.

In December, the US and some of its Western allies announced they were launching an operation in the Red Sea to try to stop attacks on ships from Yemeni territory and secure shipping routes. But this campaign has largely failed its mission.

Houthi attacks have come at a constant pace and have not shown any signs of diminishing. On January 10, the group launched 18 drones, two antiship cruise missiles and an antiship ballistic missile – all intercepted by US and British forces. Two days later, allied forces responded with air strikes against Houthi military targets in Yemen.

Ibrahim Al-Marashi

However, attacks on shipping lanes continued afterwards, leading to the damage and loss of a number of vessels. Missiles launched from Yemen continued to target Israel. In mid-March, a cruise missile made it through Israeli air defences and exploded in an open area near the Israeli port of Eilat. In April, the group joined Iran in its missile and drone attack on Israel in response to the assassination of Iranian officials in Syria.

The fact that the Houthi drone penetrated so deep into Israeli territory on July 19 is seen in Sanaa as a symbolic victory even against

While in Sanaa there seems to be a cause for celebration, in

Washington there are major failures to reflect on. The seven-month-long US-led campaign against the Houthis has not given many results.

However, it has cost a whole lot. Since January 2024 the US has launched salvos of missiles, costing \$1m to \$4.3m each, against Houthi targets. The costly attacks led

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Committee, to admonish US

President Joe Biden in January, saying: "So you've got this issue

that will be emerging of how long can we continue to fire expensive

missiles." To date, the US has lost at least three Reaper drones over

Yemen, each costing \$30m.

the backdrop of Israel's bloody retaliation. Such military successes are raising the group's profile not only in Yemen, but also regionally. The attacks on Israel have broadened the Houthi appeal beyond their Zaidi Shia base and beyond Yemen, which is expanding their domestic and international legitimacy.

US failures

While in Sanaa there seems to be a cause for celebration, in Washington there are major failures to reflect on. The seven-month-long US-led campaign against the Houthis has not given many results. However, it has cost a whole lot.

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of how long can we continue to fire expensive missiles."

To date, the US has lost at least three Reaper drones over Yemen, each costing \$30m.

Estimates of the total cost of the operation range between \$260m and \$573m per month – that is, between \$1.8bn and \$4bn so far.

None of the US and its allies' actions in the Red Sea have stopped the disruption of shipping lanes. Shipping and insurance costs have soared. President Biden himself has admitted that the strikes against Houthis do not work. Yet, he has refused to stop them even as experts are suggesting that "strategic inaction" may in fact be

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more effective. He has also refused to use the most effective way to stop the Houthis: to press Israel into putting an end to the genocide in Gaza. The Houthis have repeatedly made clear that their attacks will stop as soon as there is a ceasefire.

The Biden administration has instead allowed Israel to commit unimaginable atrocities in Gaza – breaking well-established legal and ethical norms. It has also enabled Israel to escalate not only against the Houthis, but also against Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran.

On the ground and in reality, it has done nothing to stop an escalation that can turn into a regional war, despite repeatedly making the claim that it is trying to prevent one. Now that Biden has made the historic decision not to seek re-election, he will also go down in history as the US president who caused one of the worst crises in the Middle East in recent history.

ing other conflicts. He stated, "The destruction of cities was about preventing people from coming back. So even after a heavily shelled city was under the control of a particular [enemy] armed force, they would still go in and do things like dynamite houses. They would dynamite mosques and make them into a car park."

Before tackling Gaza, he investigated Grozny in Chechnya, Aleppo in Syria, Mosul in Iraq, and Mariupol and Bucha in Ukraine.

I can say, however, there is no comparison between images of Gaza broadcast by satellite television and Aleppo. Aleppo was not destroyed during the civil/proxy conflict. The medieval souq at the centre of Aleppo was devastated (souqicide?) but "urbicide" does not apply to the formerly rebel/Daesh-held eastern sector of Aleppo. I can testify that eastern Aleppo was battered but largely standing and inhabited after the government ousted the rebels/Daesh at the end of December 2016. When I visited on March 8, 2017, I attended events celebrating International Women's Day at a school in eastern Aleppo and an upmarket hotel in the largely unscarred western sector of the city.

I await the end of the Gaza war and permission to visit to see and report on who of my friends have survived (eight in one family have been killed) and what remains of its urban areas.

— Gulf Today

Facing hidden dangers

IN an article in The Guardian, Haniya Albaiony declared that she will be helping to "clear unexploded bombs in Gaza, my home. But I dread what I will find there" under 37 tonnes of rubble. "Yet this will be the most vital work I have ever done," wrote Albaiony who is a Gaza emergency response manager for the Mines Advisory Group.

Since she is from heavily bombed Gaza City, she is eager to restore "some kind of normality" to this tortured strip of land. A professional who has worked in explosives clearance for a decade, she left Gaza three months ago.

Her family has been displaced to Khan Younis where they live in makeshift shelters along with hundreds of thousands of Gazans.

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She pointed out that hidden horrors threaten "to blight hopes for recovery long after the bombs have stopped falling." While it is one of "the most densely populated places on Earth" it could be "one of the most densely contaminated with unexploded ordnance."

She will be guiding colleagues in heavy body armour as they sort and sift rubble for explosives with the aim of preventing death and destruction once Israel ends its war on Gaza and withdraws its forces. She said the UN Development Programme estimated that clearing Gaza of explosives could take over a decade and cost \$40 billion.

Between Oct.7 and April 24, Israel dropped more than 70,000 tons (63,500 tonnes) of explosives on Gaza. These have been delivered by a wide variety of weaponry: conventional air-dropped bombs, rockets, artillery shells, tank rounds, grenades, and bullets. White phosphorus shells – which Israel has used in both Gaza and South Lebanon – are not meant to be deployed in urban areas but in battlefield conditions. On average, about 10 per cent of ordinance fails to explode on target, leaving long-term dangers for populations and humanitarian workers.

The UN Mines Action Service (UNMAS) has been operating in Gaza

since 2009 following Israel's first major assault which was mounted after Hamas took control of the strip in June 2007. This operation, which has served as a template for further Israeli onslaughts in 2014 and 2021, was far,

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Gaza City which was largely destroyed by Israeli strikes. She said UNRWA schools and UN other international organisations' offices were also destroyed or damaged. This meant, she wrote, "While the ongoing

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ing conflict required humanitarian assistance on an unprecedented scale, the activities of the United Nations, UNMAS and other organisations, were severely restricted at the start."

Between October and December, while she managed operations from outside Gaza and secured donor funds, UNMAS staff in Gaza managed to improve safety for international workers in Gaza and providing security

advice for 1.4 million of the 2.3 million Gazans. Gazan UNMAS staff who remain in the strip face the same problems as fellow countrymen and women. Many have lost homes and have taken refuge in southern

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Gaza where, she said, they are "working to protect other Gazan civilians from the risk of explosive ordnance while they themselves are in a very difficult situation."

To provide essential expertise not available in Gaza, international explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) experts have been deployed to ensure the safety of UN and other humanitarian workers. Among them is Carlos Mesa, who said

that delivering aid "entails driving through rubble and destroyed areas, which are potentially contaminated by explosive remnants of war, for a long time, and involves high risks of explosive incidents. Therefore, no humanitarian

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ian activities can be delivered without UNMAS accompanying them, checking for unexploded ordnance and other threats, avoiding dangerous routes, and protecting humanitarian convoys."

Of the millions of tonnes of rubble Israel has created in Gaza a considerable has been contaminated by explosives which must be cleared from every reconstruction site.

Former UNMAS chief for Iraq Pehr Lodhammar, stated in April, "Based on the current [amount] of debris in Gaza, with 100 trucks we are talking about 14 years of work ... to remove it." He added that it is impossible to say how long this process will take until the war ends.

The UN Environment Programme estimated that the mid-June figure for debris was 40 million tonnes.

At the end of June, the UN Satellite Centre reported that during the first eight months of the Gaza war more than 55 per cent of the strip's structures have been destroyed. Homes, schools, hospitals, public buildings, commercial offices, cultural centres, religious sites, and infrastructure in main towns have been ravaged by Israeli bombardment. Housing suffered the most devastation, the Centre said. The term "urbicide," the killing of cities, coined in the 1960s, has been applied by experts to Gaza and Ukraine.

However, the latter has suffered far less devastation than Gaza. In a June 28 report France 24 television channel cited researcher Martin Coward, head of the School of Politics and International Relations at Queen Mary University in London. He said urbicide "is deliberate and not proportional to the strategic goals of war, and therefore violates the laws of war."

Coward began urbicide research in Sarajevo during the 1992-95 Bosnian war before prob-



SCCI demands uniform implementation of Axle Load system in country

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The executive committee of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry demanded the uniform implementation of the Axle Load system across the country.

The demand was made through a resolution during a special meeting of the SCCI executive committee held under chairmanship of the chamber's president Fuad Ishaq here on Monday.

The resolution was presented by the SCCI chief Fuad Ishaq which was unanimously adopted by the house.

The resolution also

demanding imposition of illegal fines from the transporters should be stopped immediately.

It furthermore asked to end bribery and extortion at various checkpoints across the country.

According to the resolution, if in case the charter of demands were not met, the SCCI will fully support the strike call given by transporters across the country on 25th July 2024.

The meeting attended by vice president of the SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi, former president of FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, ex-president Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Executive Members Hamza

Ibrahim Butt, Affaf Ali Khan, Javed Akhtar, Qurat Ul Ain, Imran Khan Mohmand, Muhammad Ismail Safi, Monawar Khurshid and Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Fazal Wahid, Ishtiaq Paracha, Secretary General Muqtasad Ahsan and Secretary Sohail Anjum, Patron in chief, Peshawar Goods Carriers Association Haji Sanaullah, Chairman Haji Iftikhar Ahmed, Deputy Chairman Haji Ghaffar Khan, Hussain Khan, along with representatives of the transporters community and other officials were present in large numbers.

On the occasion, the

officials of Peshawar Goods Carrier Association informed the house in detail about the problems of the transporters.

SCCI chief Fuad Ishaq assured the office bearers of the association that efforts will be made to resolve the concerns regarding Axle load in an effective manner by taking before the government and concerned institutions.

Ghazanfar Bilour also spoke on this occasion and informed the house in detail about the difficulties and problems of entrepreneurs and the steps taken by the SCCI to solve them.

