

PPP seeks review
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The PPP has officially filed a petition in the Supreme Court, requesting a review of the decision concerning the allocation of reserved seats. The petition, submitted by Farooq H. Naik on behalf of the PPP, challenges the SC's ruling dated July 12. In their revision petition, the PPP argues that the allocation of seats to PTI was carried out without proper consultation.

Premier gives \$60b target for country's annual exports

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the National Export Development Board wherein he tasked the authorities concerned to take the country's annual exports to \$60 billion within three years.

The prime minister asked the commerce ministry and other relevant departments to take all necessary measures to achieve the given target. He said the country's exports crossed the \$30 billion mark during the previous fiscal year, and the government's policies also took the IT exports to over \$3.2 billion.

The prime minister asked the ministry to resolve the issues pointed out by the exporters and present a report within two weeks. He said that he would personally chair the National Export Development Board meeting every one-and-half months. Calling for collective efforts for the country's development, he paid tribute to the business community and investors for their role in increasing exports despite tough circumstances.

Prime Minister Shehbaz asked the commerce ministry to finalise the policy proposals, in coordination with representatives of the potential export sectors. He also tasked the Ministry of National Food Security to improve extension services, in coordination with provinces, to enhance agricultural exports. He instructed for exporting of quality seeds and agricultural products after further processing and taking measures to introduce crop varieties with high yields.

He said that the delivery time of Pakistani goods to Europe and America should be reduced by solving the problems related to the shipping of exports immediately. Similarly, the commerce ministry and Board of Investment should ensure

cooperation regarding the transfer of Chinese export industries to Pakistan. He also called for carrying out research and development, innovation and brand development to increase the export of Pakistani goods.

The prime minister warned against any delay by the Federal Board of Revenue in refunds to the exporters, besides emphasising the trade officers in Pakistan's missions abroad to promote Pakistan's exports and for guiding the exporters. The prime minister tasked the power ministry to present a comprehensive plan to provide low-cost electricity to the industries. Highlighting the crucial role of the private sector for national development, he called for the sector's inclusion in the policymaking process.

The representatives of the export sector appreciated the prime minister for his frequent meetings to resolve their problems and called his keen interest in the export sector "very encouraging". They also appreciated the prime minister's initiative to ensure timely refunds by the FBR to the export industry.

The meeting was briefed about the steps taken for the uplift of the export sector. It was told that the country's exports crossed the \$30 billion mark this year and a five-year plan to double the exports was also presented in the meeting. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Abdul Aleem Khan, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Sardar Awais Leghari and Dr Musaddiq Malik, Ministers of State Ali Pervaiz Malik and Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Jahanzaib Khan, State Bank Governor, PM's Coordinator

Rana Ehsan Afzal, relevant FBR officers and representatives of textiles, IT, leather, agriculture and other sectors attended the meeting.

Shehbaz welcomes Chinese investment in Pakistan: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, welcoming the Chinese investment in Pakistan, said that during his recent visit to China, a number of significant bilateral business-to-business agreements between companies of two countries, was a good sign in this regard.

The prime minister was talking to a delegation of Hengeng Trading Company led by Chairman Zhang Bin. The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanvir Hussain, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik and other relevant senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister said that Pakistan wanted to seek benefits from the Chinese experience in agriculture sector and directed Gwadar Port Authority for provision of all possible facilities to the Chinese companies. He also asked for ensuring uninterrupted supply of utilities at Gwadar Free Zone.

The prime minister was briefed that Hengeng Trading Company was investing in agriculture, livestock, medicines and other sectors of Pakistan. The company was also constructing a slaughter house with all the latest facilities at Gwadar, at a cost of \$50 million. Its completion could generate \$30 million annual exports from Pakistan's livestock sector while it would provide 1,000 new jobs opportunities to local populace. The company was also exporting pharmaceutical products to China after processing them at Gwadar Free Zone, it was further added.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Terrorists in Afghanistan also pose threat to China, Iran, says Durrani

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reiterated its call for the interim government in Afghanistan to take steps against terrorist groups holed up on its soil, stressing that such militant outfits pose a threat to the neighbouring countries including Pakistan. "Terrorism emanating out of Afghanistan is a concern not only for Pakistan but other neighbouring countries like China, Iran, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan as well," Ambassador Asif Durrani, Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan said, addressing a roundtable discussion on the "Pak-Afghan Relations: Challenges and Opportunities" at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) on Tuesday.

"Pakistan desires peace and stability in Afghanistan," a statement quoted him as saying. Ambassador Durrani's remarks came as Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks, especially in KP and Balochistan, since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021.

At the roundtable moot, Ambassador Durrani said that Pakistan sought socio-economic and political conditions in Afghanistan that would facilitate the return of over three million Afghan refugees currently residing in Pakistan. In a major development earlier this month, Pakistan extended the stay of legally residing Afghan refugees in the country by another year, according to an official statement issued on July 10.

The federal cabinet approved the extension in the validity of Proof of Registration (POR) cards until 30th June next year for 1.45 million legal Afghan refugees and those whose POR cards had expired last month.

Continuing his call for repatriation of Afghan refugees in today's discussion, the career diplomat urged the international community, especially the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to come up with strategies for the dignified return of Afghan refugees to their homeland.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar, Asad Qaiser, Shibli Faraz, Latif Khosa, and other central leaders of the party participated in the hunger strike camp. Other leaders of PTI including Sheikh Waqas Akram and Zartaj Gul also participated. The PTI leaders announced that they would extend of the scope of the hunger

Minimum marriage age for Christians increased

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday reiterated that the minority communities living in Pakistan, enjoyed equal rights and stressed upon increasing jobs quota for them in different government departments.

Addressing a ceremony after signing Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024 at the Aiwan-i-Sadr, the president said that he would write to the federal government to enhance the jobs quota in different departments including police, FIA etc, for the minorities. "I will definitely write to the government and ask them for this," he said, adding there should be a quota for the minorities in every department.

The president said that all the citizens of the country had equal rights and urged the minorities to continue playing their role for the progress and prosperity of the country as this soil and land belonged to them as much as to him. He also advised them not be disheartened at certain issues pertaining to politics as in every society, there might be some problems.

President Zardari mentioned that PPP had given sacrifices for the country as their leaders and workers laid down lives for the people. The ceremony was attended by Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain, secretary of the religious ministry, officials and representatives of the Christian community.

Speaking on the occasion, Bishop Abraham Daniel said that raising the age of marriage for men and women had been a long-standing demand of the Christian community. He expressed his gratitude to the President for signing the Act into law during a special ceremony and also thanked him for his role in his previous tenure in reserving a 5% quota for minorities in government jobs, besides allocating special seats for minorities in the Senate as well as declaring 11th August as Minorities' Day in Pakistan.

Zardari for expanding ties with Turkmenistan: President Asif Ali Zardari

has called for further expanding bilateral ties with Turkmenistan in all fields of mutual interest. He reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to its relations with Turkmenistan, saying that Pakistan-Turkmenistan relations were based on a common vision for peace and prosperity in the region. He added that the exchange of high-level visits between the two countries signified the mutual desire to further strengthen bilateral understanding and cooperation.

The President expressed these views while talking to the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday.

Welcoming the Minister, the President urged the need to enhance connectivity and communication between Pakistan and Turkmenistan, saying that Gwadar port offered great opportunities for promoting regional trade and Turkmenistan should benefit from the port.

The President stressed the need for continued exchanges and dialogue at all levels and enhanced trade, economic, investment and cultural relations for the prosperity of the two countries. He offered that Turkmen students could seek education from the medical institutions of Pakistan. The President noted the importance of the Third Round of Bilateral Political Consultations held today by the two Foreign Ministers.

The Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan said that Pakistan and Turkmenistan enjoyed cordial relations. He stated that his country would continue to promote economic, cultural and educational cooperation with Pakistan. He highlighted the importance of constructing motorways and railways, through Afghanistan, to connect the two brotherly countries. Foreign Minister Meredov conveyed the greetings of the leadership of Turkmenistan to the President. The President reciprocated the sentiment and said that he was looking forward to welcoming the Grand Leader of Turkmenistan H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in Pakistan.

PTI plans to widen scope of hunger strike

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) set up a symbolic hunger strike camp outside Parliament House in Islamabad. The hunger strike camp continued from 3pm to 7pm. Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan led the camp.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar, Asad Qaiser, Shibli Faraz, Latif Khosa, and other central leaders of the party participated in the hunger strike camp. Other leaders of PTI including Sheikh Waqas Akram and Zartaj Gul also participated. The PTI leaders announced that they would extend of the scope of the hunger

strike camp.

Shibli Faraz said the scope of the hunger strike camp would be extended to other assemblies. He said their mandate was stolen in the Sindh Assembly and announced a camp there as well. The purpose of the camp is the release of the PTI founder. He said this was a symbolic protest for the release of the political workers. "They want to tell the world what is happening to them," Faraz said.

Meanwhile, PTI leader Salman Akram Raja along with former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser have stated that PTI founder Imran Khan has made no admission regarding the May 9 events. After meeting Imran Khan in

Adiala Jail, Salman Akram Raja spoke to the media, saying that a unanimous decision was made at Zaman Park that protests would occur where necessary following the Rangers' action.

"We are ready to talk for the betterment of the country, we are ready to move forward. We do not want chaos in Pakistan; we want the country's economy to develop, and we want the people to be free from poverty and inflation. The environment being created in the country is leading to destruction. "You cannot achieve the welfare of the state by distancing it from the people. It is essential to move forward with the public and their elected leadership.

'US flays violence at Pakistani consulate in Frankfurt, awaits German investigation'

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The Frontier Post had posed a question to US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller yesterday regarding the incident at the Consulate of Pakistan in Frankfurt Germany but he was unaware of the incident and had said that he would follow up.

Today, The US State Department official returned with an official statement stated that "We are aware of reports regarding the incident at the Consulate General of Pakistan in Frankfurt, Germany.

With respect to this specific incident, we are waiting until investigations by German authorities yield information about the assailants and their motives before offering any assessment. Broadly speaking, we condemn violence against any diplomatic or consular facility or personnel anywhere in the world," US State Department stated firmly.

PTI's Raouf handed over to FIA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court Islamabad handed over custody of PTI General Secretary Raouf Hassan to the FIA after approving his two-day physical remand. The court also approved physical remand of other PTI leaders including two women workers. The Islamabad police on Monday arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar and Secretary General Raouf Hassan on the allegation of encroachments. Sources said the 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.

Heated debate in KP PA session on Dera water issue

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Heated debate was held during Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session on Tuesday with special focus on Dera Ismail Khan water problems. Presided over by Speaker Babar Saleem Swati, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session started two hours late with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by the question hour.

Speaking on the floor of the House, MPA Ehsan Ullah requested for providing details about the functional and nonfunctional water schemes in PK 115 Dera Ismail Khan, stating that the water from active schemes in the area was not drinkable, forcing people to buy water. He highlighted that the use of rainwater in the constituency was causing intestinal diseases among the public.

MPA Ahmed Kundi also highlighted the water issues in Dera Ismail Khan. He said that despite spending billions of rupees, basic facilities are not being provided to the public, leaving people deprived of water due to the provincial government's negligence.

Law Minister Aftab Alam responded that the concerned minister, Pakhtun Yar, was not present in the House, but the members' concerns would

be shared with the relevant minister. According to the department's report, out of 230 water schemes in constituency 115, 181 are active, he told.

Speaker Babar Saleem Swati expressed the assembly members' dissatisfaction with the department's responses and instructed the relevant departments to provide accurate and detailed information. The law minister said that if the members objected to the information's accuracy, clarification would be sought from the department.

On MPA Ehsan Ullah's request, the Speaker referred the question to the standing committee concerned. During the question hour, Ahmed Kundi also raised concerns about the formation of District Development Advisory Committees (DDAC) in 28 districts of the province while six districts were left out. He said that making decisions on merit would enhance the government's reputation and urged that they should not be forced to approach the court.

Local Government Minister Arshad Ayub assured that they do not want members to go to court and that DDAC Chairmen would be appointed in the deprived districts through consultation. He emphasized sending the member's question

to the committee, after which the Speaker referred PPP member Ahmed Kundi's question regarding the payment details of leave encashment to Local Government employees and PML-N member Sobia Shahid's question related to communications and works to the Standing Committee.

APP adds: Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader and Member Provincial Assembly, Sobia Shahid here Tuesday alleged that the medical report of an eight year old girl belonged to Dir Monda has been written on the political intervention and relief was provided to the accused.

She claimed the accused were given undue favour in the murder case and minimum offenses were shown in the report which was tantamount of obstruction in the way of justice.

On a call attention notice in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Sobia Shahid further claimed that dead body of the girl was deliberately concealed for four days and deleting of CCTV footage has made the case suspicious. Responding to the PMLN leader notice, Law Minister Aftab Alam said that inquiry of the incident was made and forensic samples were sent to forensic laboratory besides post-mortem conducted and three accused nominated in the FIR.

Palestinian factions sign declaration to end divisions

BEIJING (Reuters, AFP): Various Palestinian factions have agreed to end their divisions and strengthen Palestinian unity by signing the Beijing Declaration on Tuesday morning in China, according to Chinese state media.