Office bearers of Peshawar Goods Carrier Association presented the Charter of demands in the house and made it clear that the transporters will go on strike across the country, if these demands are not fulfilled by the government and related institutions till July 25 next.

Transporters demanded the government to implement a uniform Axle Weight system across the country and overweight vehicles should be returned and no unjustified fines should be imposed.

The Motorway Police should not issue challans without investigation and that the power of challan should be withdrawn from the patrol police and it should be made mandatory to provide security, according to charters of demands.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fuad Ishaq presiding over a special meeting of SCCI Executive Committee. Vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

Pakistan Stock Exchange witnesses bearish trend, loses 1,578 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday losing 1,578.70 points, a negative change of 1.97 percent, closing at 78,539.19 points against 80,117.89 points on the last working day.

A total of 375,599,184 shares were traded during the day as compared to 479,000,434 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 19.350 billion against Rs 27.851 billion on the last trading day.

Around 446 companies

transacted their shares in the stock market, 80 of them recorded gains and 319 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 47 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 33,441,470 shares at Rs 4.41 per share, Pak Elektron with 23,559,106 shares at Rs 26.59 per share and PIA Housing Company with 19,205,471 shares at Rs 17.02 per share.

JDW Sugar Mills Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 26.51

per share price, closing at Rs 544.99, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with a Rs 12.72 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,369.92.

Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs161.93 per share closing at Rs1,469.57, followed by Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with a Rs134.07 decline to close at Rs18,125.92.

Gold rates up by Rs1,000 per tola: The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs. 251,000 on Monday against its sale at

Rs. 250,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 857 to Rs. 215,192 from Rs. 214,335 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.197,260 from Rs. 196,473, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,920 and Rs.2,503.42 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$2 to \$2,402 from \$2,400, the Association reported.



KARACHI: CEO of DIBPL Junaid Ahmed and Chairman of ZLK Islamic Financial Services Zahid Latif Khan exchanging documents after signing MoU.

PSX transitions to One-Share Lot system

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) has successfully transitioned to a One-Share Lot system for investor transactions on the regular market, aligning with international best practices for stock market investments.

According to PSX press release received here Monday, previously, the minimum marketable lot sizes for listed companies varied from 20, 50, 100, and 500 shares based on their prices.

To enhance investor convenience and streamline stock market transactions, this change has been enacted, it said adding PSX as a frontline regulator was committed to add value to its customer experience and facilitate investors and stakeholders.

The transition to the One-Share Lot began on April 19, 2024, and was executed in multiple phases on a weekly basis, to ensure a smooth and efficient transition. The conversion was based on a comprehensive evaluation conducted by the Exchange.

The new lot size is expected to offer numerous benefits to investors, facilitating seamless, systematic, and efficient transactions in the capital market.

Key advantages of the One-Share Lot include increased retail participation, as the smaller standard lot size makes high-priced stocks more affordable for retail investors, resulting in higher liquidity and improved trading volumes.

Additionally, this change allows investors to build more balanced portfolios, as those with limited capital can now afford a wider range of stocks. The new lot size also eliminates the need for investors to trade in odd lot markets at a discount, promoting accessibility.

Furthermore, it simplifies operations for investors and securities brokers by removing the need to track multiple lot sizes, thus reducing administrative and operational burdens, the press release added.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer PSX, Farrukh H. Khan expressed his satisfaction with the transition, saying this was a significant step forward for Pakistan Stock Exchange, particularly benefiting small investors.

The shift to a One-Share Lot aligns with international best practices and moves PSX closer to global standards where trading units consist of one share per lot, enhancing market compatibility, competitiveness, and accessibility, it added.

Enhancing Shariah-compliant financial access

DIBPL and ZLK sign MoU

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dubai Islamic Bank Pakistan Limited (DIBPL), a subsidiary of Dubai Islamic Bank, has partnered with ZLK Islamic Financial Services, Pakistan's first Shariah-compliant brokerage firm. The MoU signing ceremony was held at DIBPL Head Office in Karachi. The MoU was signed by Junaid Ahmed, CEO of DIBPL and Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman of ZLK Islamic Financial Services, in the presence of Ashfaq Ahmad Khan, COO of ZLK Financial Services, and Naveed Malik, Head of Consumer Banking at DIBPL.

This strategic collaboration is aimed at enhancing access to Shariah-compliant financial products for DIBPL's wide customer base, including Roshan Digital Account holders and local clients. Customers are set to gain access to brokerage services by investing in a variety

of Riba-free financial products such as shares, GoP Ijars Sukuk, ETFs, and Murabaha Share Financing (MSF). This initiative is a testament to DIBPL and ZLK Islamic Financial Services' commitment to promoting and expanding ethical and Shariah-compliant financial solutions in Pakistan.

Junaid Ahmed, CEO, DIBPL, commented: "DIBPL remains committed towards initiating and promoting innovative Islamic banking solutions. This collaboration with ZLK Islamic Financial Services highlights our dedication to expanding access to creative financial products, promoting financial inclusion and prosperity."

Naveed Malik, Head of Consumer Banking, DIBPL, added: "Our partnership with ZLK is designed to help customers achieve Halal Munafa (returns) on their investments. At DIBPL, we provide Shariah-compliant

investment opportunities, enabling our customers to engage in financial activities that promote both financial inclusion and Shariah-compliant banking services."

Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman, ZLK Islamic Financial Services, emphasized the strategic importance of the partnership, stating: "We are excited to partner with DIBPL to enhance our brokerage services and provide clients with seamless access to Shariah-compliant investment opportunities. Together, we will deliver value-added solutions that meet the globally accepted standards of Islamic finance."

Through this partnership, DIBPL and ZLK Islamic Financial Services aspire to foster a conducive ecosystem for Shariah-compliant finance, contributing to the sustainable growth and development of Pakistan's Islamic financing sector.

BoP hosts talk on economy with business community



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Bank of Punjab held an interactive session of Professor Stefan Dercon with local industry leaders in Karachi this week. Stefan is a Professor of Economic Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government and the Economics Department, at the University of Oxford. He combines his academic career with work as a policy advisor, providing strategic economic and development advice.

His latest book 'Gambling on Development: Why some countries win and others lose', published in May 2022, draws on his academic research as well as his policy experience across three decades and 40-odd countries, exploring why some countries have managed to settle on elite bargains favoring growth and development, and others did not.

Professor Dercon is engaged with key stakeholders at the highest level of policy making to review the strategic economic plans of the Government and incorporate international best practices. He is

driving the 'Committee on the Home-Grown Economic Plan' for the government of Pakistan, and advising the Government on developing and implementing a medium-term reforms agenda that will support economic growth through higher international trade and greater private sector participation for job creation and poverty alleviation. These reforms will support the economic stabilization policies outlined by the government in the IMF EFF agreement.

During the discussions, Professor Dercon highlighted areas of critical reforms for the economy. He emphasized the current structure of the economy distorts the allocation of resources, stifling productivity growth. He also highlighted the anti-export bias of the policies and the need to move the economy away from import substitution towards export-led growth. He stressed on the need for corrective actions to improve the investment climate, boosting private and foreign investments in the economy.

Professor Dercon shared examples of successful pol-

icy implementation in other developing countries and lessons for Pakistan. Drawing on his experience of working in 40 countries, Professor Dercon shared insights that government policy must take into account the distributional consequences of measures and factor in risk mitigating measures on implementation constraints and political economy challenges.

Zafar Masud, CEO of the Bank of Punjab, welcomed Professor Dercon and the business community to the event. He shared the details of the work being undertaken, including the implementation plan and the economic

COURT NOTICE

In The Court of Dua Mehreen Civil Judge VI Kohat. Suit no.04/RC Date of hearing. 26-07-2024. Titled:- Muhammad Khalil Vs Muhammad Naeem, Notice against:-Muhammad Naeem Son of Faqir Muhammad Khan R/o Old Jail Road Tehsil & District Kohat Presently R/o (now.in.Abroad England UK) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 26-07-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 26-07-2024 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on.19-07-2023 (Court of C.J VI Kohat)

FFC to set up SONA Centres to provide fertilizers to farmers

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Given the country's agricultural development and to support government's efforts, Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited has started a program to set up SONA Centres to provide quality fertilizers to farmers at control rates. The first two SONA Centres are inaugurated at Sharaqpur and Muridke. Rana Tanvir Hussain, Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Ahmad Atique Anwar, MNA Muridke, senior management of FFC and large number of farmers participated in these events.

Addressing these programs, Rana Tanvir Hussain, Federal Minister for Industries and Production said that agriculture is the backbone of our country's economy and the government is always striving for the develop-

ment of this sector. Fertilizers are the most important component of crop production; FFC's initiative to supply quality fertilizers at control rates is a very important step for the welfare of farmers and development of agriculture. He extended his gratitude to the FFC management for setting up its first two SONA Centres at Sharaqpur and Muridke. He showed his confidence that establishment of SONA Centres by FFC across the country will prove an important milestone for uninterrupted fertilizer supply and subsequent agricultural development of the country.

Jahangir Piracha, Managing Director and CEO of FFC, stated that the agriculture sector is vital for the country's economy and food security. He emphasized to the importance of fertilizers which

contribute significantly to crop production and explained that FFC has been playing an important role in the country's agricultural development through the provision of quality fertilizers and farm advisory services since its inception. He informed the participants of the ceremony that Sonas Centres are being established to ensure the timely availability of quality fertilizers at control rates to the farmers so that they can contribute to the agriculture development of the country by increasing their farm production. He unfolded FFC's plan to set up several SONA Centres nationwide to ensure an uninterrupted supply of fertilizers at critical stages of crop growth. He further added that besides offering quality fertilizers these centres will also provide technical training to the farmers and access to new technolo-

gies, enhancing innovation and profitability in the agricultural sector.

Rana Ahmad Atteeq Anwar, MNA Muridke, also praised the FFC management for establishing SONA Centre at Muridke for the benefit of farmers. He hoped that local farmers would now purchase quality fertilizers at control rates, thereby increasing agriculture production and contributing to the country's self-sufficiency in food production.

At the end of the program, the farmers expressed their appreciation for the establishment of SONA Centres and reiterated their commitment that with the support of SONA Centres, they will improve their production and boost their income through the balanced use of fertilizers.

Rupee sheds 18 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 18 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.30 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.12. The buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.25 and Rs 280.7 respectively.