The declaration was signed at the closing ceremony of a reconciliation dialogue among the factions held in Beijing from July 21-23, state broadcaster CCTV said. A total of 14 Palestinian factions including the leaders of rival groups Fatah and Hamas also met with the media, with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi present, CGTN said in a social media post.

Rival factions Hamas and Fatah met in China in April to discuss reconciliation efforts to end around 17 years of disputes. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi hailed the agreement by 14 Palestinian factions to set up an "interim national reconciliation government" to govern Gaza after the war. Palestinian

factions including Hamas and Fatah met in Beijing this week in a renewed bid for reconciliation.

As the meeting wrapped up on Tuesday, China's top diplomat said the groups had committed to "reconciliation." "The most prominent highlight is the agreement to form an interim national reconciliation government around the governance of post-war Gaza," Wang said following the signing of the "Beijing declaration" by the factions in the Chinese capital.

"Reconciliation is an internal matter for the Palestinian factions, but at the same time, it cannot be achieved without the support of the international community," Wang said. China, he added, was keen to "play a constructive role in safeguarding peace and stability in the Middle East." Hamas and Fatah have been bitter rivals since Hamas fighters ejected Fatah from the Gaza Strip after deadly clashes that followed Hamas's

resounding victory in a 2006 election. The Islamist Hamas movement has ruled Gaza since seizing control of it in 2007. The secularist Fatah movement controls the Palestinian Authority, which has partial administrative control in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told families of hostages held in Gaza that a deal that would secure their release could be near, his office said on Tuesday, as fighting raged in the battered Palestinian enclave. Israeli forces pressed on with a new raid into Gaza's southern area of Khan Younis after ordering civilians to evacuate some districts they said had been used for renewed attacks by Palestinian militants.

Thousands of people were fleeing for safer areas as Israeli airstrikes hit, UN officials said. Netanyahu is currently in Washington and is expected to meet US President Joe Biden later this week after

making an address to Congress. Speaking in the US capital on Monday to families of hostages, he said: "The conditions (for a deal) are undoubtedly ripening. This is a good sign."

Efforts to reach a ceasefire in the war between Israel and Hamas, outlined by Biden in May and mediated by Egypt and Qatar, have gained momentum over the past month. "Unfortunately, it will not take place all at once; there will be stages. However, I believe that we can advance the deal and leave us in possession of the leverage to bring about the release of the others (hostages not freed in first stage)," Netanyahu said.


Ruby Chen, the father of dual US-Israeli citizen Itai Chen, a soldier whose body is being held in Gaza, was one of the family members who met with Netanyahu. "He did say that conditions were ripening but I'm taking that with a pinch of salt," Chen told Israeli Army Radio.

Traders threaten shut-down

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The traders' community threatened to observe a country-wide shut-down if the government does not withdraw the recently issued Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) under the Tajir-Dost Scheme. President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran Ajmal Baloch in a statement rejected the SRO issued by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

مرزا **راؤ** **خیر** **چٹو** **اڀساو**
ڀٽيار **رڪوا** **روز** **نام** **آج**
06-07-2024 **مورخہ**
INFP **مورخہ** **06-07-2024** **سیریل نمبر**
 کو حذف کیا جائے۔ جو زیر خطمی کو مورخہ
 سے یکے کے پہنچ جانے کا نہیں۔ لس ای دن بوقت
 موجودگی میں کوئی مل جائے گی۔
 ایس پی ایڈمن،
 پریس پیش راء، ڀساو



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 Chakdara	Branch code 10022
Auction Date 25 th July 2024	Time 10:00 AM

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Hazrat Usman	15307-6983397-7	Post Office Chakdara Sah Saddah, Tehsil Lower Dir	19.57	1 kara
Suliman Shah	15302-3474585-5	Post Office Chakdara Mandi, Tehsil Lower Dir	23.76	1 kara, 1 angoti
Malik Shah	15307-5629804-5	Post Office Chakdara Ali Mast, Tehsil Lower Dir	163.12	4 churian

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

KhUJ office bearers calls on Governor

Kundi pledges to enhance journalists' skills, resolve problems

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday reaffirmed his commitment to addressing the province's challenges as well as the problems of journalists community.

He said this during a meeting with the delegation of Khyber Union of Journalist (KhUJ) led by President Nasir Hussain, Senior Vice Presidents Abdul Baseer Qalander, Bukhar Shah Bacha, Muhammad Naem and others.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the importance of constructive criticism in fostering societal improvement, stating that prioritizing peace is essential for economic progress.

He urged the Chief Minister to convene cabinet and apex meetings regarding recent incidents of lawlessness, stressing that security is paramount for development.

Highlighting the significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he acknowledged the adverse conditions around the Dera Ismail Khan economic zone, proposing enhanced economic zones near CPEC routes. Governor Faisal Kundi commended KP athletes for their achievements across various fields, citing PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's recent visit to Peshawar as a morale booster for provincial sports. He underscored empowerment for women and youth as crucial for fostering progress.

He pledged to enhance journalists' skills and resolve their problems on priority basis.

Governor Faisal Kundi also expressed his intent to collaborate closely with the federal government, to resolve issues facing journalists.

In reference to provincial assembly rights, he assured support from Parliamentary leader of PPP, Ahmed Kundi and others, advocating for increased public engagement across different regions.

Protecting Peshawar's cultural heritage and promoting interfaith harmony were also highlighted as priorities.

Governor Faisal Kundi criticized the provincial government for misstatements in court, noting disparities in university funding compared to Sindh. The Governor announced plans to form a task force within provincial parties to address infrastructure promises made to designated districts, pledging a focus on affordable electricity and local resource exploitation.

Before concluding, Khyber Union of Journalists' officials briefed Governor Kundi on ongoing challenges faced by media personnel and workers.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi offering dua for the departed soul of journalist's father.

MPA alleges of changing child murder's medical report

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader and Member Provincial Assembly, Sobia Shahid here on Tuesday alleged that the medical report of an eight year old girl belonged to Dir Monda has been written on the political intervention and relief was provided to the accused.

She claimed that the accused were given undue favor in the murder case and minimum offenses were shown in the report which was tantamount of obstruction in the way of justice.

On a Calling Attention Notice in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Sobia Shahid further claimed that dead body of the girl was deliberately concealed for four days and deleting of CCTV footage had made the case suspicious.

Responding to her notice, Law Minister Aftab Alam said that inquiry of the incident was made and forensic samples were sent to forensic laboratory besides conducting postmortem and three accused nominated in the FIR.

Social media provides modern information to farmers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary Agriculture Muhammad Javed Marwat has said that through social media, information related to the agriculture and modern methods of cultivation can be provided to the farmers and landowners. In this connection landlords can also take benefit from it because this is the age of social media. Through YouTube channel, farmers will have easy access to timely, useful and actionable information related to farming, modern technology and agricultural research.

He expressed these views while speaking as a special guest at the inaugural program of the YouTube channel launched in the name of "Zaraat aur kisan" in the Bureau of Agriculture Information. Director Bureau of Agriculture Information Jan Muhammad informed about the YouTube channel and its various programs.

On this occasion, Director General Agriculture Extension Abdul Qayyum, Director General Agriculture Research Dr. Abdul Rauf, Director General On Farm Water Management Muhammad Hayat, Director General Crops Reporting Altaf Hussain, Director General Agriculture Extension Margd areas Murad Ali, Deputy Director Imran and other relevant officials were also present.

NDMA alerts relevant departments after forecast of significant rainfall

PESHAWAR (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday issued alert to relevant departments amid forecast of significant rainfall, flooding across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Southern Sindh.

According to the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) of NDMA, strong monsoon currents were likely to penetrate from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal in upper regions of Pakistan, resulting in a series of rains across various parts of the country over the next 24 hours, expected to continue until July 27.

Thunderstorms and rain are expected tonight in the coastal areas of Sindh including Karachi, Hyderabad, Umarnot, Mirpur Khas, Nawabshah, Sukkur, Larkana Division, Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Islamkot, and surrounding areas. NEOC anticipated heavy to moderate rainfall in Rohi and Rahim Yar Khan of southern Punjab, Neelum Valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur in Azad Kashmir, Dir, Chitral, Swat, Kohistan, Bajaur, Shangla, Bannu, Kohat, Mohmand, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Swabi, Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Kurram, Hangu, Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan in KP and areas of Gilgit Baltistan.

The rain may cause flood situations in various urban areas, rising water levels in streams and rivers, and landslides in mountainous areas.

NDMA urges all relevant authorities and the public to take necessary precautions to mitigate the potential impacts of flooding and landslides. NDMA issued instructions to all relevant departments to alert Emergency Response Teams and mobilized resources to ensure a swift response to any arising situations. Tourists are advised to avoid traveling to these areas during the forecast period.

The public is advised to remain vigilant and follow instructions from local authorities. NDMA advises the public to stay informed and download 'Pak NDMA Disaster Alert' mobile app for timely alerts and closely monitor weather reports.

Widening of roads should not cause any problems for public: Ayub

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan, chaired a meeting of the Urban Area Development Authorities in Peshawar. During the meeting, officers from the Urban Area Development Authorities of Haripur, Swat, Swabi, Bannu, Mansehra, Kohat, and Karak briefed him on their performance and presented their issues.

The Provincial Minister attentively listened to the challenges faced by the Urban Area Development Authorities and assured them of solutions. He directed the concerned officers to work sincerely for the welfare of the public.

Members of the Provincial Assembly, including Akbar Ayub Khan, Shafiullah Jan, Hamid Rehman, Ikram Ghazi, and Secretary Local Government Daud Khan, were also present on the occasion.

The Provincial Minister emphasized that road widening in residential or commercial areas should not cause any problems for the public. If any issues arise, they should be resolved through mutual discussions with the affected residents.

Provincial Minister Arshad Ayub Khan strictly instructed that action should be taken against ghost employees in all Urban Area Development Authorities.

Those who have been absent from their jobs for a long time should also face action, as the government's money is the public's money, and it should not be wasted.

Muzammil chairs meeting on new tobacco taxes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance, Muzammil Aslam, on Tuesday along with Provincial Minister for Excise and Taxation Mian Khaliq-ur-Rehman, chaired a meeting with local farmers regarding the new taxes imposed on tobacco in the province.

Representative delegations of local farmers from Swabi and Mardan attended the meeting, led by Provincial Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru, Provincial Minister for Education Faisal Khan Turki, Special Assistant for Industries Abdul Karim Tordher, and Member Provincial Assembly Haji Rangiyee Khan, among other political leaders.

During the meeting, local farmers expressed their concerns to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance and Excise Departments about the implementation of the Tobacco Act.

In response, Muzammil Aslam, Mian Khaliq-ur-Rehman, and Secretary Excise Syed Fayaz Ali Shah provided a detailed briefing on the Tobacco Act and announced the issuance of an explanatory statement to address any ambiguities regarding the Act's implementation.

Advisor Muzammil Aslam thanked the farmers and emphasized that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is a people's government that makes decisions in consultation with the public.

The representative delegation of tobacco farmers from Swabi and Mardan also expressed their commitment to contributing to the province's development.



PESHAWAR (APP): National Vocational & Training Commission (NAVTTC) in collaboration with Industrialists' Association Peshawar (IAP) organized a Job Fair here on Tuesday.

In this job fair, various 20 big companies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including FF Steel Mills (Pvt) Ltd, Zakori Industries (Pvt) Ltd, Khyber Match (Pvt) Ltd, Libra Pharmaceutical, PPI ZRK Group (Pvt) Ltd and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) set up their stalls in different areas so that the youth can get technical skills and employment opportunities.

The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi was the chief guest in the job fair, besides senior officials of NAVTTC, including Chairperson Gulmina Bilal, Director General (DG) Mr. Irfan Aman Yousafzai, and other officials of Industrial Association Peshawar participated in the job fair.

He appreciated NAVTTC efforts in providing technical education to the youth and urged to organize more such job fairs and enable the youth to get employment opportunities in the country and abroad.

Dy Speaker visits Central Jail; ensures rights, facilities for inmates

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: According to the Constitution of Pakistan and Article 55 of the United Nations Human Rights, prisoners are entitled to all human rights. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that prisoners receive all their rights in jails.

These views were expressed by Deputy Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Suraya Bibi, during her conversation with the jail administration during her visit to Central Jail Peshawar.

AIG Establishment Sonia Shamroz also accompanied the Deputy Speaker on the jail visit. Upon arrival at Central Jail, Superintendent Muhammad Waseem Khan welcomed the Deputy Speaker.

During the visit, the Deputy Speaker was taken on an inspection tour of various barracks in the jail and was briefed on the facilities provided to the prisoners.

The Deputy Speaker met with female prisoners in particular, listened to their issues, and issued immediate instructions to the jail authorities to address these issues on a priority basis.

She inquired about health, education, and other essential facilities for the prisoners. She also visited the jail hospital to check on the health of the inmate patients.

The Deputy Speaker inspected the computer lab, handicraft center, leather crafting, and shoe-making departments in the jail and praised the quality of the items made by the prisoners.