The price of Euro came down by 19 paise to close at Rs 303.01 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.82.

The Japanese yen gained 01 paise and closed at Rs1.77, whereas a decrease of 04 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs359.64 as compared to the last day's clos-

ing of Rs359.68.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 04 paise each to close at Rs75.76 and Rs74.19 respectively.

Stocks diverge, dollar down

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets diverged and the dollar dropped Monday as Joe Biden's decision to drop out of the US presidential race fuelled fresh uncertainty.

Main equity indices in Tokyo, Shanghai and Sydney closed lower, though Hong Kong rallied thanks to healthy gains in

Chinese tech firms.

Europe's major stock markets rose strongly, led by Paris and Frankfurt which each recorded gains of nearly 1.5 percent approaching the half-way mark.

Analysts said markets would likely be volatile in the near term."Market instinct will be to say that the news adds a degree of uncer-

tainty to the outcome of the 5 November election that wasn't present last week," noted National Australia Bank analyst Ray Attrill.

However, "it will be many weeks... before anyone can reasonably determine if the race for the White House is significantly narrower than looked to be case".



KARACHI: MD & CEO of FFC Jahangir Piracha and Group GM Marketing FFC Ather Javed with Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain at inauguration ceremony of Sona Centre.



In brief

James named Olympic flagbearer

PARIS (Agencies): Los Angeles Lakers superstar LeBron James has been selected as the male flagbearer for Team USA at Friday's Olympic Games opening ceremony. The 39-year-old was nominated by his fellow American Olympians as the male flagbearer, with a decision on the female flagbearer to be announced on Tuesday. James, a two-time gold medalist, will be competing in his fourth Games in Paris. "It's an incredible honour to represent the United States on this global stage, especially in a moment that can bring the whole world together," said James. "For a kid from Akron, this responsibility means everything to not only myself but to my family, all the kids in my hometown, my team-mates, fellow Olympians and so many people across the country with big aspirations." James, a four-time NBA champion and the league's all-time leading points scorer, won bronze in Athens in 2004 when he competed in his first Games. The American won gold for the first time in Beijing four years later and added another in London 2012. Friday night's ceremony will be held on the River Seine and will be the first opening ceremony in summer Olympic history to be held outside the main stadium.

Women's T20 WC will expand to 16 teams

LONDON (Agencies): The Women's T20 World Cup will expand to 12 teams for the 2026 tournament in England and grow to a 16-nation competition for 2030, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced. The tournament started with eight teams in 2009, before rising to 10 teams from the 2014 edition. Ten teams will take part in the 2024 tournament in Bangladesh in October, where Australia will aim to win a record-extending fourth successive title. The increase in size could benefit Ireland and Scotland. Ireland qualified in 2023 but have not made it to this year's tournament, while Scotland will compete this year after failing to qualify last time. The 2026 tournament will see England host for the first time since 2009, with the staging rights for 2030 yet to be awarded by the ICC. At its annual conference in Sri Lanka the ICC also put the governing bodies of two Associate members - USA Cricket and Cricket Chile - formally on notice. A statement said both bodies have been given 12 months to address "non-compliance with ICC membership criteria due to the lack of fit-for-purpose detailed governance and administrative structure and systems". USA Cricket has been beset by administrative issues in recent years with a high turnover of staff at senior and board level. It is without a chief executive after terminating the contract of Dr Noor Mohammad Murad in March, although a shortlist of candidates is set to be finalised in the near future. The US co-hosted the T20 World Cup but USA Cricket had no role in the organisation of the tournament which was passed to the ICC's own local organising committee, T20 USA Inc. ICC officials are also concerned at USA Cricket's failure to address governance criteria issues outlined by the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). USA Cricket is required to fulfil these to earn its status as the national governing body under USOPC, a requirement for all sports which will feature at the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028.

Mehran, Dahani bowl Pakistan Shaheens to victory against Bangladesh A

DARWIN (APP) : Pakistan Shaheens bagged a hard-fought 148-run win over Bangladesh A in the last hour of play on day four of the first four-day match at the DXC Arena in Darwin on Monday. Shaheens took all 10 Bangladesh wickets in 79.2 overs on day four with Mehran Mumtaz and Shahnawaz Dahani sharing seven among them.

Requiring 408 runs to win or to bat out the day to save the game, Bangladesh A's opening batters started the day by bringing up fifty-run opening partnership continuing from the overnight score of 20-0. Dahani struck to remove Shadman Islam (26, 65b, 4x4s) in the 22nd over.

Shaheens' bowling attack toiled for another 21.1 overs when Mehran eked out the vital scalp of Parvez Hossain Emon, who had faced 138 balls for his 57 runs hitting six fours and two sixes. Mehran soon trapped Aich Mollah, for a paltry four, in the 50th over.

For the next 12.2 overs Amite Hasan (71, 102b,



14x4s) and Shahadat Hossain put on 57 runs ringing the alarm bells for Shaheens. Dahani made much needed inroads in the Bangladesh A batting by removing well-set Amite in the 63rd over and Ariful Islam (4, 5b, 1x4) in the 65th over with a little over two hours' time left in the day.

With Shaheens five wickets away from triumph, Mehran Mumtaz landed a double blow in 71st over to end

Shahadat's (42, 62b, 7x4s) rearguard effort and removed Hasan Murad for a five-ball duck leaving Bangladesh A 221-7.

It took Shaheens 15.2 more overs to remove the remaining three batters as Ripon Mondol resisted with an unbeaten 43 off 30 balls hitting seven fours and Mahidul Islam chipped in with a 66-ball 15 with Bangladesh A scoring 279 all out in 86.2 overs. Mehran and Dahani collected figures of 4-84 and 3-57,

respectively. Kamran Ghulam, Khurram Shahzad and Mohammad Ali picked up one wicket each. The second four-day match will start on Friday, 26 July at the same venue.

Scores in brief:

Pakistan Shaheens won by 148 runs

Pakistan Shaheens 467-3 dec, 96.1 overs (Mohammad Huraire 218, Kamran Ghulam 100 not out, Sahibzada Farhan 66, Umar Amin 54; Ripon Mondol 2-84, Hasan Murad 1-130) and 226-3 dec, 47.2 overs (Omair Bin Yousuf 100 not out, Mubasir Khan 95; Ripon Mondol 1-38, Mukidul Islam 1-47)

Bangladesh A 266 all out, 76.2 overs (Shadman Islam 88, Aich Mollah 70, Shahadat Hossain 36, Rejaur Rahman Raja 32; Khurram Shahzad 6-72, Mohammad Ali 2-64, Shahnawaz Dahani 1-50) and 279 all out, 86.2 overs (Amite Hasan 71, Parvez Hossain Emon 57, Shahadat Hossain 42; Mehran Mumtaz 4-84, Shahnawaz Dahani 3-57).

Babar Azam says 'always learning' from batting greats Kohli, Root

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's T20 captain Babar Azam recently said he seeks guidance from international batting greats and colleagues Virat Kohli, Joe Root and Kane Williamson to learn about their mindset and how they approach different situations in cricket to improve his own performance.

Azam is counted among one of the world's best batters in modern-day cricket. The right-handed batter has scored 3,898 runs from 52 Test matches, 5,729 runs from 117 ODIs and 4,145 runs from 123 T20Is. Azam has also scored 31 centuries for Pakistan in all three international formats and is frequently compared with top batters around the world such as Kohli, Williamson, Root and others.

Former South African batter AB de Villiers interviewed Khan for his YouTube channel in June



before the T20 World Cup kicked off. However, the South African icon shared the full interview on Saturday in which he spoke to the Pakistani captain about his goals, achievements and how he handles pressure situations.

"When overseas players come [to Pakistan], youngsters engage them and learn because international players are playing lots of leagues and they share that experience with everyone,"

Azam told de Villiers.

"When I was young, I always talked with you, learn from every single player. I am always talking to Kane [Williamson], [Joe] Root, Virat [Kohli]," he added.

The Pakistani captain said he tries to learn how these players approach the game, what is their routine and how they manage their self-belief. "So when you speak to good players they give you good advice that helps you a lot," Azam

explained. When asked what his goals and dreams for the future were, Azam said he was living in the moment mostly.

"Honestly, I'm just thinking day by day," he said. "I'm not thinking about where I am going. I'm just playing my game and enjoying myself every single time. I just love to play cricket." The Pakistani captain, however, has been heavily criticized recently by fans and critics alike for Pakistan's lackluster performance in the T20 World Cup 2024. The green shirts, under Azam's leadership, failed to beat minnows USA and India, crashing out of the World Cup in the group stages of the tournament last month.

Former cricketers and cricket commentators have asked Azam to resign as captain, with some even calling for his ouster from the international T20 squad. "I've done it again, Alhamdulillah, 5th EVO title in the bag, but definitely not my last," Arslan posted on X, formerly Twitter. "This win is for Pakistan and everyone out there pushing boundaries! Onward and upward! And to my critics, I've still got it, baby! And I'm not done yet," he added. Meanwhile, Atif Butt showcased sportsman spirit by terming Arslan Ash a deserving winner but shared that he was not satisfied with his performance. "First of all, I would like to thank all of my supporters. As a professional player, I always wanted to win an EVO. It's a dream title of any player. I have tried hardest to win it, but failed & got the (2nd position)," wrote Butt. "I'm not really happy with my performance. Still, I'm thankful to Allah for showering a lot of blessings on me. I will work tirelessly to present Pakistan at the highest level. In Sha Allah, he added. "[Arslan Ash] you have given me a tough time in grand finals. You really deserve to win the tournament. I heartedly congratulate you on your 5x EVO title. It's again the victory of Pakistan Tekken. It's just a beginning, In Sha Allah," Atif Butt concluded.

American Football's NFL.

"I've now met and spoken to, a number of times, all the IPL owners and WPL (Women's Premier League) owners that don't overlap and there is interest there, from what they've told me, which is fantastic and lends into a very exciting process," Banerjee said. "I would really hope we have a level of partnerships with some IPL teams, I think that would be brilliant. They have done a great job and know cricket very well." He added: "At the same time, we've just sent out a document and video to some NFL owners that explains what cricket is and what the rules are.

"In terms of fan engagement, how they can build stadia experience and bring in the next generation, those guys are amazing. "So, we can bring that blend together, which I think is what we hope to do and that can work really well."