Following a request from the jail authorities, the Deputy Speaker issued instructions to WSSP to remove garbage from the jail and promised to discuss the provision of minor surgical facilities with the health department.

She also instructed the jail authorities to organize sports and cultural galas for the inmates and to promote healthy activities such as tournaments between prisoners from different jails.

Minister instructs immediate distribution of scholarships to workers' children

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Labor, Fazal Shakoor Khan, has directed the relevant officers of the Workers Welfare Board (WWB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure the immediate distribution of scholarship funds to the children of workers studying in various universities and colleges across the province.

He emphasized that any delays in this regard will not be tolerated.

During a ceremony held on Tuesday for the distribution of scholarship checks at WWB, the Provincial Minister instructed the officers to prioritize the issues faced by workers' children and resolve all cases promptly.

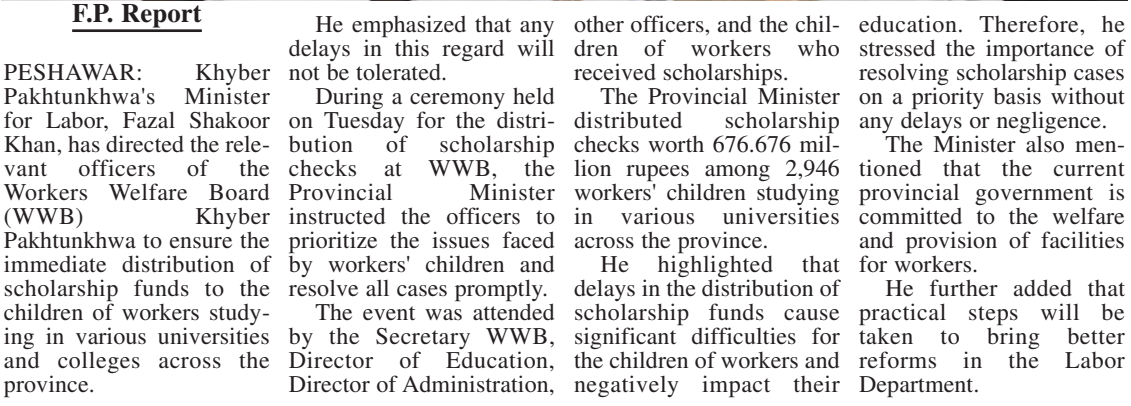
The event was attended by the Secretary WWB, Director of Education, Director of Administration, other officers, and the children of workers who received scholarships.

The Provincial Minister distributed scholarship checks worth 676.676 million rupees among 2,946 workers' children studying in various universities across the province.

He highlighted that delays in the distribution of scholarship funds cause significant difficulties for the children of workers and negatively impact their education. Therefore, he stressed the importance of resolving scholarship cases on a priority basis without any delays or negligence.

The Minister also mentioned that the current provincial government is committed to the welfare and provision of facilities for workers.

He further added that practical steps will be taken to bring better reforms in the Labor Department.





In brief

Man killed as hit by train

B A H A W A L P U R : (INP): A man was killed when he was hit by a Lahore-bound train in Musafir Khana area of Bahawalpur district. The official sources in the Punjab Emergency Department, Rescue 1122 and the police said that they received information about presence of a body on railway track near Kalanchwala railway station in Musafir Khana area of the Bahawalpur district. "The ambulance of the Rescue Department reached the scene and shifted the body to hospital morgue," they said, adding that the man was hit by train on railway track at night time and local people noticed presence of the body in morning time. The hospital sources said that apparently, the body was of a 25-year-old man. However, his identity was yet to be ascertained. The police have been conducting investigation into the incident. Further probe was underway.

Man kills younger brother

GUJRANWALA (INP): A man stabbed his younger brother to death over dispute of electricity bill here on Tuesday. Police arrested the accused. According to details, two brothers residing together at Prince road of Gujranwala got electricity bill of Rs10,500 for the month of June. Elder brother asked younger brother to pay half of the bill and refusal led to exchange of hot words. The verbal clash turned violent after which elder brother stabbed younger brother with sharp edged weapon. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem. The police arrested the accused and after registering a case against him started investigations.

2 youth buried under glacier

BALAKOT (INP): Two young tourists died on Tuesday after part of a glacier fell on them while they were posing for a photograph on their way to Saiful Muluk Lake, near the Naran city of district Mansehra of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The tourists were reportedly taking pictures under the glacier when it fell on them, which resulted in their deaths. The victims included Mehran 22, and Parsa 13, and they belonged to Rajanpur. Rescue personnel reached the site of incident, dug out the bodies from under the fallen glacier and transferred the bodies of the ill-fated tourists to a nearby hospital. The bodies were later sent to the native town of the deceased.

Bandit killed in cross firing

B A H A W A L P U R (INP): The district police said that a suspect wanted in around 30 cases including highway robberies and murder had been killed in firing opened by his own accomplices. A spokesman for Bahawalpur police said here that a suspect identified as Bilal was wanted by the Bahawalpur police in several heinous crimes cases including highway robberies and murder. "Around 30 cases were lodged against the suspect at police stations in Bahawalpur district," he said, adding that the suspect was involved in heinous crimes including highway robberies and murder. He said that the police took the suspect to an area to recover snatched goods and during that cross firing took place in Chak-7BC area. "When firing stopped, the police noticed that the suspect has been killed in firing opened by his own accomplices," the spokesman said.

Civil society protests against inflated electricity

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The residents of Bakhshali along with suburbs protested with the support of political, social organizations, business community and local elders against the prolonged load shedding and inflated electricity, on Tuesday.

According to detail, large number of people from every of walk of life participated in the protest. Due to road blockage citizens including transporters faced severe difficulties during the protest. There was a complete shutter down strike by the business community in Bakhshali Bazar.

The protestors also shouted slogans against WAPDA sub-division Bakhshali and the members of the National and Provincial Assembly. On this occasion, the protestors said that they had held meetings with the WAPDA authorities to reduce long-term load shedding and load adjustment and explained their problems. No positive response has yet been received, on which the people of Bakhshali and its suburbs, fed up with cruel load shedding for more than 12 hours, protested.

On this occasion, the protestors said that until the new schedule of load shedding is not released, our protest will continue. On this occasion, while discussing with the protestors,

SHO of Chora Sabar Khan, Assistant Commissioner of Tehsil Rustam and SDO of Wapda Sub-Division. Bakhshali immediately assured to reduce the load shedding by three hours from Wednesday and another two hours from August 1 and fix the load adjustment immediately, upon which the protestors dispersed and opened the road for all types of traffic.

City Mayor argues for maintenance of law & order: Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar stated that the increasing incidents of terrorism in the province are spreading fear among the people, affecting the province's law and order situation. He expressed these views while addressing the meeting of the City Local Council held here on Tuesday, presided over by Presiding Officer Babar Khan. The meeting was attended by elected local representatives, government officials, and media representatives. Mayor mentioned that negotiations with the provincial government are ongoing regarding the strengthening of local governments and the restoration of funds.

A procedure for funds and powers will be established according to local Government Act following approval from the provincial cabinet. He added that follow-up negotiations with the Chief Minister of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are ongoing for effective local governments. If our demands are not met, representatives of all local governments in the province will not only protest but also stage sit-ins in front of the provincial and national assemblies.

Mayor Mardan Himayatullah highlighted that the provincial government is reducing the transfer of property taxes for TMAs by one percent, which will affect TMAs' expenses and revenues, leading them into financial crises. Therefore, we demand the provincial government withdraw this decision and instead reduce provincial government taxes rather than TMA taxes.

"This house has significantly increased TMA properties and their resultant revenue, making the TMA financially stable. However, its employees are unjustifiably striking and locking offices, which is sheer oppression and injustice because this institution provides Municipal services" he added. He noted that there has been an alarming increase in various incidents of terrorism in the province, especially in Mardan, resulting in the martyrdom of police officers and civilians, which we strongly condemn.

"Law enforcement agencies and security forces to take action against terrorist elements without affecting the public, and

called on the public to fully cooperate with the police and security forces in actions against terrorists" He added. Mayor said that the people of Mardan are peace-loving and we will cooperate with institutions for restoring peace and order and against criminal elements.

He also highlighted the significant increase in drug trafficking in the city, affecting the younger generation. We demand police action against drug dealers and appeal to the public to cooperate with the police in identifying these elements to make our society peaceful. He mentioned that while the federal government increased employees' salaries, it also increased taxes, nullifying the benefit of the salary increase.

Mayor also noted that excessive load shedding of electricity and gas has distressed the public, as our province's electricity is being provided to our people at high prices. He added that the federal government owes approximately 1600 billion rupees in electricity dues, and paying these dues would alleviate the province's financial crisis.

Mayor Mayar expressed solidarity with the Muslims of Palestine according to the meeting's agenda and said that from the beginning, we have been against the ongoing oppression of Palestinian Muslims and strongly condemn it. Council members also expressed their

views according to the agenda. The council members unanimously approved the resolution according to the agenda.

After the meeting, led by Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar, the council members protested against gas and electricity load shedding and terrorism at the Mardan Commissioner's office. He presented the resolutions passed by the council to the Mardan Commissioner.

MCCI demands revision of IPPs contracts: Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Zahir Shah said that the IPPs contracts are anti-national and destructive to the economy and demanded their immediate termination along with this, the interest rate of the banks should be reduced to a minimum to save the industry from closing down.

MCCI President Zahir Shah has described IPPs as a bane for the country's economy and demanded immediate termination of these contracts by conducting a forensic audit. He further said that a comprehensive inquiry should be conducted into over-invoicing and misdeclaration of capacity in the IPPs contracts and to check that the government of Pakistan was cheated so much and to hold all the concerned people/officers accountable.

He said that due to the IPPs agreements, the people are bub-

bling and the industries have reached the brink of destruction and the termination of these agreements has become inevitable for the stability and development of the country's economy. He said that the Mardan Chamber fully supports the electricity payment model where payments should be made only for the electricity actually supplied and consumed. He has strongly demanded from the government and related institutions to use the abundant water resources available in the country in an efficient manner to provide cheap and green energy to the consumers.

Zahir Shah said that the business community fully supports investment in renewable energy sources and measures to reduce dependence on IPPs and overall efficiency and stability of the power sector and improve the national grade. President Mardan Chamber said that due to the high interest rate of our banks, where the industry is suffering, non-filers are attracted towards interest by putting their money in banks and getting attractive profit, so the interest rate should be reduced to a minimum level. He said that in the recent budget, excessive taxes have been imposed due to which the purchasing power of a common man has decreased. In developing countries, taxes are reduced so that the people can develop and prosper.

Model police station inaugurated in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan on Tuesday visited the Lower Dir district and inaugurated the newly built model police station at Timergara. The Regional police officer Malakand range Muhammad Ali and District Police Officer Mazhar Iqbal welcomed the police chief on his arrival to the district headquarters.

The IGP was presented a bouquet by the kids of martyred police official Israr Ahmed on the occasion. A police squad presented a salute to the IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The officer inaugurated the new building of Timergara model police station equipped with modern facilities by cutting the ribbon. The DPO Mazhar Iqbal briefed him about the overall security situation in the district.

IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa inspected various departments of the police station.



Addressing area elders and police officials the IGP said that the establishment of a model police station in the district will be a milestone in providing convenience to the local people.

Chairing a meeting regarding peace and order at the DPO office the IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expressed his satisfaction over the peace and order situation in Lower Dir district. He also planted a deodar tree and launched the monsoon plantation campaign. The IGP informed that a decision had been taken to fill vacant posts in the province in a transparent manner.

"All vacancies requiring promotion will be filled by promotion", he said. Lauding the services of police he said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police was a brave force and command-in-h it was a source of pride for him. "It is a force of martyrs and veterans who sacrificed their lives to ensure peace and order in the country", he remarked. He said the establishment of law and order in the province, and the provision of modern training, vehicles, IT, and technical equipment to the police force would be ensured.

Police resolve blind murder case of deaf, dumb man

MULTAN (INP): Police resolved the blind murder case of a deaf and dumb man and arrested the accused besides recovering mobile phone of the deceased from his custody here on Tuesday.

According to police sources, Makhdoom Rasheed police recovered an unidentified body from railway line near Mouza Nai Wala Basti Sardarwala on June 21, 2024. The police started the investigation into the incident and conducted the autopsy of the body. As per the post-mortem report, he was

killed by unknown outlaws with repeated blows of a sharp edged weapon. The police registered case number 1060/24 under section 302 against unknown outlaws.

Taking action on the incident, the City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali Dogar formed special teams under the supervision of SSP Operations Arsalan Zahid to arrest the criminals. The police teams completed the identification process through figure print bureau and he was identified as Umer Daraz, resident of Samijabad area. The

heirs informed police that the deceased was 35-year old deaf and dumb.

The police team solved the case and arrested the accused Gulham Mujtaba s/o Abdul Rehman resident of Samijabad. The criminal was friend of the deceased and he was also a deaf and dumb.

During the investigation, the accused confessed the crime and the police also recovered mobile phone of the deceased from his custody. However, further investigations were underway from the criminal, police added.

Journalist Hamza's mother passed away

F.P. Report

KARAK: The mother of journalist Hamza Zeeshan has passed away while her funeral prayer was offered at their ancestral village, on Tuesday.

The deceased was also mother of Asad Pakhtunyar, owner of Ubqari Islamic Center Kohat, Al-Haq Qara, Provincial President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Qari Kamran, Nafeesuddin, Mubasher Hazin.

DC took charge: Newly appointed Deputy Commissioner Karak Shakeel Ahmad John took charge of his post in Karak district. Did the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner Karak take charge of his post and start regular work while expressing his views on this occasion, he said that according to the vision of the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, solving the problems of the people at

their doorsteps is the first priority.

Priority will be given to all measures to solve the problems faced by the people and provide legitimate legal assistance to the people. DC Karak further said that there is no place for careless and negligent officials and corrupt officials in my office and the officials will be encouraged to take interest in the government and perform their duties well. On this occasion, the newly appointed DC Karak appealed to the public and asked them to fully cooperate with the district administration in the construction and development of Karak District.

Meanwhile, a farewell ceremony was organized for Deputy Commissioner Karak Mujibur Rehman and Additional Assistant Commissioner Karak Shamimullah. In which District Police Officer Karak, Additional Deputy

Commissioners Kirk Assistant Commissioners and other officers. attended. Speaking on this occasion, District Police Officer Kirk said that transfers are an essential part of the job.

Officers who perform their duties with the spirit of serving humanity will always be in the hearts of their superiors, subordinates and the public. are alive Mujibur Rahman is an asset to the Civil Service and as Deputy Commissioner Karak he has performed his duties with great zeal and responsibility. Speaking at the event, Mujeebur Rehman said that the time spent in Karak district was memorable. He also acknowledged the capabilities of his team and said that the team gave full support in dealing with every challenge. At the end, district administration Karak and police officers presented gifts to Deputy Commissioner Karak.

Teachers training center inaugurated

F.P. Report

LARKANA: A teaching center was inaugurated by the district education department in connection with providing professional training to the headmasters of the city's Government Primary Boys School Railway Colony, on Tuesday.

District Education Officer (DEO) Anees Rehman Jalbani, TEO Malel Munir Ahmad Bhutto, Madam Shahinawaz Zainab Memon, Abdul Nabi Bugti and a large number of others participated. Speaking to the media on the occasion, DEO Anees Rehman Jalbani said that today the Education Department in Government Boys School Railway Colony.

A training center has been inaugurated to increase the knowledge of the schools primary head masters and also information has been provided to the headmasters of different primary schools in Larkana district.

We want to prepare all the headmasters of the sector through training so that they can try to solve the challenges faced in the field. In this regard, we have divided this training program into six parts which are assigned to each training center district. have been opened in the taluk on this occasion Herd Mistress, Nayab Sarkash and others were also present.

Farewell ceremony held

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The officers of District Administration here on Tuesday organized a farewell ceremony in honor of Commissioner Kohat Division, Abid Khan.

The commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Kurram, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Additional Assistant Commissioners participated were present on the occasion.

The commissioner said that transfers were an essential part of the job, adding Officers who perform their duties with the spirit of service to humanity would always be remembered in public circles. Dr. Azmatullah Wazir was an asset to the civil services and as Deputy Commissioner Kohat, he performed his duties with great zeal and dedication, he added.

11 arrested

SARGODHA (INP): The district police, in a crackdown on criminals, arrested 11 accused here on Tuesday.

A police spokesperson said teams raided different localities and arrested Inam, Wasim, Rashid, Imran, Kamran, Suleman, Tahir, Kaleem, Wajahat, Nouman and Khalil. The police also recovered 2.5-kg hashish, 2.3-kg heroin, 145 litres of liquor, 12 pistols, four guns, 235 bullets, 133 empty bottles and valuable worth millions of rupees from them. An investigation is ongoing.

Forest Dept to plant 50 thousand saplings

F.P. Report

BUNER: Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Buner claimed as many as 50 thousand saplings will be planted in public sectors installations till August 15, 2024 during the monsoon season, on Tuesday.

DFO appealed public to support this drive and plant one person two saplings so that the forest area in the country will increase which will bring about positive environmental changes and boost tourism and the increase in wildlife will bring many benefits to humans.

DFO Arshad Khan planted a sapling at the beginning of the tree plantation campaign in Buner University. On this occasion, ADC Syed Akram Shah, SDFO Swari Liaqat Ali Khan DFO Watershed VC University and forest Division's officials participated.

DFO said that fifty thousand saplings will be planted and the focus will be on the government institutions located on the government land so that the watchmen already present there will keep an eye on it while briefing media personnel. The pour water and ensure protection along with care, he argued.

DFO said in his message to the people that every human being must plant two trees and make the motherland green and provide a favorable environment for wild life. He argued, locals will get benefits and reward as well. He asked public to play role in making the name of Mother land higher and higher in the world by growing more forests.

One shot killed in police custody at court: One alleged murderer named Abdur Rehman Farooqi shot killed in

police custody at district courts Buner over old rivalry.

According to details, police arrested alleged killer namely Akhtar Ali and Fazal Rehman residents of Shalbandi village in Buner district while recovered weapon used in the offense. The accused are brothers of late Rahat Ali who was allegedly killed by Abdur Rahman Farooqi over money dispute, police confirmed.

The deceased Abdul Rahman Farooqi was arrested some time ago on charges of murdering Rahat Ali Akhunzada son of Elahi Bakhsh and was brought from District Jail Daggar under police supervision to appear in the court of Additional Sessions Judge II. The indiscriminate firing caused panic in the court premises and created sense of insecurity among litigants.



QUETTA: Daily wagers sitting with their work tools along roadside waiting for some work.

SAU hosts national workshop

F.P. Report

H Y D E R A B A D : Agriculture experts and researchers have emphasized the urgent need for research on new and hybrid cotton varieties, with Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) poised to play a pivotal role in this initiative.

During the inaugural session of a two-day National Workshop titled "Development of Cotton Varieties through Hybridization Techniques," hosted by SP&DC in the Senate Hall of SAU Tandojam on Tuesday, Dr. Inayatullah Rajper, Dean of the Faculty of Crop Production, underscored the significant contribution of the cotton industry to national development. He highlighted that cotton provides essential raw materials for various sectors, including edible oil and the textile industry, while noting that there is

still significant potential for improving seed quality.

Dr. Rajper further explained that due to the current economic situation and the pressing need to supply the industry with a skilled workforce, it is essential for students at Sindh Agriculture University to be registered in specialized groups from their first year. This approach will enable them to develop expertise in value chains across various sectors, including cotton, wheat, horticulture, vegetables, oilseeds, and pulses.

Dr. Saifullah Abro, Head of Plant Breeding and Genetics at the Nuclear Institute of Agriculture (NIA), highlighted cotton's significant impact on the national GDP, providing 40% of employment, contributing 2.9% to value addition, and accounting for 60% of foreign exchange earnings. He lauded the ongoing

research at NIA and the critical contributions of SAU experts to agricultural advancements.

Dr. Zahoor Ahmed Soomro, Director of the Seed Development and Production Center, elaborated on the workshop's training agenda. He stated that representatives from SAU, various public sector agricultural institutions, and private seed companies would receive comprehensive training on both conventional and non-conventional hybridization techniques for cotton seeds, and practical sessions would also be conducted.

The event also featured remarks from several notable speakers, including Dr. Aijaz Soomro, Chairman of Agronomy; Professor Dr. Shabana Memon; Jamil Ahmed Solangi; and others. Additionally, training and practical sessions for trainees were initiated by university experts.



Batons, tear gas, live fire - Kenyans face police brutality

NAIROBI (BBC): The recent wave of the deaths of dozens of people in Kenya, as police cracked down on protests countrywide, began with the shooting of 30-year-old Rex Masai.

The killings have further eroded what little trust there was in the police to maintain order. And as a new series of protests is about to begin, there are concerns over how the security forces will respond. 20 June saw demonstrations against a finance bill that was going to raise new taxes break out for a second time. The previous day of action, two days earlier, had been without major incidents, but as sun set on that Thursday something changed in the heart of the capital, Nairobi. The protesters became more defiant. Police officers switched from using water cannon and tear gas to firing live bullets. Mr Masai got caught at the wrong end of that. He was shot in the thigh and bled to death.

"His blood was all over my hands," says his friend, Ian Njuguna, who rushed to try and help him when he fell to the ground. But as he and another friend tried to carry him to a nearby hospital "the officer tear-gassed us [as] we were carrying our dying friend". "We were frantically trying to speak to him, pleading with him not to leave us."

At least four police officers so far are to face prosecution for shooting and killing protesters over the last four weeks, amid rising calls for jus-

tice for victims of the alleged excessive use of force. But the investigations have been tricky.

"We have encountered non-cooperation from the police and to a certain level some intimidation even to our officers," John Waiganjo, a commissioner from the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), told the BBC. But the investigation into the killing of Mr Masai has not yet resulted in the start of a prosecution, as investigators seek to gather more evidence and record statements. Mr Waiganjo did not comment on this specific case but explained that when investigating injury or death the IPOA needs information on where the guns involved were from and the identity of the officers allegedly involved.

The BBC has verified a video filmed around the same time and likely the same place that Mr Masai was killed, showing what appears to be a plain-clothes police officer shooting at a crowd of protesters who were fleeing along a street. Mr Njuguna says he thought his friend was profited by the officer who shot him because he had dreadlocks. "He was accused of stealing a phone. There was a shop that was looted. So, they thought he was one of the looters, so they shot him – because of what? Dreadlocks," he tells the BBC, sounding angry and frustrated.

On the night he was killed, Mr Masai's family says the doctor who



pronounced him dead confirmed there was a bullet lodged in his thigh, with a wound visible on one side but no exit wound on the other. "When I got to [where he died], I asked the medics to uncover my son's body," his mother, Gillian Munyao, told the BBC a day after the incident. She saw where the bullet had entered his leg.

After the autopsy, the family and friends of Mr Masai were shocked to learn that bullet could not be found in his body. They suspected that it was removed at some point. When the BBC told Mr Waiganjo of the allegation of a lack of physical evidence, he was not surprised, given the IPOA's own challenges securing items to aid their investigations. This can derail

the quest for justice despite the IPOA's powers to compel institutions to hand over any vital information.

The BBC contacted acting head of police Douglas Kiricho for a response to the allegations of obstructing investigations and of using excessive force against protesters. While he acknowledged the request and instructed the police spokesperson to respond to our specific questions, no response had been received by the time of publishing this story despite multiple reminders. This criticism of the police comes as Kenyan officers are deployed to Haiti, where they are leading an international mission to tackle the country's powerful gangs.

For many Kenyans, the conduct of

police at home has left them with little faith in the system. It is unsurprising that the IPOA says it has struggled to get witnesses to record statements in Mr Masai's case or the others, as people are often scared to come forward. The IPOA is using allegations shared on social media of killings, arbitrary arrests and abductions to initiate investigations.

Looking across the weeks of protests as a whole, BBC Verify has found dozens of videos which appear to show what activists and the police oversight body say would amount to excessive use of force and violations by the police as they quelled the protests. The BBC has managed to verify the locations and time the incidents took place by comparing landmarks we can see in the video with Google Street View imagery and satellite maps, local media reporting and other videos showing the same events. The videos range from shooting at unarmed protesters, beatings with batons, attacks on people offering first aid, attacks on journalists and abductions.

In one video filmed along next to the Parliament buildings a protester is seen walking towards the police with his arms raised. Moments later, shots ring out. We later see him being bundled into the back of a police vehicle, with wounds on both legs, screaming. "I haven't done anything, I haven't burned any vehicle... they have shot me for nothing," he says, as he shows

the wounds on his legs.

"It is not justified to use live fire or even rubber bullets on people who are unarmed, and essentially not confronting the police violently," says Irungu Houghton, the executive director of the Kenyan branch of rights group Amnesty International. He argues that there is a clear legal framework for policing in the country. "You can't go more than one page without reading the words human rights and service to citizens." But he reckons the problem is deep-rooted in the system: "Rather than de-escalating conversations, or essentially facilitating peaceful protests, what we've seen is an attempt to try and block peaceful protests. And that's where things break down."

He argues that policing can work if the leadership is clear that the role of the police is to de-escalate tensions. "If demonstrations are peaceful, the police are not supposed to use any tear gas canisters or water cannons, or even live bullets," Mr Waiganjo says. Their role is to guide protesters along an agreed-on path, and "can only use firearms when a person's life is in danger". Asked if she was confident justice would be served, Mr Masai's mother said: "You know how government works here but let me trust for the best." "I'd say to the police, in the upcoming protests, they are parents just as we are. The pain we feel should be theirs. We won't take revenge. We leave it to God."

Lawmakers in Nigeria trying to resolve rift

ABUJA (AP): Nigerian legislators began an investigation into the alleged importation of contaminated fuel into the country, part of efforts to resolve issues causing a rift between an oil refinery owned by Africa's richest man Aliko Dangote and the industry regulator.