ICC puts USA Cricket on notice for 'non-compliance'

COLOMBO (Agencies): The International Cricket Council put USA Cricket on notice Monday to comply with the world body's membership rules, just weeks after the country co-hosted the T20 World Cup. The US board and Cricket Chile "have been formally put on notice and have 12 months to rectify their current non-compliance with the ICC Membership Criteria", the ICC said in a statement following its annual conference in Colombo.

"Neither Member is considered to have in place a fit for purpose detailed governance and administrative structure and systems." It did not give fur-

ther details but said the board "will reserve its right to suspend or expel the Member for continued non-compliance."

The move comes with cricket set to return to the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles in the T20 format – the theme of the four-day ICC conference was "capitalising on the Olympic opportunity".

The administrative structure of American cricket has long faced problems and the former governing body, USA Cricket Association, was expelled in 2017.

The US played host in June to top teams in the T20 World Cup co-hosted by the West Indies with

matches held in New York, Dallas and Florida.

But there were issues with playing elite cricket at the venues. The wicket in New York, developed in Florida and "dropped in" shortly before the tournament, was criticised for its uneven bounce and unpredictability which led to low-scoring games.

The ICC said there would "a review into the delivery of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024". The ICC highlighted their long-time commitment to balance men's and women's games and confirmed the expansion of the women's T20 World Cup in 2030 from 12 to 16 teams.



Pakistan's Arslan Ash becomes five-time EVO Tekken champion

LAS VEGAS (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's Esports star Arslan Ash added another feather to his cap by winning his fifth EVO Tekken 8 title for the fifth time, defeating compatriot Atif Butt in the Grand Finals here.

Arslan emerged victorious 3-1 in the winner's final following which Atif locked horns with Japan's Nobi in the loser's final and outclassed the latter to 3-0 to set up the Grand Final with the star Pakistan gamer.

Atif started the thrilling Grand Final on a high as he won the first game but Arslan equalised. Atif then switched to FENG and tied the score at 2-2. In the final round, however, Atif Butt appeared favourite but Arslan Ash landed a perfect hit to clinch his fifth EVO title.

"I've done it again, Alhamdulillah, 5th EVO title in the bag, but definitely not my last," Arslan posted on X, formerly Twitter. "This win is for Pakistan and everyone out there pushing boundaries! Onward and upward! And to my critics, I've still got it, baby! And I'm not done yet," he added.

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Gautam Gambhir flashes a smile as Ajit Agarkar responds to a question

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India's new head coach Gautam Gambhir believes veteran batsmen Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma can both continue playing until the 2027 World Cup if they remain fit but said on Monday that the decision was entirely up to them.

Rohit, 37, and his opening partner Kohli, 35, quit Twenty20 Internationals last month after the team's victory in the World Cup final against South Africa in Bridgetown but both men will continue to play test and 50-overs cricket.

Speaking in his first press conference since replacing Rahul Dravid at the helm of the national team this month, Gambhir said the two stalwarts still had plenty to offer.

"I think they've shown what they can deliver on the big stage, whether it's the T20 World Cup or the 50-over World Cup," Gambhir told reporters.

"One thing I can be very clear of is that both those guys have a lot of cricket left in them. More importantly, with the Champions Trophy (in 2025) and a big tour of Australia (from November 2024), obviously they would be motivated enough.

"Then, hopefully, if they can keep their fitness, the 2027 World Cup as well. But this is a very personal decision. I can't say how much cricket is left in them. Ultimately it's up to the players. How much can they contribute to the team's success.

"Ultimately, it's the team that's important. But looking at what Virat and Rohit can deliver, I think they still have a lot of cricket. They're world class players and any team would want to have both of them for as long as possible."

Gambhir's tenure officially begins when India play three T20 internationals and three ODIs in Sri Lanka starting on Saturday in Pallekele, with Suryakumar Yadav picked to lead the side in the shorter format ahead of Hardik Pandya.

Pandya has had his share of injury issues in recent months and chief selector Ajit Agarkar said that though the all-rounder was an important player, the team needed someone who was likely to be available more often than not.

"Hopefully his performances are more important than anything else," Agarkar said. "Surya has all the qualities needed to succeed as captain."

Hardik Pandya fitness issues cost him India T20 captaincy: selector : Hardik Pandya lost out on India's T20 captaincy to

Suryakumar Yadav because of concerns over his availability after frequent injury absences, India's chief selector Ajit Agarkar said Monday.

Explosive middle-order batsman Suryakumar, 33, was last week named Rohit Sharma's successor in the T20 format for India's white-ball tour of Sri Lanka, which begins Saturday.

All-rounder Pandya, 30, was Rohit's deputy during India's T20 World Cup triumph last month but he has suffered from fitness problems and missed the 50-over World Cup last year with an ankle injury.

"Fitness has been something that he's struggled with," Agarkar told reporters in Mumbai alongside new coach Gautam Gambhir. "As selectors, it becomes difficult then. The thought behind it was that we want someone who is likely to be available more."

India begin their Sri Lanka trip with the first of three Twenty20 internationals on Saturday and Pandya has reportedly opted out of the three subsequent one-day internationals. He was "still a very important player," Agarkar said. "And that's what we want him to be, those skill sets are hard to find."

Agarkar praised Suryakumar's captaincy credentials. "He is one of the best T20 batters in the world," said Agarkar. "We feel that Surya has all the necessary qualities to be a good captain. "We wanted a captain, who is likely to play all the games," Suryakumar would remain solely a T20 player, said Agarkar. Rohit has retained the 50-over captaincy.

Gambhir explained his coaching philosophy, speaking to reporters for the first time since succeeding Rahul Dravid.

"I think it is important to give players the freedom, that's what I believe in," he said.

"The best relationship is built on trust. I can promise that the most important thing is that they will always have my back."

Rohit, 37, and Virat Kohli, 35, both quit T20 internationals after the World Cup.

Gambhir, a former India teammate of both Kohli and Rohit, expects the veteran pair to remain key figures in the Test and 50-over teams.

"Both those guys have a lot of cricket left in them," Gambhir said, adding he hoped they are motivated to feature in the 2024/25 tour to Australia and next year's 50-over Champions Trophy. Retirement is "a very personal decision" he added.

Tour de France winner Tadej Pogacar pulls out of Olympics

LJUBLJANA (AFP): Tour de France winner Tadej Pogacar on Monday pulled out of the Paris Olympics citing "tiredness", his Slovenia team announced. "Unfortunately Tadej Pogacar has cancelled his participation because of a state of extreme fatigue," Slovenian Olympic cycling coach Uros Murn said in a statement.

Pogacar won a third Tour de France title in Nice on Sunday. Victory also gave him the first Giro d'Italia-Tour de France double since Marco Pantani in 1998.

But the 25-year-old, a bronze medalist in the road race at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, had been angered by his girlfriend Urska Zigart not being selected for the Slovenian women's

cycling team for the Paris Games.

He said he was "angry" and "speechless" in a message posted on his Facebook account.

"I need a little rest after the Tour and I'm not sure what I'll be doing next," Pogacar had said on Sunday. "And I want to relax and rest and spend some time with my girlfriend."

When asked about the Olympics on Sunday, he remained very evasive, preferring to mention his "dream" of one day wearing the rainbow jersey of world champion.

At the worlds in September in Zurich, the Slovenian is aiming for a triple of the world title, the Giro and Tour, only held by two men, Ireland's Stephen Roche and



Belgian Eddy Merckx.

Pogacar will be replaced on the national team by Domen Novak.

"Once again Tadej, congratulations for Tour de France win!" Team Slovenia said.



In brief

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP, FSH, I-8/4, I-8 Markaz, Industrial-I, Modern Steel, New PTN, Pak Iron Steel, Mumtaz Steel, Fazal Rubber, MG Steel, Pothohar Steel, Fazal Ghee, GOR, I-10/4, Katarian, Banni, Holy Family, Isolation Hospital, Rahara, CM Pak Zong, D-12 /1&2 Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Bagh Sardaran, Eid Gah, Dhok Najo, Ali Market, Khyaban Sir Syed, Raja Sultan, Mohammadi Chowk, Katarian Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Qureshiabad, Garja.I, Hayal, Gulistan Fatima, Ranyal, Murt, Katarian, Holy Family, Bani, F Block, Bajniyal, Bijniyal.II, Madina Colony, Officer Colony, Lakho, Car Chowk Feeders, Attock Circle, Punjab Small Industries, Mix Industries, Kohistan Enclave, Pind Pran, Valley, Gulshan Sahat, Sangjani, Shahullah Ditta, Paswal, Shokurdra, Ghorghashti, Maskinabad Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Kallar Kahar, Jund Awan Feeders, from 08:00 AM to 05:00 PM, GSO Circle, Sodan Gali, Bagh No-2, Numanpura, Harijal, Numanpura 3, Dhali No. 1, Dhali No. 2, Bagh No. 1, Numanpura 2, Kharal feeders and surrounding areas.

ICT admin cracks down on price hikes

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the Assistant Commissioners of Islamabad have intensified their efforts to control price hike in the Federal Capital in a bid to tackle rising prices. According to the Spokesman of ICT's Administration, Assistant Commissioner Nilore led by district administration teams inspected markets at Khanna Pul area, where offenders were nabbed for overpricing and failing to display price lists. On the occasion, he also visited shopping malls where he also checked licences of security guards. Additionally, an anti-encroachment operation cleared 15carts blocking pathways. In another action, Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area targeted price violations in I-9 area. During inspection, the AC arrested 10 persons and imposed fines to several individuals for not displaying price lists and using polythene bags. He also inspected Petrol pumps of the area, and checked petrol nozzles and fire safety measures. Security guards found without proper licenses had their weapons confiscated. Similarly, Assistant Commissioner Shalimar visited G-10 area, resulting in multiple arrests for overpricing on fruits and vegetables, as well as violations in naan/roti pricing, leading to the sealing of offending tandoors. These proactive measures underscored the administration's commitment to curb price hikes and ensure fair practices across the capital, the spokesman added.

Gilani for PUIC's proactive role in advancing sustainable development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday called upon the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member Countries (PUIC) to play a proactive role in advancing sustainable development agendas through legislative measures and science diplomacy. He was addressing the 25th IAS Scientific Conference, titled "Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus for the Security of OIC Countries," as chief guest here at the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS). The conference, organized jointly by the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) and the PAS, gathered distinguished scientists and researchers to discuss critical issues facing OIC countries.