A legislative committee tasked with carrying out the probe is also looking into allegations of the "indiscriminate issuance of licenses and the alleged unavailability of international standard laboratories" blamed for such contaminated products, its chairman,

Ikenga Ugochinyere, said in the capital of Abuja. The committee called on parties in Nigeria's petroleum sector to "deescalate tensions" that have been deepened in recent weeks by accusations from the regulator that Dangote was seeking a monopoly in the market and that his refinery's products are of a low standard.

Nigeria's junior petroleum minister Heineken Lokpobiri, meanwhile, met with Dangote and officials from the country's petroleum sector in what he called a "collaborative effort" to address the issues facing the refinery. "All parties involved demonstrated a strong commitment to proactive problem-solving," the minister said after the meeting in a post on

social media platform X.

The 650,000-barrels-per-day refinery in the economic hub of Lagos is the biggest in Africa and was touted by authorities as a game-changer that would end the oil-rich country's dependence on imported petrol. However, the \$19 billion facility has been off to a slow start despite opening more than a year ago. It has had to source crude oil from other countries after failing to secure supplies in Nigeria, whose capacity as one of Africa's biggest oil producers has been impeded by oil theft and chronic corruption.

A senior executive of the refinery has also accused international oil companies in Nigeria of plotting the refinery's failure. "It is either they are deliberately asking for a ridiculous premium or they simply state that crude is not available," Devakumar Edwin, a vice-president of Dangote Industries, said of the companies. The Dangote refinery's challenges compounded last week when the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority said its product quality, along with those of other local refineries, was "more inferior" compared to that of imported products.

"Dangote is requesting that we should suspend or stop the importation of all

petroleum products ... and that is not good for the market because of monopoly," said Farouk Ahmed, chief executive of the regulatory agency. Dangote denied both claims and invited with coordinating actions on its southern flank, a move that has caused outrage in Italy.

Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto has accused NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg of betraying Rome by not appointing an Italian to the position, created this month at the request of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Her government said at the time it thought an Italian should be given the job. Crosetto told La Stampa newspaper at the weekend that Stoltenberg had nominated a Spaniard, and that he considered the decision as "nearly a personal affront".

Colomina is NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, and has served as Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia. "The Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel regions are important to our Alliance," Stoltenberg said in a statement on Colomina's appointment as Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood. "Javier Colomina has extensive experience in dealing with NATO partners. His appointment will further strengthen NATO's important work in the South."

Nato appoints Spanish diplomat as envoy

BRUSSELS (Reuters): NATO confirmed on Tuesday the appointment of Spanish diplomat Javier Colomina as the military alliance's new envoy tasked with coordinating actions on its southern flank, a move that has caused outrage in Italy.

Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto has accused NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg of betraying Rome by not appointing an Italian to the position, created this month at the request of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Her government said at the time it thought an Italian should be given the job. Crosetto told La Stampa newspaper at the weekend that Stoltenberg had nominated a Spaniard, and that he considered the decision as "nearly a personal affront".

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Tanzanian minister sacked

DAR ES SALAAM (BBC): Tanzania's information minister Nape Nnauye has been removed from his post following an outcry over comments he made suggesting that elections could be rigged.

Mr Nnauye was filmed at a rally on 15 July, saying that he would help a fellow ruling party MP win in the 2025 election. He added that "election results are not necessarily those in the [ballot box], rather they depend on the person counting and making announcements". Following a public backlash after a video of his controversial remarks went viral, Mr Nnauye said he had made them in jest.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan sacked him from the cabinet as part of a wider reshuffle. She did not give reasons for her decision. The video, filmed on Mr Nnauye's visit to the northern city of Bukoba, also showed the former minister saying: "Because I'm good at election tricks, I will assist to emerge victorious." He said there are various methods to ensure a win - "legal, half legal and illegal".

"All of them could be used provided after the conclusion you seek God's forgiveness," Mr Nnauye added. Many Tanzanians criticised the former minister, arguing that he had violated the principles of electoral democracy and did not respect the decision of voters.

Biden's legacy is Gaza genocide, Palestinian rights advocates say

GAZA: Democratic politicians and commentators in the United States have heaped praise on President Joe Biden since he dropped out of the 2024 presidential race.

Representative Maxine Waters, for instance, called Biden a "kind and decent man". Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, meanwhile, extolled his "vision, values and leadership". But while political leaders showered Biden with compliments, bombs continued to rain down on Gaza, killing dozens and sparking another wave of mass displacement in Khan Younis.

For many Palestinian rights advocates, the carnage and abuses in Gaza will define Biden's place in the history books, as the US remains steadfast in its support of Israel's war in the Palestinian territory. "He'll be remembered for the hundreds of thousands killed, injured and displaced in Gaza," said Abed Ayoub, the executive director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC).

"There is no way around it. 'Genocide Joe' is what he's going to be remembered as." Since Israel's war on Gaza started on October 7, Biden has offered the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unconditional military and diplomatic support.

Only once did Biden withhold a shipment of bombs to Israel over humanitarian concerns — and even then, he released part of that cargo a couple months later, amid pressure from Netanyahu. Israel's war, meanwhile, has killed nearly 39,000 Palestinians, displaced hundreds of thousands, fuelled a man-made hunger crisis and destroyed large parts of the territory. United Nations experts and other observers have warned of a "risk of genocide" in Gaza. Ayoub told Al Jazeera that,

despite Biden's domestic achievements, the president will rank among the worst in US history due to his unconditional support for Israel.

The US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) echoed that comment. "Nothing will erase the fact that Biden's legacy is — and always will be — genocide," the group said in a statement. The US president has been a stalwart supporter of Israel throughout his decades-long political career. He frequently calls himself a Zionist and argues that Jews across the world would not be safe without Israel.

He put that worldview into policy during his presidency, as he pushed on with Former President Donald Trump's pro-Israel doctrine. Biden kept the US embassy in Jerusalem and refused to reverse the Trump-era decision to recognise Israel's claims to the occupied Golan Heights in Syria. He also aggressively pursued formal ties between Israel and Arab states, a goal Trump advanced with the 2020 Abraham Accords.

That push for normalisation, however, came without progress towards the recognition of an independent Palestinian state or the dismantling of systemic anti-Palestinian discrimination. The outbreak of the war in Gaza further underscored Biden's pro-Israel policies.

Weeks after the conflict started, Biden travelled to Israel and publicly embraced Netanyahu in what many critics have described as a "bear hug". That sign of friendliness was widely understood to be an endorsement of Netanyahu's response in Gaza, after the Palestinian group Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7. Even early in the conflict, human rights groups accused Israel of horrific violations rising to the level of genocide — a push to destroy the

Palestinian people.

Within the first week alone, the Israeli military said it had unleashed 2,000 strikes across Gaza — a strip of land roughly the size of Las Vegas. Biden has since authorised continuous arms transfers and more than \$14bn in additional aid to sustain Israel's Gaza offensive. Moreover, his administration has vetoed three United Nations Security Council proposals that would have called for a ceasefire.

Hatem Abudayyeh, the chair of the US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN), said Biden will be remembered above all for enabling Israel's "crimes against humanity". "He could've turned the tap of money and weapons off in October, but he allowed this genocide to happen. He is complicit, and that's what will be written on his tombstone," Abudayyeh told Al Jazeera. Following his entry into politics in 1970, Biden quickly rose from local to national prominence, mounting a successful dark-horse campaign to represent Delaware in the US Senate in 1972.

After nearly four decades in Congress, he became vice president under Barack Obama, and in 2021, he won the presidency himself. The president does not hail from a political dynasty, and he is not an exceptional orator. His success in politics is often credited to his interpersonal skills and ability to project empathy. That sense of compassion, however, never extended to Palestinians, activists say. "For nine and a half months, President Biden has funded and armed the brutal Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, making the US government directly complicit in the killing of at least 39,000 people, including over 15,000 children," Jewish Voice for Peace Action said in a statement. — Aljazeera

Moroccan ex-minister sentenced to five years

RABAT (AP): Mohamed Ziane, an ex-Moroccan minister of human rights, was sentenced to five years in prison in a corruption case that his attorney described as retribution for outspokenness and work defending political prisoners. An appeals court in Rabat handed down the sentence after a hearing in which the frail 81-year-old Ziane — once known for his loud and combative rhetoric — was silent as a form of protest.

The court had earlier found him and two other colleagues guilty of corruption and embezzling from their political party during Morocco's 2015 election campaign. Ali Reda Ziane — his attorney who is also his son — strenuously denied the charges faced by his father and his two colleagues. He said the court had not followed typical procedures in the case or any of its appeals, all 17 of which the defense lost.

He also linked the proceedings to his father's defense of journalists and activists who had faced charges for unrelated offenses after criticizing the government. "It means freedom of expression has been curtailed in Morocco," he said in an interview with The Associated Press. The verdict marks the latest development in one of the freedom of expression cases that has drawn condemnation from Morocco's international allies and human rights organizations. It supplements a three-year sentence issued in 2022, in which Ziane was found

guilty of 11 charges including defamation, adultery, sexual harassment and insulting a public official.

In a statement, the Moroccan Association In Support of Political Prisoners called the charges arbitrary and the proceedings unfair. The group described the case against Ziane as "purely political, aiming to humiliate and subjugate the man and discourage him from expressing his opinions." Ziane was among those profiled in a 2022 Human Rights Watch report on how Morocco has harshly cracked down on the freedom of expression of those critical of its government.

"Moroccan authorities, since the mid-2010s, have increasingly accused and prosecuted high-profile journalists and activists of non-speech crimes, including crimes involving consensual sex," the report said. Morocco's government dismissed the report as biased and said it was full of false allegations. The government spokesperson did not respond to questions about Ziane's sentencing. The report documented how authorities convicted one of Ziane's sons for hiding a witness and obstructing justice after a woman scheduled to testify in a human rights case that Ziane was defending slept at their home for security reasons before having to appear in court.

It also chronicled how pro-government media published leaked images and videos — including ones showing nudity — and suggested Ziane was engaged

in an affair with a client. His son and attorney told The Associated Press that the legal complaints filed against him began after he accused Morocco's intelligence services of being behind the leak — a charge the country's Interior Ministry denied. In 2023, Amnesty International said Ziane's legal troubles were based on "bogus charges that stem from his work defending activists, journalists and victims of human rights abuses."

Those who Ziane has defended as an attorney include Taoufik Bouachrine, the former editor of the independent Arabic language daily newspaper, Akhbar Al-Youm, and Nasser Zefzafi, an activist who helped lead an anti-government protest movement in northern Morocco's Rif region last decade. Bouachrine is currently serving a 15-year sentence for human trafficking, blackmail and sexual misconduct. Zefzafi is serving a 20-year sentence for undermining public order and threatening national unity.

Ziane's defense of both men followed decades of human rights activism that began after he resigned as Morocco's Human Rights Minister, a position he served in from 1996 to 1997. After serving as president of the Rabat Bar Association, he began defending activists and journalists critical of the government in 2017, becoming a rare dissenting voice who had once served in Morocco's government.

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Biden's exit move overshadows the real Biden

PRESIDENT Joe Biden's announcement that he was not going to contest had come as a huge mood booster for the Democrats, especially influential leaders like former president Barack Obama and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi. After the announcement, Biden had begun to fade faster than expected from the news, from news headlines.

Suddenly, Vice President Kamala Harris has become the focus of news and news analysis. The big question that is being asked is whether she will win the nomination at the Democratic Party convention in Chicago next month. It appears that she might get through with the nomination.

Already, 16 of the Democratic governors had endorsed her. The liberal media that had worried about the wobbly Biden campaign had overlooked the fact that Biden enjoyed the full support of the Democrat party.

Obama's backroom manipulations to persuade Biden to step down did not work, and he maintained his silence. Obama has not yet declared his support for Harris. It would be useful to remember that Biden has transferred his support base in the party to Harris. She is not a much liked figure in the Democratic circles.

When and how Biden decided to pull out of the race will remain in the realm of speculation until Biden gives his own take on the issue. Many would like to know as to why he delayed the decision, giving about 104 days for Harris to campaign against an aggressive and triumphant Donald Trump, whose political fortunes soared after an attempted assassination bid on him about 10 days ago.

It seems to be the case that Biden was keen to remain in the contest. What might have changed his mind is when doctors had declared that he had Covid. Biden in one of the post-Covid interviews had said that he would quit only if the medical situation arose. It is possible that it is Covid that had influenced his decision to quit the presidential contest.

So, it looks like that Biden gave up the quest for a second term when it had become apparent that he may not be able to keep up the campaign momentum against a robust Trump. It would be futile to believe that Biden had heeded the advice of the political caucus that had initially supported him and later developed cold feet when Biden seemed to have fumbled in the TV debate with Trump. The liberals feared that a frail Biden would not be a match to a belligerent Trump. But they could not persuade Biden.

It is also forgotten that Biden beat Trump against many odds. Trump was a president in office. Biden projected a reassuring image of a man who believed in the simple American values of democracy. He did not want to shake up things like many liberal utopians.

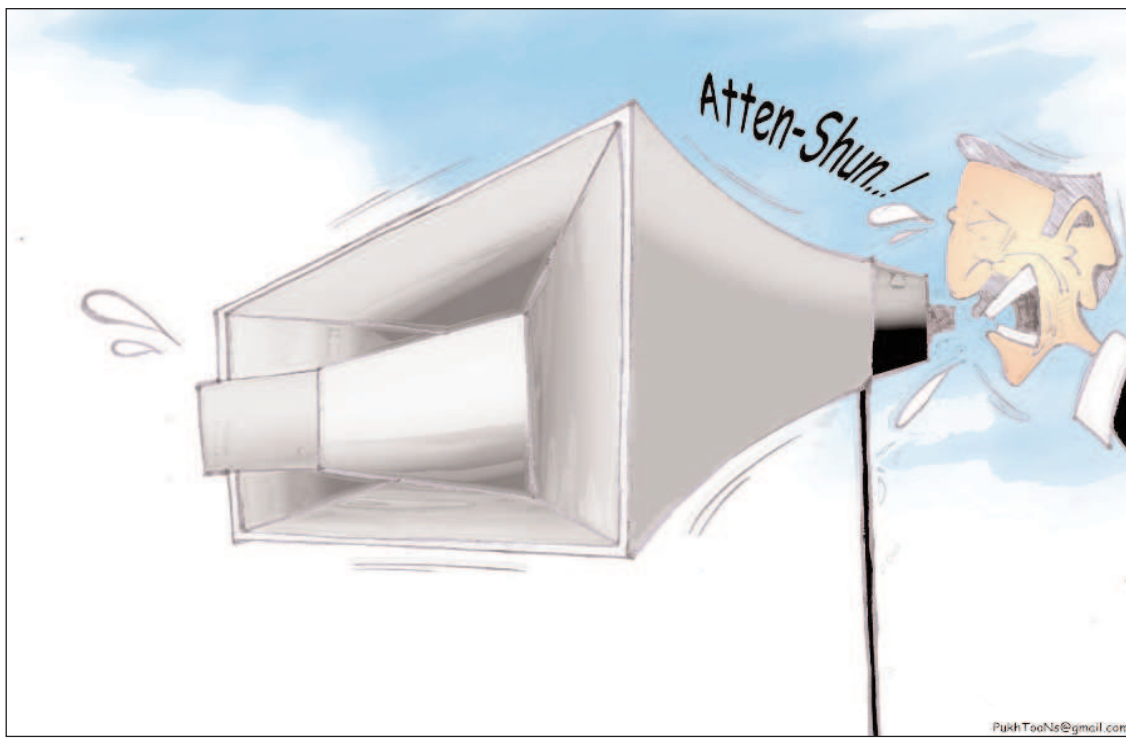
He was a man who faced hardship and tragedy in life, the death of his wife and daughter, the death of his elder son due to cancer, and the legal troubles of his second son. But he built his political career doggedly. He was no ideologue and he had no oratorical skills of a Bill Clinton and an Obama.

But he was a quintessential American in his pragmatic outlook on life, willing to negotiate and talk.

His critics have pointed out that he did not keep to his initial promise that he would be a one-time president and he would not seek re-election. But what changed his mind was the vulgar Trump politics, and he was fired to fight for what he believed to be the essential values of American democracy. He was the president who considered climate change a serious issue and he was willing to put money into it. History will judge Biden kindly.

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Reaganite America may struggle in the post-Trump era

Eyad Abu Shakra

THOSE with better insights about former US President Donald Trump's personal considerations, as well as the Republican Party's factions on the rise, can determine whether the Republicans are at an ideological crossroads ... or not.

Many, including myself, who do not claim to have privileged information about what goes on within the Republican Party, were surprised when Trump chose J.D. Vance, a young senator from Ohio, as his running mate for the presidential election in November. We, the community of foreign observers, have seen, over the past months and even years, how much Trump has succeeded in tightening his grip on a party with a long history and that is traditionally known for having many "heads."

We saw how many leaders he eliminated ... and how many others he marginalized.

We saw how many positions and policies were imposed on a partisan institution. Empowered by his simple, direct slogans, he managed to swiftly ensure shifts on matters that had been mulled over and considered painstakingly until the recent past. So much so that the party is not prepared to play the game under customary terms and restrictions.

Trump, who has absolute control over his base, has rebuilt the party, which now operates his way.

In turn, the party did not object to handing a "magician" the reins and giving him a mandate to do whatever he wants, as we saw and heard at the end of last week's Republican National Convention in Milwaukee. The two historical models closest to the Trumpian phenomenon, be it in terms of the intensity of its right-wing politics or the extent to which it has shaped the rules of the game in the party and the country, are perhaps those of former Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater and President Ronald Reagan.

However, if the former model led to a disastrous defeat for the Republicans against Democratic President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, the latter achieved historic success in 1980.

For decades, the Reagan model shaped not only the Republican Party but also

right-wing politics throughout the Western world. This success was broadly recognized as having brought an end to the Cold War by pushing the Soviet Union to collapse.

Goldwater's extremism, which left hundreds of millions frightened by the prospect of him pushing the "nuclear button" during the Vietnam War, did not have the same effect when Reagan ran for office. Goldwater's men raised the slogan: "Better dead than red" (i.e., it is better to die than surrender to communism). No, but the message

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In fact, Reaganist hawks dragged Moscow into a costly "Star Wars" battle that the Russians did not have the economic capacity to wage. Thus, the series of Soviet surrenders began under Mikhail Gorbachev, who was delighted to hear Western officials speak of his "wisdom" and "vision." In the end, the Soviet Union collapsed and the two halves of Germany were reunified. The Warsaw Pact collapsed and NATO grew. Three domestic pillars laid the foundation for the success of the Reaganite model, both within the Republican Party and across the US. The first pillar was market liberalization and reducing the state's role in the economy, which Reagan and his economic team called "small government" and which came to be known as Reaganomics.
.....

of Reagan-era hawks like Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was very clear about the prospect of waging a "limited" nuclear war, especially containing the "nuclear theater" in Europe and keeping it under control.

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The second pillar was the powerful grip of the

may be too early to know for sure what Vance will manage to do when he takes the helm — if he ever does — there is undoubtedly a wing within the party that the Trumpian phenomenon has obscured from view. This wing, if we are to understand its philosophy through the statements of Vance before his nomination in Milwaukee, indicates that some Republicans, though with great caution, are moving away from the three pillars of the Reaganite model.

Foreign military and political interventions going hand in hand, an absolute commitment to the free market economy and the centrality of evangelicalism, with its religious and moral teachings, do not seem like they will continue to be taken for granted once Trump hands Vance the reigns and the time comes to change the guard, as they say.

Supporting Ukraine, for example, does not mean much to the movement embodied by Vance. Neither does ensuring Europe's security through a strong and broad NATO, nor does containing Vladimir Putin's ambitions. Indeed, Moscow is no longer the greatest threat to US interests, as Trump was keen to remind us.

Moreover, the free market economics of Reagan and the Chicago school's monetary Friedmanism do not suit the states that are religiously and socially conservative or the poor states that rely on obsolete economic resources, such as coal mines and other traditional industries in the Rust Belt. Accordingly, state intervention is needed to push back against cheap foreign labor and the advanced technology creeping in from East Asia.

Finally, while the Christian faith runs deep across the spectrum of the American right — especially among rural Republicans in the Bible Belt — the "theology" of right-wing identity is clearly on the back foot in favor of the "nationalist" face of Make America Great Again, sometimes in explicitly racist terms, targeting some minorities and large sectors of immigrants.

Yes, it may still be too early to determine what comes next for the Republicans, but it will certainly be interesting.

Arab and Muslim Americans key to US election

Ray Hanania

THERE is no doubt that US President Joe Biden's much-criticized performance in last month's debate with former President Donald Trump raised concerns among many Democrats about his ability to win November's election.

However, the truth is that we did not need to see Biden's debate performance to know that he was in trouble. His unelectability had already been determined in the primary elections as a consequence of the #AbandonBiden movement, which encouraged Democrats to withdraw their support of Biden in several key swing states.

This movement siphoned Arab and Muslim votes away from Biden in states such as Michigan, Arizona, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Georgia, New Jersey and Nevada. Without their return, Biden's reelection hopes were doomed.

and Israel, as justification to seek the ethnic cleansing of Gaza's Christian and Muslim Palestinians, hoping to push them out in order to annex the important coastal land.

The Biden administration subsequently failed to use its influence to force Israel's government to restrain its response, which has resulted in the murder of at least 39,000 Gazans — and perhaps as many as 186,000 — and the destruction of the homes and lives of more than 1.5 million.

Demands in the early weeks of the Israeli carnage for a ceasefire that might have prevented so many deaths were ignored by the Biden administration. This angered Arab and Muslim Americans so much that they significantly undermined Biden's election chances by not voting for him in the swing state primaries. Instead, they voted for other candi-

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Without the support of Arab and Muslim Americans, Biden would have lost those key states, even if they did not switch to Trump and instead voted for a third-party candidate such as Dr. Jill Stein, a progressive Jewish independent who opposes Israel's government and supports the two-state solution for Palestinians. Instead of recognizing this fact — that the abandonment of Biden by Arab and Muslim voters doomed his reelection bid — the media and politicians are focused only on Biden's dismal debate performance. Arabs and Muslims are among the most marginalized voter constituencies in America. They are ignored by the mainstream news media and by the political system.
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Monday's momentous decision by Biden to withdraw from the race and not seek a second term in the White House should put the spotlight on the role Arab and Muslim American voters will play in the election.

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Arabs and Muslims are among the most marginalized voter constituencies in America. They are ignored by the mainstream news media and by the political system.

This was demonstrated in the aftermath of the brutal Hamas violence against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Tel Aviv has used that act of violence, which was one of a series of violent acts perpetrated by both Hamas

dates or even cast blank votes for "undecided" or "uncommitted."

Now that Biden has withdrawn from the election, there is a campaign by some Democrats to put Vice President Kamala Harris in his place. Biden has endorsed Harris to replace him on the ballot and Harris announced her intention to run. But for Arabs and Muslims, Harris is no different than Biden. She was silent on the call for a ceasefire and has been in lockstep with Biden.

Alternate candidates are expected to surface as contenders to succeed Biden, including third-party independent Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Sen. Joe Manchin, former First Lady Michelle Obama and former Democratic hopeful Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Yet, no matter who the party rallies around to succeed Biden, no Democratic candidate can win the White House unless they address the concerns of Arabs and Muslims and the powerful voter display seen during the primary elections.

Without a major realignment of American foreign policy toward Palestine, Israel and the Middle East, the Democrats are in for an uphill election fight they are almost certain to lose.

In search of a path toward a better world

Wu Hongbo

THE challenges facing the North and the South, the East and the West, can be boiled down to two major issues — peace and development.

Without peace, there will be no sustainable development; without development, peace will not last. As peace and development are inseparable, they should be handled together.

In terms of peace, conflicts have been increasing in number over the last decade. Ukraine and Gaza are still bleeding. A huge number of infrastructure and facilities have been destroyed. People are suffering. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the world is not sleepwalking into a wider war; it is doing so with eyes open.

This brings me to the issue of Ukraine, the top topic for Europe. Since the very beginning, China has made its stance clear on the

issue of Ukraine. First, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected. Second, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be observed. Third, the legitimate security concerns of all countries should be taken into account. Fourth, all efforts conducive to peaceful settlement of the crisis should be supported.

China is not adding fuel to the fire. Nor does China encourage either side to fight with more firepower. China has normal trade relations with both Russia and Ukraine. China is still Ukraine's largest trading partner. The two countries have stayed in touch with each other. In early June, China and Ukraine held consultations at the vice-foreign minister level.

Recently, China and Brazil reached a six-point common understanding on political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, which has gained

positive response from more than 100 countries. China is not sitting there with folded arms, but striving for a peaceful solution in its own way. To call China Russia's supporter is a sheer fabrication. China will continue to work for the peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis.

In terms of development, only 15 percent of the 169 targeted sustainable development goals are on track. CNN reported that 5 billion out of 8 billion people globally have become poorer since 2020, while, during the same period, the wealth of the richest five people in the world has more than doubled. Forbes told us that at the current pace, it would take 230 more years to eliminate global poverty.

What is the root cause of all the troubles? A senior diplomat gave us a perfect answer at this year's Munich Security Conference. He

said, in the international system, if you are not at the table, you are on the menu. That is the rule of the animal world. It is the Law of the Jungle.

Talking about security, if one country or a group of countries try to seek "absolute security" for themselves, they are putting other countries in "absolute insecurity". This would lead to the lurking danger of future conflicts.

What we are facing together is not a single challenge, but a whole set of challenges. What we need is an international order that works for all. We will build a world order that serves everybody without reinventing the wheel.

Seventy years ago, when over 80 colonies were trying to achieve independence, the prevailing catchphrase was "might is right". Exactly 70 years ago, the Chinese

government put forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, namely mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. The Principles have been enshrined in the Chinese Constitution. China has been following the guiding principles for the past 70 years and is celebrating the 70th anniversary. China is a stabilizing factor in world affairs. To suggest the rise of China is a threat to world peace is absolutely unfounded.