Speaking on the occasion, he also emphasized the importance of scientific innovation and collaboration in addressing the interconnected challenges being faced by OIC countries vis-a-vis water, energy, food, and ecosystems security. The Chairman Senate acknowledged the vital role of IAS and PAS in fostering

scientific excellence as a pivot to address and resolve socio-economic issues.

He also highlighted the high-profiled patronage of IAS by leaders, including His Royal Highness Prince El-Hassan bin Talal of Jordan and President Asif Ali Zardari and called it indicative of the significant political support for scientific progress.

Chairman Senate Gilani underlined that national security now encompasses a broader range of issues beyond traditional military threats. He pointed out that these challenges are particularly acute in OIC countries due to rapid population growth and environmental degradation. He drew attention of the participants towards Pakistan's own efforts to tackle these issues, including the national tree plantation campaign and comprehensive climate change policies introduced during his tenure as prime minister. He urged continued commitment to scientific research and innovation to drive sustainable development and address shared challenges effectively.

He also recommended prioritizing good governance, incentivizing sustainable practices, and providing financial support for research and development in clean energy and climate resilience. He reaffirmed commitment to fostering scientific research and innovation as key drivers for inclusive development and growth.

He expressed hope for continued collaboration to support interdisciplinary cooperation in terms of promoting science diplomacy for the betterment of the OIC countries. Senator Sherry Rehman also participated in the conference and read out message from President Asif Ali Zardari. Prof. Kausar Abdulla Malik, President Pakistan Sciences Academy, Prof. Adnan Badran, President, Islamic World Academy of Sciences also addressed the gathering and highlighted the crucial role of water, energy, food and ecosystem. The speakers observed that their challenges were common and there was need for adopting collective approach to tackle the burgeoning threats posed by climate change.



ISLAMABAD: Girls keenly watching colorful fish displayed by vendor at roadside in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Al-Shifa Chakwal Eye Hospital to treat 500 patients daily

Police arrest five gamblers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police arrested five gamblers and recovered Rs 23,000 stake money, four mobile phones and other items from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Monday. He informed that Warris Khan police conducted a raid and arrested five gamblers namely Muhammad Iqbal, Pervaiz, Ashiq, Malang Jan and Safian, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards.

Police recovered Rs 23,000, four mobile phones, and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process.

Superintendent of Police, Rawal, Faisal Saleem said that gambling is the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes do not deserve any concession.

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan has said that as many as 500 eye patients would be treated at the Chakwal Eye Hospital.

He said this while on the completion of the extension block of the Chakwal Eye Hospital here on Monday.

Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan briefed the media that Chakwal Eye Hospital was designed to cater for 250 patients daily but the influx forced the hospital administration to make temporary arrangements.

The trust was concerned about providing better facilities to the patients but was unable to extend and upgrade the hospital due to a lack of funds, at this juncture, Dr Nasir Baz, a Pakistani doctor serving in Fresno, California, met him and expressed concern about the hospital in Chakwal.

Maj. Gen. Rehmat Khan said that he informed Dr Baz, who hails from a village in Chakwal about the financial constraints hindering expansion plans. Dr. Nasir Baz on my

request showed confidence in the ability and integrity of officials of the Al-Shifa Trust and donated Rs 150 million to complete the hospital's expansion and upgrade within two years.

"Our Chakwal hospital can now accommodate 500 patients daily and provide round-the-clock emergency eye care services due to Dr Baz's generosity," Maj Gen (Retd) Rehmat Khan explained. He added that the number of retinal and glaucoma surgeries will now reach 40 per day, in addition to the daily treatment of 30 to 40 glaucoma patients who do not require surgery.

Rehmat Khan announced the deployment of an outreach team in Chakwal villages to conduct school screenings and provide pick-up and drop-off facilities for serious patients.

The Al-Shifa President said that over the last 30 years, the trust has treated 30 million patients free of charge at Rs 13 billion including thousands of surgeries for glaucoma, retina, and cancer, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Yousuf Raza Gilani addresses as chief guest at 25th conference of the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) in Federal Capital.

IRSA releases 322,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 322,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 311,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1515.96 feet and was 117.96 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 171,000 cusecs and 190,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1197.20 feet, which was 149.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 22,600 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 205,900, 201,800, 143,000 and 75,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 52,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 36,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

23 brands of bottle water declared unsafe

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has declared 23 brands of bottle water unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination.

For the 2nd quarter of year 2024 (April to June), 209 samples of mineral/bottled water brands were collected from 21 cities and out of which 23 brands were found unsafe for human consumption, said a press release issued here Monday.

Four brands (Aqua Qismat, Vivo Water, Ruyal Silver, Smart) were found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of sodium, three brands (Still, Starlite Water, Premium Safa Purified Water) were found unsafe due to presence of high level of Arsenic than the permissible limit, while, one brand (Smart Pure Life) was found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of Potassium.

Fifteen brands (Fiji, Asha Premium Drinking Water, Water Plus Premium Drinking Water, Neo Health Drinking Water, Cliff Water, Healthy drinking water, Dream Pure, Samar Indus drinking water, Splash water, Crystal Pure Life, Buxton, Kohinoor, BRO H2O, Oriol, Parwaz Water, Masafi) were found contaminated with bacteria and thus were unsafe for drinking purpose.

Political parties should work jointly for peace: Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Region (SAFRON) and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday said that all political parties should work together for maintaining peace and ensuring substantial economic stability in the country.

Addressing a news conference here, the minister said that nobody should play politics on the national issues such as peace and economic prosperity, adding that the country was heading towards economic stability due to efforts under dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

He strongly condemned malicious campaign against the supreme institutions and tragic incidents of Germany and Bannu and urged that no one should be allowed to defame the country for their personal motives.

He said that a political

party was continuing the campaign against state institutions which was highly regrettable. "I have always talked against terrorism valiantly and all the political parties should play their role in eradicating the menace of terrorism from the country," Amir Muqam added.

He said that PTI was following the same agenda to destabilize the country which it implemented on May 9th by targeting the state institutions including torching Radio Pakistan's building and disgracing the memorials of the martyrs.

The minister lauded the sacrifices of the armed forces in the war against terrorism and their services for the country. He further said that the armed forces had played a proactive role in earthquake disaster and flood havoc by providing relief to the masses.

He said that the government of Pakistan strongly condemned the incident of ransacking Pakistani

Consulate in Germany. He said that those involved in this incident wanted confrontation between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Turning to the situation in Bannu, the federal minister said every political party has the right to protest, however, peace and economy should not be politicized. He strongly condemned targeting the state institutions in Bannu. He demanded formation of Joint investigation Team to probe into Bannu incident.

He said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was doing nefarious and reprehensible politics of chaos and anarchy for their personal gains. He urged the political parties to refrain playing politics on law and order situation, terrorism and economic development issues.

To a query, the minister said in fact that he had vigorously raised voice against terrorism and subversive activities in the country.

Railways move ahead to adopt digital workplace solutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is taking steps to become an E-office soon to digitalize its service and improve internal efficiencies through electronic administration.

The e-office platform aims to cater for the need for effectiveness and transparency in Governmental processes and service delivery mechanisms as well as help government departments to go paperless.

The idea is being implemented with the help of the National Information Technology Board (NITB) which will be responsible for providing the relevant training to the staff of Pakistan Railways.

E-Office is a digital workplace solution that replaces the existing method of manual handling of files and documents with an efficient electronic system.

According to an official source, Pakistan Railways will be on e-office soon which will not only facilitate the users but also make the entire system of the department transparent.

Listing other steps taken by the department, the source revealed that Pakistan Railways has developed a software application for journalist concession card management.

All the related data for journalist concession cards across the country is managed by the Directorate of Public Relations. The software has been prepared and is linked with the centralized reservation center as well.

About the Networking Monitoring System (NMS), the source said that the software has been deployed on the premises of the Directorate of IT with the help of this system all network deployed all over the railways network is being monitored critically and in case of any disconnections the concerned service provider is taken up and pursued till the fault is removed.

The efficiency of the network is being monitored through this system from audit perspective as well, it said. Regarding the provision of internet facilities at different levels, the source said that the entire railway headquarters office is covered with internet service. Internet facility is also been provided at the Ministry via the PR Headquarters office (as a backup link).

It was decided by the management of Pakistan Railways to develop an e-ticketing system with the latest technology indigenously. To implement this idea, Pakistan Railways hired IT

professionals from the market and developed the software, which has been deployed and in operation since May 2016. As the e-ticketing system has now been deployed on the latest tools and techniques, to facilitate the management of earnings at the day's end, a train train-wise earning portal has been devised.

This portal indicates complete information about the financial aspect from the commercial point of view and provides the live incremental financial position concerning passenger earning. The software for the email exchange server has been installed in the IT Directorate with the viewpoint that emails being used previously from the web hosting company were bounced back as a result e-ticketing client of Pakistan Railways was not in a position to approach this office in case of complaints and claim of refund.

In addition to the above facility the email addresses have also been issued to the officials of Pakistan Railways to communicate on officials' email within or out of the organization, it added. They developed the software for the court cases for all of the Pakistan Railways System.

Tackling plastic pollution vital for environmental sustainability, public health: Romina Khurshid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam Monday said that plastic pollution has emerged as a serious concern for Pakistan, which has aggravated further the environmental degradation problem being faced by the country with significant economic and health crisis.

"Plastic waste, if not managed properly, degrades our ecosystems, affects public health, and hampers our sustainable developmental goals," the PM's aide warned while addressing as a chief guest at a high-level roundtable discussion

on plastic waste management in the country, organised by the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, the roundtable discussion aimed at sharing knowledge, showcasing successful interventions, and exploring opportunities for collaboration.

The discussion was attended by various stakeholders including top key government officials, representatives of national and international non-governmental organization, academia, researchers, students and media.

Highlighting the present government's plastic waste management policy measures, Romina

Khurshid Alam informed the participants, "We have established a robust regulatory and policy framework to control the transboundary movement of plastic waste in line with the Basel Convention."

The Basel Convention establishes standards for the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, solid waste, and municipal incinerator ash, including notice to and written confirmation from the receiving country prior to export, she explained.

Romina Khurshid highlighted that tackling plastic pollution through efficient management of plastic waste was must for protection of human health and

the environment against the adverse effects resulting from the generation, management, transboundary movements and disposal of hazardous and other wastes.