China has been trying to find the common values acceptable to all countries, and has so far identified five features for the future world: First, lasting peace. I believe nobody has objections. Second, universal security. If any country is feeling unsafe, it could be a

problem. Third, common prosperity. Many troubles are attributable to the widening gap between the rich and the poor. The best solution is common prosperity. Fourth, openness and inclusiveness. It is dangerous to divide the world into different blocs, and separate production and supply chains by building different silos. Fifth, a clean and beautiful environment. That is what China is trying to deliver with its efforts to address the climate change challenges.

A world with the above five features is summarized precisely by President Xi Jinping as a community with a shared future for mankind.

In September, the UN will convene the Summit of the Future, the biggest UN event of the year. China stands ready to work with other UN member states to contribute to a better future of the world.

In Bangladesh, protests are no longer about the quota system

IT has been more than 10 days now since the start of the protests against a government job quota system. Students and youth across the country have been demonstrating against what they see as an unfair policy favouring a certain group – children of “freedom fighters” in the Bangladesh war of independence. But after the government unleashed unprecedented violence, the protests have gone beyond the demand for cancellation of the quota system.

A list of demands by students has been circulated in an underground press release.

1) The prime minister must accept responsibility for the mass killings of students and publicly apologise.

2) The home minister and the road, transport and bridges minister [the latter is also the secretary general of the Awami League], must resign from their [cabinet] positions and the party.

3) Police officers present in the sites where students were killed must be sacked.

4) Vice Chancellors of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar and Rajshahi universities must resign.

5) The police and goons who attacked the students and those who instigated the attacks must be arrested.

6) Families of the killed and injured must be compensated.

7) Bangladesh Chhatra League [BCL, the pro-government student wing, which is, effectively, the government’s vigilante force] must be banned from student politics and a student union established.

8) All educational institutions and halls of residences must be reopened.

9) Guarantees must be provided that no academic or administrative harassment of protesters will take place.

That Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina publicly apologises for her disparaging comments about the protesters may seem a minor issue, but will surely be the sticking point.

This prime minister is not the apologetising kind, regardless of what she does. Regardless of the allegations that she has rigged elections, regardless of the fact that corruption has been at an all-time high during her tenure, regardless of the fact that more than 100 students and other protesters have been murdered by her goons and the security forces, regardless of the fact that she has

deemed all those who oppose her views to be “razakars” (collaborators of the Pakistani occupation army in 1971).

There is certainly not anyone in the negotiating camp who would have the temerity to even suggest such a course for the prime minister. There is a Bangla saying, “You only have one

Compensation is not an issue. State coffers are there to be pillaged and public funds being dispensed at party behest is a common enough practice. The demand to ban BCL and associated student organisations in Dhaka, Jahangirnagar and Rajshahi universities is a sticking point, as they are the ones who keep the student body in check and are the party cadre called upon when there is any sign of rebellion. It is a vigilante group that can kill, kidnap or disappear at party command. For a government that lacks legitimacy, these are the foot soldiers who terrorise and are essential parts of the coercive machinery. Educational institutions being reopened is an issue. Students have traditionally been the initiators of protests. With such simmering discontent, this would be dangerous, particularly if the local muscle power was clipped. The return of independent thinking is something all tyrants fear. The cessation of harassment is easy to implement on paper.

head on your neck.”

The ministers do the heavy lifting. They control the muscles in the streets and “manage” things when resistance brews. The ministers are high-ups in the party, and apart from the difficulty of finding suitable replacements, discarding them would send out the wrong message within the party.

Vice chancellors and proctors having to resign is an easy one. These are discardable minions. The perks are attractive and there are many to fill the ranks. The police being dumped is not as easy, as they provide some of the muscle, but “friendly fire” does take place.

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Shahidul Alam

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reports as I can. Many of the bodies have a single, precisely targeted bullet hole. Pellets are aimed at the eyes.

International news, out of touch as the internet has been shut down and mobile connectivity severely throttled, say deaths are more than 100. Those monitoring feel that these numbers are

A student talks of a body lying on the empty flyover being dragged off by the police. A friend talks of an unmarked car spraying bullets at the crowd as it speeds past. She was lucky. The shooter was firing from a window on the other side. A mother grieves over her three-year-old senselessly killed.

A gory report of a human brain congealed on a tarmac is a first for me. The curfew has resulted in rubbish being piled up on the streets. The brain will be there for people to see, perhaps deliberately.

The raid at 2:20 earlier this morning in the flat across the street was also in commando fashion. The video footage is blurry, but one can only see segments of the huge contingent of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), heavily armed police and others in plain-clothes. They eventually walked out with one person, perhaps an opposition leader.

A significant underestimate of the dead and missing. Government news report even fewer.

Staff at city hospitals are less tight-lipped and can give reasonably accurate figures, but not all bodies go to hospital morgues. An older hospital in Dhaka did report more than 200 bodies being brought in. The injured who die on the way to the hospital are not generally admitted. Families prefer to take the body home rather than hand them over to the police. Bodies are also being disappeared.

Police and postmortem reports, when available, fail to mention bullet wounds. The body of my former student Priyo was among the missing ones, but we were eventually able to locate him. A friend took him back to his home in Rangpur to be buried. Constant monitoring and checking by activists resulted in the bullet wound being mentioned in his case, though a deliberate mistake in his name in the hospital’s release order that was overseen by a police officer attempted to complicate things. Fortunately, it was rectified in the nick of time.

Getting the news out has become extremely difficult. This piece is going out through a complicated route. I have deleted all digital traces to protect the intermediaries.

The entire internet network has been brought down; a junior information

technology minister has said that this is due to the “unstable situation”.

Helicopters fly low, beaming searchlights downwards. There have been reports of shots fired at people. Tear gas and stun grenade shells become lethal when dropped from a height.

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The raid at 2:20 earlier this morning in the flat across the street was also in commando fashion. The video footage is blurry, but one can only see segments of the huge contingent of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), heavily armed police and others in plain-clothes. They eventually walked out with one person, perhaps an opposition leader.

Armoured personnel carriers prowling the streets. Orders to shoot on sight have not quelled the anger and people are still coming onto the streets despite the curfew. There is the other side of the story. Reports of policemen being lynched and offices being set on fire are some of the violent responses to the government-led brutality.

Then there is the impact of the protests on the average person, as most working-class Bangladeshis live day-to-day. Their daily earnings feed their families. As a prime minister, who desperately clings on to a position she does not legitimately have the right to, and a public, who have been tormented enough, to battle it out, they are the ones who starve.

Private TV channels vie with the state-owned BTV and churn out government propaganda. As I watch members of the public complain on one, I am unable to forget all the average people I spoke to – the rickshaw drivers, and even fruit sellers with perishable goods – who expressed solidarity with the students. Their immediate suffering, though painful, is something they are willing to accept. She has to go, they say.

— Aljazeera

The biggest lie we tell people

Asha Iyer Kumar

erned by how we will be perceived by others, and for this, we never tell the truth. We never reveal the reality behind the mask of ‘I am OK’, carefully sugarcoating our travails with fake smiles and laughter. Our excessive need to be liked; to be appreciated; to make others happy often robs us of our freedom to cry or even sigh loudly. “Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone.” And we fear being alone like we fear death.

The reason for our practised lie of telling people we are fine might also stem

What does ‘OK’ in reality mean? Good? Not good? Or is it an ambiguous reply that one can interpret any which way, based on the context and the questioner’s disposition? Posed with a question on our well-being, seldom do we give an honest reply. How many times have we heard someone say, “Life sucks”, “Going through hell” or “not good”? At worst, people say, “going on”. But then why do we shy away from telling people the truth of our lives, if not at length at least the fact that not all is well? Why do we hasten to make people believe the lie of being well, alive and kicking? Because we all have been given to believe that whiners are not winners.

from the fact that we don’t want people close to us or those who genuinely care about us to get worked up in our thoughts. We conceal many unsavoury truths not with a wily intention, but because we are convinced that making family and friends privy to our troubles might cause them pain.

Yet again, we don’t want to cause undue stress and distress with our sob stories; we want people to be happy with us so that they may love us. Hence we lie over and over again – “I am good”. “I am fine.”

But of late, I have strived to be a little more honest than I have been before. The idea of being judged as wimpy or sullen for telling the truth doesn’t haunt me because it is what it is. By no stretch of imagination do I expect anyone to resolve my personal woes, but I am increasingly becoming aware of the adverse effects of feigning

to be fine. I have divorced the notion that we must fake it till we make it.

I am becoming increasingly aware of the fact that pain and suffering is endemic to human existence and there is no reason why we must either glorify it or negate it. There is a simmer in every heart and an uneasy tremor in every body. The acceptance of reality is the first step towards alleviating the bitterness and pain that come along with material life and tenuous relationships. If I am unwell, I might as well spell it out so the other person may know. Not in the expectation that compassion will flow instantly, but

it keeps me from turning my life into a travesty. Saying it aloud will elicit varied responses. From story topping to offering left-handed solutions, people will be very forthcoming in their views. They may be affected by my plight or be ridiculously impervious to my pain. They may probe further out of genuine concern or with the intention of feeding their gossipy nature. What they do with my answer is their look out. They can stew new stories or leave it by the wayside. They can offer me a shoulder or share in my happiness. No matter what they choose to do, in my own defence I have only this much to say: Ask me “How are you?” and be prepared to hear it like it is. Of being ill, well or neither. The third option because sometimes it is hard to decipher how I am. Life is often a grey, obscure haze.

— Khaleej Times

US action on a two-state solution in Israel-Palestine cannot wait

AS Gaza is decimated and millions of Palestinians there desperately try to hold on to life without shelter, food, water or adequate medical care, the Israeli cabinet continues to “legalise” settlement outposts in the West Bank – deepening challenges for a viable two-state solution.

In blatant defiance of international law, Israel’s Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich framed the most recent settlement expansion decision on June 27 as retaliation against the recent recognition of a Palestinian state by several European countries, promising, “For every country that unilaterally recognises a Palestinian state, we will establish a settlement.”

While this promise is the natural next step of Israel’s long-term strategy of annexing the Palestinian territory under its occupation, the blackmailing inference suggests an awareness of illegal settlements as the linchpin of Israeli efforts to block continued peace efforts. It also reveals how and why this conflict cannot be solved by the Israelis and Palestinians alone.

Although before October 7 Palestine was recognised as a sovereign state by 143 of the 193 United Nations members, it is the recognition by European states that most threatens Israel’s colonial settlement project and its far right’s determination to make it impossible for the Palestinians to pursue independence.

In addition to the multifaceted economic, security and diplomatic rela-

tionships it has with Europe, the unique and complex history around the Holocaust that justified the establishment of a Jewish state is central to how Israel defines itself as a refuge for Jews worldwide today.

Horrified by the humanitarian disaster unleashed on Gaza and reflecting a growing movement in global public opinion, Ireland and Norway, followed by Spain and Slovenia, recognised Palestinian statehood based on the 1967 borders. Soon after, Malta affirmed its readiness to do the same “when the time is right”. These bold moves, taken after the United States, on April 17, vetoed a widely backed UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution that would have paved the way for full UN membership for Palestine, pushed the number of European states recognising Palestine to 12, including Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Sweden, and the total number of UN member states to 147.

The recognition alone is not the solution, but a step towards a sustainable solution. Recalling how his people once made a similar plea for international recognition of their independence, Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar described the two-state solution as “the only credible path for Israel, Palestine, and their peoples”.

In addition to wide international consensus, a two-state solution is premised on the right of self-determination and

respect for the rights of both peoples on the one hand, and sheer pragmatism on the other.

It offers a realistic compromise given the demographic reality of having two peoples on one land.

Even Hamas, long opposed to Israel’s existence, has recently indicated a willingness to disarm if a Palestinian state were established.

The roots of the two-state concept can be traced back to the 1947 UN Partition Plan (Resolution 181), which proposed dividing the British Mandate of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. The 1993 Oslo Accords marked a significant milestone, establishing mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and promised the materialisation of an independent Palestine by May 1999. This led to the founding of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and setting a framework for future negotiations on core issues.

The accords failed to produce a two-state solution for several known reasons. These include ambiguity in the agreement (on borders, Jerusalem, refugees) that led to divergent interpretations and growing distrust, weak political will and leadership, the failure to address core divisive narratives and to stop extremist elements on both sides from serving as spoilers, especially after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, which significantly hardened the Israeli position towards a peace settle-

Sultan Barakat and Erin McCandless

ment. However, it is the continuation of state-sanctioned Israeli settlement expansion in occupied territory, which dramatically altered demographic realities on the ground, that serves as the primary obstacle to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state and the realisation of a two-state solution.

Despite these setbacks, the international community has consistently reaffirmed support for a two-state solution. It remains the only credible path to peace and the only basis for sustaining it.

Reflecting the wide member-state consensus that exists on this path, the UN has passed some 800 resolutions dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and several pivotal ones explicitly supporting two states.

UNSC Resolution 242 (1967), for example, called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory and recognition of every state’s right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries. Critics argue that a two-state solution is no longer viable due to settlement expansion, security concerns, and historical and religious claims to the entirety of the land on both sides.

However, these obstacles, while significant, are not insurmountable. Other seemingly intractable conflicts, such as those in Northern Ireland and South Africa, have found resolution through compromise and dialogue. Moreover,

alternative proposals like a binational state or confederation model face even greater practical and political hurdles. A two-state solution remains the only approach with broad international support and a track record of progress, however limited.