She said that the federal and provincial governments, along with stakeholders, diligently follow the Standard Operating Procedures designed to ensure compliance with national laws and international agreements.

The Import Policy Order of Pakistan has been meticulously designed in accordance with national laws and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) requirements to control the transboundary movement of

plastic waste. And, these movements are regulated through the Web-Based One Customs (WeBOC) system operated by Pakistan Customs, she added.

The PM's aide said the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) has taken significant strides in banning single-use plastics and polythene bags, as well as D2W technology that causes the generation of microplastics, hoping that these measures would prove to be crucial steps towards mitigating plastic pollution.

Romina Khurshid said that none of us can afford to ignore the reality that plastic, due to its

low price and ease of use, continues to be an integral part of our everyday lives. Therefore, impactful solid waste management and raising awareness among all stakeholders are imperative, she added.

She said: "Therefore, we must ensure that our citizens understand the environmental and health impacts of plastic waste, and we must equip them with the knowledge and tools to reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover plastic products effectively."

She said that by working together, we can overcome the challenges posed by plastic waste and move towards a sustainable future.

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

Herat becomes self-sufficient

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Western Herat province has become self-sufficient in producing eggs with the increased number of poultry farms, the Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock says.

Fahim Fayezi, in charge of fish, birds and insects' section at the agriculture department, told media that more than 60 poultry farms existed in the province, which had achieved self-sufficiency in egg production.

Every day, he said, these farms collectively produced more than one million eggs per day. The eggs were not only supplied to the markets in Herat, but also exported to other provinces such as Kabul, Ghazni, Farah, Badghis, Ghor and Helmand.

On the other hand, a number of poultry farm owners say egg sales usually increase in winter and they are happy with their business in summer as well.

Speaking to Pajhwok, Mohammad Halim, one of the poultry farmers, said his farm produced two thousands eggs every day and he was satisfied with the market condition.

On the other hand, residents of Herat city say they are satisfied with the decrease in egg prices in the province, declaring the current prices reasonable.

According to them, previously they used to buy one imported egg for 10 afghanis, but now they purchased locally produced eggs for 7 to 8 afghanis.

However, previously eggs to Herat were prevented from Iran. The government has now banned the import of eggs and poultry meat in order to support domestic production.

Release of media worker demanded

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan Journalists Center has called for the immediate and unconditional release of Said Rahim Saeedi, a filmmaker and television producer.

The organization has also demanded that the Taliban halt the detention, threats, and intimidation of journalists and media personnel.

According to reports, Saidi, the managing director and producer of the YouTube channel "Nam," was detained last Sunday along with two colleagues and two other individuals in the Khushal Khan area.

Sources reported that while the Taliban's intelligence service in Kabul released the other detainees the following day, Saidi remains in custody with no information on his current status.

The Taliban has yet to comment on the reasons for Saidi's detention. Saidi's associates claim that he has been a cultural activist with no political involvement.

Saidi has over two decades of experience in media and filmmaking. He has worked with the private media organization Ariana since 2005 and has managed the "Anar" YouTube channel for the past five months.

The "Anar" channel, funded by an investor, produces and publishes travel, cultural, and religious programs focusing on Afghanistan, particularly Kabul.

The Afghanistan Journalists Center reported that at least 29 journalists and media workers have been detained by the Taliban's intelligence or the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in the first six months of this year.

4,000 Afghan migrants deported

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has reported the deportation of nearly four thousand Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan. On Monday, the Ministry announced that 3,775 Afghan migrants had been expelled from Iran and Pakistan.

The Ministry's statement notes that the expelled individuals entered the country on July 21 through the Torkham, Spin Boldak, Islam Qala Herat, and Silk border crossings.

According to border management information from the mentioned provinces, 40 families, totaling 231 individuals, returned through the Torkham border; 58 families, totaling 275 individuals, returned through the Spin Boldak border from Pakistan; 1,329 individuals came through the Islam Qala border in Herat; and 1,940 individuals from Iran returned via the Silk border in Nimroz.

Recently, both Pakistan and Iran have expedited the expulsion of Afghan migrants who do not have legal residency documents in these countries. Despite reactions regarding the expulsion of Afghan migrants, Pakistan has continued the process of deportation.

The plight of Afghan migrants has become increasingly dire as they face the dual challenges of displacement and the harsh conditions of their return. Many are arriving in Afghanistan with limited resources and support, exacerbating an already difficult situation.

This influx of returnees places additional strain on local resources and infrastructure, compounding the humanitarian crisis in the region. The international community's response to this crisis will be crucial in addressing the immediate needs of these individuals and supporting their reintegration into Afghan society.

Ghori Cement Factory boosts production

KABUL (TOLONews): The production of Ghori Cement Factory in Baghlan province has increased compared to last year.

According to officials, Ghori Cement production was 180,000 tons last year, but this year it will increase to 200,000 tons.

The technical deputy of this factory said that with the increase in production, the demand has also increased.

Sarbaz Banuzai, technical deputy of Ghori Cement Factory, said: "In total, last year's production was 180,000 tons and this year we plan for 200,000 tons. God willing, our production will exceed this plan."

The technical deputy of this factory added in another part of his speech that the National Development

Company plans to establish another new cement production plant alongside this factory, which will have a production capacity of 4,000 tons in 24 hours.

Sarbaz Banuzai said: "Fortunately, the National Development Company has advanced most of the technical works. The dry system device, which will be installed next to the Ghori Cement Factory, will have a daily production of up to 4,000 tons, and its expenses will be covered by the budget of the National Development Company."

Meanwhile, some workers in this factory called for the creation of more production factories to reduce the country's unemployment rate.

"We request the Islamic

Kabul slams Israeli attack on Yemen port

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has condemned Israeli forces' airstrikes on Yemen's Hodeidah port.

Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), wrote on his X handle all victims of the attack were civilians.

He said: "The MoFA strongly condemns the attack by the Zionist regime on Hodeidah port in the republic of Yemen. The victims were all civilians."

The ministry called on international organizations and influential countries to stop the crimes of Israeli forces in Gaza and the region.

At least three people were killed and 87 others wounded in the Israeli strikes on port on Saturday night.

According to Houthi-affiliated Al Masirah TV, the Israeli attack targeted oil storage facilities and a power plant, igniting a fire.

The news outlet cited health officials as saying the air raids resulted in casualties, including fatalities, without specifying a number.

APJCC recommends launch of preferential tariff

KABUL (Pajhwok): Officials of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce (APJCC) have recommended the establishment of preferential tariffs between the two countries.

After about three weeks have passed since Pakistan increased the customs tariff on fresh fruits and vegetables in Afghanistan, officials of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce say that the only way out of this problem is to establish a preferential tariff between the two countries.

On June 29, the Pakistan government increased the tariffs on fresh fruits and vegetables from Afghanistan and the decision would be implemented from July 1.

The move proved to be harmful for Afghan busi-

nessmen who demanded the decision to be reversed.

The joint chamber has acknowledged that tariffs on Afghanistan's fresh fruits and vegetables had increased 10 times now compared to the past.

Khan Jan Alkozai, an official of the APJCC, acknowledged the decision was not in the interest of businessmen from the two countries.

He said: "In the past over 500 containers loaded with fruits and vegetables entered Pakistan in this season daily but currently even 20 containers did not enter Pakistan."

Alkozai said termed surge in tariff on fruits and vegetables exported from Afghanistan into Pakistan a huge challenge.

Omaid Haidari, the busi-

nessmen of fresh fruits, said the move is not only harmful to Afghan farmers and businessmen but it is dangerous for bilateral trade between the two countries.

He said that trade relationships should not be affected by politics and asked the two countries to address this challenge.

Rafiullah, another businessman, said in the presence of high tariffs exporters will earn no profit. He exported apricots to Pakistan.

Some economic experts suggested the construction of cold stores in all provinces and the search for alternative ways in order to address this challenge.

Abdul Naseer Restiari, an economic affairs expert, said that Pakistan every year adopted the same policy and urged that

Afghanistan should also increase tariff on Pakistani products.

He also asked the government to construct cold stores in all provinces of the country for the protection of vegetables and fruits for a long time.

Limar Kphalwak, another expert, said that the government should not only rely on Pakistan for export but should explore other options.

These problems were shared with Abdul Salaam Jawad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, but no response was provided until the release of this report.

It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan every year under different pretexts creates hurdles before Afghanistan's fresh fruits and vegetables export.

110 die in landmine explosions

KABUL (Ariana News): The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan (OCHA) says that explosive devices kill 110 people every month across the country.

This report states that since 1989, 45,000 people have been victims of landmines and explosive remnants in Afghanistan.

In addition, the organization says that the United Nations Office of Mine Action Services is facing a lack of funds to continue its activities in Afghanistan in 2024.

OCHA says that if demining services in the country are not funded, the lives of 3.4 million people in Afghanistan will be at risk.

According to the report, the country has one of the highest number of landmines and explosive remnants of war in the world.

The OCHA report also states that 1.2 million square meters of land across Afghanistan has been contaminated by landmines, improvised explosive devices, and remnants of war.

The agency said that Afghanistan's polluted lands include 262 districts, which include areas close to educational institutions and water sources.

From January 2022 to February 2024, as a result of the explosion of these materials and remnants of war, 1,401 people lost their lives, 86% of whom were children.

Foreign investors show interest in mining sector



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum reported the interest of Turkish and Kyrgyz investors in the mining sector of Afghanistan.

The spokesperson for the ministry said that investors from these countries have expressed their desire to invest in gold, marble, onyx, antimony, and oil during separate meetings with the acting minister.

The spokesperson for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Homayoun Afghan, said: "They have shown interest in investing in Afghanistan's mines, especially in marble, oil, gas, and other minerals."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Industries and Mines also emphasized the

importance of standardized extraction and the establishment of processing factories in the country.

Sakhi Ahmad Payman, the First Deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "We will achieve self-sufficiency and sustainable employment in the mining sector only when Afghanistan's mines are legal and based on a mechanism extracted and processed within the country. Factories and industries related to mining that can process should be supported so that all stages are done within Afghanistan."

Some economic experts also consider foreign investment in Afghanistan's various sec-

tors, especially mining, to be influential in the country's economic growth.

"Afghanistan's underground reserves have a good reputation in the world. It is very good to take advantage of this opportunity and invite foreign investors to the country to invest in this sector," said Abdul Ghafar Nezami, an economic expert.

After the return of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan, countries including Qatar, China, Turkey, Iran, Germany, the United Kingdom, India, and Turkmenistan have shown interest in Afghanistan's mining sector, and some of these countries have invested in Afghanistan.

Tourists numbers increase in Paktia's Rohani Baba District

PAKTIA (TOLONews): In recent months, around 30,000 tourists have visited the recreational areas of Rohani Baba District in Paktia province.

Tourists, in addition to visiting Rohani Baba, spend joyful moments swimming and cooking.

In this area, food and tea are provided for free, known locally as "Langar," a tradition that has continued for a long time.

"During Eid days, about 2,500 motorcycles and more than 500 cars would come here daily, bringing the number of people to almost 30,000. Even now, more than a hundred people come here daily," said Zia-ul-Haq, a local resident.

"This area has beautiful scenery. People from Herat, Kandahar, Khost, and other provinces come here. They

visit for both pilgrimage and recreation," said Akhtar Gul, another resident.

"This area has a lot of natural beauty, and during Eid, people from many provinces come here," said Baz Mohammad Roshan, a visitor. Tourists visiting this area complain about the lack of accommodation and recreational facilities, as well as the poor road conditions, and demand these issues be addressed.

"Private investment here would not be wasted, and we also ask the government to provide recreational facilities and build the road. So far, nothing has been done here," said Rahmatullah Shahed, a tourist.

"These walkways should be properly built and more recreational facilities should be provided because this area is famous and

many people come here from everywhere," said Besmillah Mohammadi, another tourist.

"Regarding the roads, the construction of baths, and other places, nothing has been done as it should be to match the spiritual personality of this place," said Abdul Wadood, another tourist.

Meanwhile, a charity foundation, with financial assistance from the people, has begun work on expanding and graveling the 8-kilometer road leading to this shrine and recreational area.

The head of information and culture in Paktia also pledged the construction of the main road leading to Rohani Baba District and providing facilities there.

Noor Rahman Rahmani, a representative of the char-

ity foundation, said: "This road is 8 kilometers long and 14 meters wide, and the Rohani Baba Charity Foundation, with financial help from the people, especially travelers, is building it because people face many problems here."

Sawab Jan Islami Yar, head of information and culture in Paktia, said: "Efforts are underway to build this road properly, and local people have helped in leveling part of the road. Given the available facilities, necessary amenities will be provided for this recreational area."

Meanwhile, the tourism industry has grown more than ever, and with security in the country, a large number of domestic tourists are visiting various recreational and historical areas of the country.

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): A number of women in western Ghor province say financial woes and poverty have forced them to engage in hard labour, which has caused them lumbar.

Financial hardship and no male breadwinners are the main factors behind the women being pushed into taxing work to feed their families. These women work in brick kilns, agricultural fields and people's houses, besides weaving carpets and doing other

types of manual labour.

Fareshta, a widow from Ferozkoh, says: "I have been working on agricultural farms for three years. I work from dawn to dusk to support my family. At the end of the day, the land owner gives me some vegetables and 100afs in cash as a daily wage."

Her husband lost his life in a traffic accident and she shouldered responsibility for her children. At times, she has to work in people's houses as well.

The 29-year-old said: "I daily go to people's houses for work to earn a living for my children. I wash clothes, fetch water in a 20-litre jerry can to fill their water tank. My back pain has started a year back. I can't sleep at night because of the pain."

The diagnosis shows her back needs long-term treatment, but she does not have the money required for it. With she earns, she can only provide food for her children.

"Ophthalmologists treated my eyes for free. My back pain should also be treated for free, because I can't afford to pay for it."

Nazaneen, 34, said she also had a backache due to hard work. She has traveled to Kabul twice for treatment, but could not purchase all medicines due to a paucity of funds. Subsequently, her condition worsened.

"The first time I went to the doctor, I had an MRI scan. The doctor said I need a spinal cord operation. But

I don't have the money for that surgery. I will be fine with medicine, my job is not easy," he explained.

Nouria, 39, another female ceramist in Ghor, also complained about back pain and said poverty had pushed her to hard labour.

"In the morning, I go to work and put the bricks in the furnace to get baked and then take them out again." She went on to say: "I have been faced with economic problems since my husband's death. I have

been working for seven years. I did construction work as well to feed my children..."

Nouria is also unable to pay for her treatment. She asked the caretaker government and other institutions to support her and other poor women with their treatment. Doctors say sciatica is largely triggered by hard labour, lack of proper diet and economic problems.

Dr Abdul Ahmad Noori, an internal medicine specialist who runs a private

clinic in Ferozkoh, called hard work, lack of proper diet and economic crises the principal reasons for back pain.

"Unfortunately, on daily basis, five to seven women — some of them pregnant — approach the clinic. They all complain of pain in their spinal cords and legs. The disease is more common among women," he explained.

The specialist urged such women to protect themselves against by con-

suming adequate milk, yogurt, vegetables, fruits and other nutritious foods.

But Public Health Director Dr Abdul Sattar Muwafiq said efforts were being made to provide health services to patients at government health centres.

"All our doctors are working day and night to serve the people, especially women. Although treatment facilities are limited, we are still trying to address this problem," he commented.

Hard labour inflicts back strain on Ghor women



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on increase in investment and capacity of federal government ministries.

PM: Govt's commitment to create business-friendly environment

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday emphasized the government's commitment to bolstering investment in the country, underscoring efforts to create a business-friendly environment for traders and investors.

He made these remarks while chairing a meeting at the PM House focused on enhancing investment and the operational capacity of federal ministries. During the session, the Prime Minister instructed relevant authorities to establish a steering committee dedicated to monitoring progress in these areas, with himself presiding over its proceedings. This initiative aims to streamline efforts

and ensure effective implementation of policies aimed at fostering economic growth.

The meeting highlighted that the Public Private Partnership Authority had engaged the services of Kearney, a renowned consultancy firm with global expertise, particularly in the Middle East. Kearney presented their ongoing consultation strategy with the Pakistani government, having already engaged with 15 federal institutions and identified 97 priority projects.

Kearney outlined its commitment to developing a comprehensive plan for sustainable development in collaboration with the Pakistani government. They also pledged support for privatizing State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), enhancing the regulatory

framework for public sector enterprises, and attracting more investors to Pakistan.

Key attendees at the meeting included Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahad Khan Cheema, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ihsan Afzal, and other senior officials.

This concerted effort reflects the government's proactive stance towards economic revitalization and capacity building across federal ministries, aiming to pave the way for sustained growth and development in Pakistan.

Imran admits giving call for protest outside GHQ

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan admitted that he had asked the party workers to stage a peaceful protest outside GHQ before his arrest.

In an informal conversation with journalists in Adiala Jail where he has been detained for months in multiple cases, the former prime minister said he would ask his party's law-makers in Centre and provinces to observe hunger strike. He alleged that approvers were being found against him in the May 9 cases.

Talking about rising electricity prices, he said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had signed expensive contracts with the independent power producers (IPPs), leading to hike in power tariff. He lamented over economic crisis in the country. The PTI founder also demanded a judicial commission to probe the Bannu incident. Responding to a question, Khan said he would tender an apology to anyone if he had committed any mistake.

Cabinet meeting postponed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the federal cabinet to give approval for ban on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was postponed on Monday, sources said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was scheduled to chair the meeting on Tuesday, July 23, when the cabinet members were likely to nod the ban on the political party. The cabinet was also expected to give approval for pursuing cases under Article 6 of the Constitution against former President Arif Alvi, PTI founder Imran Khan, and Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri.

On July 15, Information Minister Atta Tarar said that the ruling coalition had decided to move for a ban on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Addressing a press conference, he said the federal government will file a case to ban the PTI. The government would keep the current situation in mind before taking a step in this regard, he added.

"The PTI and the country cannot go together," he categorically stated. He claimed that the government was trying to stabilise the country politically and economically, while efforts were being made to thwart its efforts. Tarar also announced that the PML-N led government has decided to file a review appeal against the decision of the Supreme Court granting reserved seats to the PTI.

Zardari for plan to prevent urban flooding in Karachi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for devising a comprehensive plan on a priority basis to prevent urban flooding in Karachi. He said that the Government of Sindh should adopt a sustainable and long-term strategy, based on international best practices, for effectively managing sewage and stormwater to save the Metropolitan City from urban flooding.

The President expressed these while chairing a meeting on saving Karachi from urban flooding and environmental degradation and promoting sustainable water resource development, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Adjutant General Lt General Muhammad Asim Malik, Minister for Local Government Department of Sindh, Mr Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Sindh, Syed Asif Hyder Shah, CEO Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation, Syed Salahuddin, Country Head Herrenknecht Pakistan, Col (r) Danyal Naveed Ahmed, senior government officials, and local and interna-

tional water management experts attended the meeting.

The President was given a comprehensive presentation by international water and sewage management experts and proposed various solutions to address the challenges of urban flooding and sewage in Karachi on the pattern of the tunnel sewer systems of Washington DC, the London Super Sewer Project, and the Deep Tunnel Sewerage System of Singapore.

During the briefing, it was proposed that a network of small and large sewer tunnels under existing roads in high-flood zones of Karachi may be developed. It was highlighted that underground tunnelling using modern techniques would not disturb the public, city traffic and land ownership. The experts informed that Karachi generated almost 450 million gallons per day (MGD) of sewage. They added that sewage and stormwater were collected in small and large open drains which fell into the Lyari and Malir rivers and were released untreated into the sea, polluting the marine ecosystem. It was further informed that the

existing network of drains had limited capacity and absorbed around 50% of the rainwater under normal circumstances. The meeting was told that excess water was not absorbed by the system, causing urban flooding.

Speaking on the occasion, the President underlined the need for completing the feasibility study to control flooding in Karachi through tunnelling options within three months. He stated that Karachi and its coastal areas need to be made clean and brought at par with other Metropolitan cities of the world. He said that since the proposed project would have significant environmental impacts, therefore, Government of Sindh should approach international donors to seek environmental financing for the project.

He said that the construction of the wastewater treatment system would also help supply treated water to Balochistan for agriculture, besides promoting the fisheries sector. The President remarked that the city of Hyderabad was also facing urban flooding and sewage issues that also needed to be addressed on priority.

'We failed', says US Secret Service on Trump shooting

Harris makes first appearance

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle admitted to Congress on Monday that she and her agency failed when a would-be assassin wounded Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump at a July 13 campaign rally in Pennsylvania this week.

"We failed. As the director of the United States Secret Service, I take full responsibility for any security lapse," Cheatle, who faces Republican calls for her removal, said in testimony before the House of Representatives Oversight Committee. "The assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump on July 13th is the most significant operational failure at the Secret Service in decades," Cheatle said.

In the face of Republican claims that the Secret Service denied resources to protect Trump, she said security for the former president had grown ahead of the shooting. "The level of security provided for the former president increased well before the campaign and has been steadily increasing as threats evolve," Cheatle said. "Our mission is not political. It is literally a matter of life and death."

She added that the Secret Service provided the security sought by the Trump campaign for the rally. "What I can tell you is that for the event on July 13, the details that were requested, the assets that were requested for that day, were given,"

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US Vice President Kamala Harris made her first public appearance on Monday since entering the presidential race after President Joe Biden, 81, abruptly abandoned his reelection bid and endorsed her as his successor. "Joe Biden's legacy over the last three years is unmatched in modern history," Harris said, before delivering remarks at a White House event to honor college athletes.

Harris has moved swiftly to lock up the Democratic presidential nomination, after Biden announced on Sunday he was stepping aside, bowing to pressure from fellow Democrats. Virtually all of the prominent Democrats who had been seen as potential challengers to Harris have lined up behind her, including Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, California Governor Gavin Newsom and Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear. Campaign officials and allies have already made hundreds of calls on her behalf, urging delegates to next month's Democratic Party convention to join in nominating her for president in the Nov. 5 election against Republican Donald Trump.

Cheatle said. She declined to answer specific questions about the day's security plan from Republicans and Democrats, saying the matter was being investigated internally.

Monday's hearing marked the first round of congressional oversight of the attempted assassination. On Wednesday, FBI Director Christopher Wray will appear before the House Judiciary Committee. And House Speaker Mike Johnson is also due to unveil a bipartisan task force to serve as a nexus point for House investigations. Cheatle has resisted calls for her resignation from top Republicans including Johnson and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Republican House Oversight Committee James

Comer echoed those calls at the hearing. "It is my firm belief, Director Cheatle, that you should resign," the Kentucky Republican told her. "The Secret Service has thousands of employees and a significant budget. But it has now become the face of incompetence." Democratic Representative Gerry Connolly said, "Unacceptable incidents like this one highlight the fact that we are an increasingly polarized nation experiencing heightened political tensions." The shooting at an outdoor campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, wounded Trump in the ear, killed one rally attendee and injured another. The suspected shooter, 20-year-old nursing home aide Thomas Crooks, was killed by law enforcement.

Brazilian Chief of Staff visits Naval HQs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Brazilian Chief of Staff Admiral Andre Luiz Silva Lima De Santana Mendes visited Naval Headquarters Islamabad and called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the visiting dignitary was received by Chief of the Naval Staff. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Navy also presented Guard of Honour. Brazilian Chief of Staff laid floral wreath at Shuhada Monument and afterwards was introduced to Principal Staff Officers of Naval Headquarters.

Later, Admiral Andre Luiz Silva Lima De Santana Mendes called on Chief of the Naval Staff in his office. Both the dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interests, regional maritime security environment and bilateral naval collaboration. Various avenues of cooperation including training, exchange of visits and conduct of bilateral naval exercises between the two Navies were also focused.

The Naval Chief highlighted Pakistan Navy's initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrols to ensure maritime security and peace in the region. The visiting dignitary acknowledged Pakistan Navy's efforts and commitment in support of collaborative maritime security in the region. The recent visit of Brazilian Chief of Staff will further augment and expand defence ties between the two brotherly countries in general and the defence forces in particular.

Houthi harbor still ablaze

HOEDEIDAH (AFP): Firefighting teams on Monday were struggling to contain a massive blaze at Yemen's Hodeidah port, days after a deadly Israeli strike hit oil tanks and a power plant in the harbor.

Heavy flames and black smoke were seen spiralling into the sky for a third consecutive day following the strike on Saturday, said an AFP correspondent in Hodeidah. Firefighting teams appear to have made little progress, with the blaze seemingly expanding in some parts of the port, the correspondent said, amid fears it could reach food storage facilities.

High-resolution satellite images taken by Maxar Technologies showed flames consuming a heavily damaged fuel storage area at the Hodeidah harbor. The fuel depot is run by the Yemen Petroleum Company which said late Sunday that the six people killed in the Israel strike were its employees.

The Houthis say more than 80 others were wounded in the attack, many of them with severe burns. With black smoke billowing overhead, a funeral ceremony was held Monday for the victims of the strikes. Their coffins were carried through the streets of Hodeidah, flanked by crowds and led by a Houthi marching band.

The strike on Saturday was the first by Israel on the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country and came in response to a Houthi drone strike that breached Israel's air defenses, killing one person in Tel Aviv the day before. The Houthis, who are fighting Israel, have pledged a "huge" response to the strikes and threatened to once again attack Tel Aviv.

Yemeni port authorities said Hodeidah "is operating at its full capacity," according to the rebels' Saba news agency. "We are working around the clock to receive all ships and there is no concern about the supply chain and supplies of food, medicine, and oil derivatives," port official Nasr Al-Nusairi was quoted by Saba as saying on Sunday. But the US-based Navanti Group said the strikes on Hodeidah destroyed five cranes and reduced the port's fuel storage capacity from 150,000 to 50,000 tons.

Hodeidah port is a vital entry point for fuel imports and international aid for Houthi-held areas of Yemen, a country where the United Nations says more than half the population relies on humanitarian assistance. "Hodeidah port is a vital lifeline for delivering humanitarian aid to Yemen," the International Rescue Committee (IRC) said in an emailed statement to AFP.

Provision of relief to masses top priority: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Monday inaugurated new Route 13 of the People's Bus Service in Karachi. The inauguration ceremony, for the route from Hawk's Bay to Tower, was held at Hawk's Bay Zero Point. The event was attended by PPP MPA Liaquat Askani and other leaders.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government is taking steps to provide relief to the people in all sectors. "As part of this effort, a new route is being inaugurated today", he said and added that we aim to provide air-conditioned buses to people during heat waves so that they can travel comfortably.

He said that along with inflation, the country faces many challenges, including ever increasing electricity prices and load shedding "Although the policy maker at federal level is the PML-N, but as Pakistanis, we all share responsibility and we are working for the people", he added.

Senior Minister said that the Sindh government has taken steps to provide relief to the people in various sectors. "In the health sector, state of the art hospitals have been established by the Sindh government which are providing better health facilities to the patients of whole country", he opined.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that some people are spreading despair among the people, but I assure you there is no need for it. "There are rumors that something significant will happen in the country in the next fifteen or twenty days, but don't worry, nothing will happen", he remarked ND added that masses and specially investors need not to worry; the government will continue to function.

He said that we will not allow any conspiracy against democratic process to succeed. "Conspiracy hatches want to harm Pakistan, but the nation will thwart these efforts with their unity", he maintained. He said that this country belongs to all of us, and we must work together to fix everything. He said that the federal and provincial governments are collaborating, and all ministers are working hard as no one from outside can come and fix the situation

Replying to a question he said that the Supreme Court judgment also granted relief that was not sought. "Read the Election Commission Act which clearly states which party is eligible to contest the election and which party is not and as PTI hide its foreign funding accounts and set buses on fire on Shahrah-e-Faisal, everyone see for itself the fate if the party", he added. He said that popularity doesn't mean you are forgiven for even a hundred murders as being popular doesn't give you the right to take the law into your own hands and conspire against the country



ISLAMABAD: Admiral Andre Luiz Silva Lima De Santana Mendes, Chief of Staff Brazilian Navy in meeting with Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

Enforced disappearance: PHC annoys police involvement

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim annoyed enforced disappearance of citizens for ransom by police and ordered Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for issuance of notification regarding Provincial Public Safety Commission while directed submission of detail report within fortnight in this regard, on Monday.

AG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal Ottomankhel, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Investigation and District Police Officer (DPO) Swabi appeared before PHC during hearing of illegal detention of a citizen Abdul Syed by Station House Officer (SHO) Zaida (Swabi district) and the demand for a ransom of Rs 70 lakh for his release.

PHC's Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim observed that the commission (Provincial Public Safety Commission) which was legislated in 2017 through Act, aims to ensure the safety and security of citizens and prevent illegal activities such as kidnapping for ransom.

The court expressed its concern over the lack of progress in implementing the commission and directed the government to take immediate steps to establish Provincial Public Safety Commission which will address several issues facing by both public and the police.

The Chief Justice observed that PHC had

ATC rejects interim bail in Badabher massacre plea

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Muhammad Iqbal Khan rejected bail pleas of three murderers allegedly involved in Badbher massacre case, in which eight members of a family were killed, on Monday.

Police arrested three alleged murderers including Deputy Director State Bank of Pakistan from courtroom after rejection interim bail plea. The petitioners named Deputy Director State Bank of Pakistan Ubaid Ullah, Shamos and Aziz-ur-Rehman were arrested from courtroom after rejection interim bail plea. The court also adjourned the hearing of the bail applications of two other accused, Farman Ullah and Rooh Ullah, who were already in custody, until 30th July. The prosecution told the court that the accused were involved in the massacre, in which four women and four children of the same family were killed.

summoned Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for appearance in the case. However, AG informed that Chief Justice is busy in a jirga with elders in wake of tragic Bannu incidents.

In the meantime, Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that they (police officials) standing (appeared) before us (PHC) and observed that they (policemen) are involved in enforced disappearance for the sake of their posting and transfers? The Advocate General has informed the court that the government is taking steps to establish a forensic lab to improve the investigation process.

PHC sought a detailed report on establishment of Provincial Public Safety Commission within 15 days and adjourned further hearing till 12th August.

Court directs submission of report on abduc-

tion of four brothers: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim exasperated over the lack of progress in the case of the alleged abduction of four members of the Alkozai family from Hayatabad, Peshawar. PHC also directed the petitioner to record statement with Joint Investigation Team (JIT) and ordered the police to submit a report on the progress of the investigation, on Monday.

The chief justice remarked that the government's primary responsibility is to provide protection to its citizens, and it is the duty of the police to investigate and recover the missing persons. He expressed concern over the lack of progress in the case and directed the police to take concrete steps to recover the missing persons.