What then should be the next steps for securing a two-state solution?

First, the momentum to recognise Palestine as a state must be maintained, with those states that have recognised it recently actively advocating for the remaining few to do so, in particular the US and the United Kingdom.

Despite the US’s “ironclad” support for Israel in Gaza, now is the time to put international pressure on Washington, as President Joe Biden does not necessarily oppose Palestinian statehood, but believes it will only come from direct negotiations between the parties. A second Trump administration, which the polls show could well be in power in a matter of months, will fare far worse for this path. Trump’s stated opposition to a two-state solution (based on Palestinian support for Hamas) is at odds with every American president who has engaged the issue. The conditions are equally ripe for applying pressure on London.

The British Labour Party, which won a landslide in a hard-fought election and formed a new government earlier this month, has pledged to recognise a Palestinian

State “as a contribution to a renewed peace process which results in a two-state solution”.

Second, support for the two-state solution in Israel should be nurtured and built upon. Despite the Netanyahu-led Israeli government vehemently opposing a two-state solution, it is important to recognise that the two-state solution has centrally featured in Israeli politics since the 1990s, with the majority of prime ministers supporting the notion, albeit under certain conditions, such as demilitarisation of the Palestinian state. While Israeli society fluctuates on this topic – understandable in a protracted, violent conflict where media is constricted – the majority seems to accept the notion according to various polls. In the context of an Israeli leadership focused on peace, the support would likely be higher. The Israeli voices who seek peace, security and dignity for all should be amplified, especially in light of the far right’s increased efforts to demonise and sideline them since October 7.

Third, although efforts to achieve reconciliation between Hamas and the PA have intensified since October 7, partly thanks to China’s facilitation, more needs to be done for the Palestinians to capture the current momentum of recognition.

Hamas’s expressed willingness to join the PLO to form a unified government in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank must be built upon and the PA must come forward with a comprehen-

sive and inclusive governance reform plan. But in order to achieve this, the international community must first ensure the safety of the Palestinian people by offering protection, at least for a transitional period.

Fourth, Israeli settlements must be reversed. There is no question that, to achieve peace, illegal Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territory need to be rolled back.

Last week’s International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on the issue – which determined that Israel’s continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful and should come to an end “as rapidly as possible” – should provide a roadmap.

The surge in settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem since October 7 has reminded the world that continued colonisation is incompatible with the creation of a viable Palestinian state and thus sustainable peace. For the first time, France, the UK, the US and later Germany and Poland have applied sanctions against Israeli individuals responsible for such violence (albeit a small number).

Finally, while many Palestinians and critical analysts understandably dismiss discussions of “the day after” as the killing continues in Gaza, to prevent another cycle of rebuilding and decimation, steadfast attention must urgently be paid to core issues underpinning sustainability. First and foremost, as

SCCI calls for revoking IPPs’ contracts

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq termed the independent power producers (IPPs) a cancer for the country’s economy, business and industry and demanded all IPPs contracts cancellation. Despite surplus in electricity and gas production, he said equal rates are being charged from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with major provinces, which is completely unjust with terrorism-affected business community and people of the province. He said SCCI has already rejected additional taxation measures in budget 2024-25, stating that it has not made it difficult to keep operational industry, business and trade but impossible after slapping further taxes. The chamber president said the tax system in Pakistan has been implemented on a pattern of Australian tax law, which has failed in income, sales tax and other taxes. He stressed it is essential that system on pattern of Australian should be replaced on tax model of Uni-

ted Arab Emirates (UAEs). Fuad Ishaq was speaking during a ‘Tajir’ Convention on the theme of “Anti-people Budget and difficulties of traders community” organized jointly by Jamaate Islami Pakistan and Pakistan Business Forum in Peshawar. Hafiz Naeem ul Rehman, emir of the Jamaat-e-Islami was chief guest at the event. Besides, Central president of the Pakistan Business Forum Muhammad Kashif Chaudhry, JI provincial amir Prof Muhammad Ibrahim, members of the SCCI Nadeem Rauf, Saddam Gul, Fazl e Wahid, Secretary Sohail Anjum, a large number of trader leaders and representative of business community were attended the convention. Terming the IPPs a major burden of the Pakistan’ economy, Fuad Ishaq said the government had paid Rs2200billion on head of capacity charges to IPPs in last year. In the fiscal year 2024-25, he said Rs2800billion would be paid to IPPs on head of capacity charges. He added that contracts with 12 new IPPs were made, which need to be

halted. He said SCCI has played a front foot role against IPPs contracts. The government had made payment of Rs60billion to those plants which didn’t remain operational even a single day, Ishaq revealed. Of the total 4500 megawatt electricity production in KP, he informed 2700 MW were consumed in summer and 1100 MW in winter and additional electricity was exported to the national grid. Similarly, he said KP is producing 31000 barrel oil/day which is 42 percent of the total production of the country, but, he regretted no oil refinery was set up in KP. Likewise, he said total KP has total gas production is 550mmcfds against its consumption of 200 mmcfds while the province’s LPG production is 850 metric ton/day. Of the total production of the natural gas, he elaborated 35mmcfds were given to industry, 40mmcfds to CNG sector, while 125mmcfds to commercial and domestic consumers. Furthermore, he explained natural gas Rs2700 per mmbtu are being charged

from industry whereas Rs4000 mmbtu are being charged from commercial and domestic consumers. Despite the surplus gas production, he said KP was put into the RLNG basket which was totally unfair and unacceptable. The total electricity installed capacity in Pakistan is 42000 megawatt, but demand is 30000 megawatt while power transmission system capacity has been reduced from 24000 MW to 18000 MW, Ishaq elaborated. The SCCI chief said Pakhtunkhwa Power Development Organisation (PEDO) had made schemes on the run of rivers but progress on these schemes was at snail pace. Fuad Ishaq condemned the imposition of withholding tax at a ratio of 2.5 percent on traders’. He said SCCI categorically rejected the collection of additional taxes from the business community. The chamber president stated it is totally unfair to make shopkeepers and traders as withholding agents. He asked the government to provide facilities and incentives to traders instead of snatching morsel from their mouths.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fuad Ishaq speaking during Tajir Convention jointly organized by Jamaate Islami Pakistan and Pakistan Business Forum.

49 illegal connections cut off

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has ramped up its crackdown on gas theft, resulting in the disconnection of 49 illegal connections across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad. The crackdown has led to fines totaling Rs 0.58 million. In Lahore, 24 illegal connections were terminated. Multan saw 14 disconnections. The Faisalabad team cut off 2 illegal connections and imposed Rs 0.04 million in fines. In Bahawalpur, 2 illegal connections and 1 compressor connection were terminated. The Gujranwala team disconnected 2 illegal connections and imposed fines of Rs 0.14 million. In Mardan, 3 illegal connections were cut off with Rs 0.03 million in fines. Sheikhpura had 1 illegal connection terminated, with fines amounting to Rs 0.37 million.

DHO visits Hands Institute

F.P. Report

KARACHI: District Health Officer (DHO) Malir, Dr. Imdad Ali Channa, was the special guest at Hands Institute of Development Studies, invited by Rector Professor Dr. Abuzar Wajidi. During the visit, a comprehensive discussion was held focusing on initiatives to enhance educational opportunities for children in the Malir district. As part of the visit, District Health Officer (DHO) Malir planted a commemorative tree and distributed rewards to support the future development of Hands Institute of Development Studies. The event also saw the participation of Additional District Health Officer Malir, Dr. Wazir Ahmed, Deputy Chief Executive of Hands, Maqbool Rahu, Registrar Syed Nasir Ali Mirza, SO to Rector, Lecturer Mehreen Shaikh, and Procurement Officer Mahesh Hotwani. Rector Professor Dr. Abuzar Wajidi expressed his gratitude to District Health Officer (DHO) Malir Dr. Imdad Ali Channa and Additional DHO Dr. Wazir Ahmed for their visit and support towards the institute’s efforts in promoting education in the Malir district.

Minister holds zoom meeting with Moody’s

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday held a zoom meeting with the representatives from Moody’s Ratings and updated them about the economic outlook of the country. He highlighted that the foreign exchange reserves surpassing USD 9 billion, stable CPI inflation at 12.6%, and a robust 7.7% increase in foreign remittances, reflecting economic resilience, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance. He emphasized a 30% rise in tax collection in fiscal year 2024 and outlined reforms to broaden the tax base, including new agricultural taxes and digital initia-

tives at the Federal Board of Revenue. He also noted that over 150,000 retailers have registered as first-time taxpayers, marking a significant stride towards broadening the tax base. The minister mentioned the ambitious targets aimed to increase revenues by 3% of GDP by FY 2027, with plans for a primary surplus of 1% of GDP, demonstrating Pakistan’s commitment to fiscal sustainability and growth. Muhammad Aurangzeb updated Moody’s representatives on the successful completion of Pakistan’s 9-month Stand By Arrangement with the International Monetary Fund, emphasizing its positive impact on macroeconomic indicators.

He highlighted multilateral institutions’ confidence in financing Pakistan’s developmental projects and apprised Moody’s of Pakistan’s recently finalized Staff-Level Agreement (SLA) with the IMF for a new medium-term program. The Minister underscored ongoing reforms in the energy sector and State-Owned Enterprises, including privatization and right-sizing efforts aimed at improving operational efficiency and governance. Moody’s Ratings representatives appreciated the comprehensive briefing and expressed confidence in Pakistan’s economic trajectory underpinned by robust fiscal reforms and strategic initiatives.

PSX gains 447 points to close at 78,987.09

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 447.90 points, a positive change of 0.57 percent, closing at 78,987.09 points against 78,539.19 points on the last working day. A total of 316,245,462 shares were traded during the day as compared to 375,599,184 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 17.074 billion against Rs 19,350 billion on the last trading day. As many as 433 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 225 of them recorded gains and 164 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 44 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were PIA Holding Company with 22,079,450 shares at Rs 15.63 per share, Pak Elektron with 19,793,659 shares at Rs 26.26 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 19,515,808 shares at Rs1.17 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 74.08

per share price, closing at Rs 18,200.00, whereas the runner-up was Lucky Core Industries Limited with a Rs 61.25 rise in its per share price to Rs 966.36. PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 95.42 per share closing at Rs 858.78, followed by Pakistan Engineering Company Limited with a Rs51.00 decline to close at Rs670.00. Rupee sheds 10 paise against dollar Pakistani rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.40 against the previous day’s closing of Rs 278.30. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.5 and Rs 280 respectively. The price of Euro came down by 22 paise to close at Rs 302.79 against the last day’s closing of Rs 303.01, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen gained 01 paise and closed at Rs1.78, whereas a decrease

of 01 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs359.63 as compared to the last day’s closing of Rs359.64. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paise each to close at Rs75.79 and Rs74.22 respectively. Gold rates decrease by Rs500 per tola to Rs250,500 The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.500 and was sold at Rs. 250,500 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs. 251,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 429 to Rs. 214,763 from Rs. 215,192 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold came down to Rs.196,866 from Rs. 197,260, 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 decreased by \$11 to \$2,391 from \$2,402, the Association reported.

PIAF flays ‘Founders’ for breaking unity of business community

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) pattern-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar has flayed the Founders for parting ways, saying the group has broken the unity of the business community, pledging it would continue the winning record of the last several years in the upcoming LCCI elections 2024. Addressing a press conference here at PIAF Office, he said that he himself along with LCCI former president Muhammad Ali Mian and late Sheikh Arshad had signed the PIAF-Founders alliance agreement, as the copy of the alliance agreement is the evidence. “This office used to be the PIAF-Founders Alliance. What happened to the founder overnight is beyond comprehension. All this happened at a time when the business community needed unity.” He said that more industrial groups and trade bod-

ies have announced their support for the PIAF in the upcoming LCCI elections, expressing full confidence of the leadership of Mian Anjum Nisar, rejecting all other so-called groups altogether. In a large gathering, attended by a large number of business representatives from across the city and the members of the PIAF posed their confidence for the Anjum Nisar group, assuring him of full support in the upcoming election of the LCCI. Mian Najam Nisar and Fahimur Rehman Saigol said that the service of traders from the platform of PIAF has been going on for the past 52 years and the presence of a large number of traders and industrialists in every event is the proof in this regard. It shows that PIAF is not just a show but a name of service to the business community. PIAF Fahimur Rahman Saigol, addressing the meeting, said that PIAF has an excellent record of 22 years of service to the busi-

ness community because PIAF brings qualified and working people to Lahore to advocate for the business community. Criticizing the government energy policy he said the PIAF has been raising its voice for the last four years that the industrial wheel of the country cannot run on this policy of electricity. Earlier it was said that there is no electricity, now they say that there is abundant electricity. People are reducing the use of electricity all over the world. PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the PIAF is not doing drawing room politics, we are people living in the business community and markets. Piaf is not the name of a few elders, but the name of businessmen and industrialists consisting of 180 executive committee members. Fahimur Rahman said that we are determined, we stand for the business community while the alliances are an unnatural one and

unnatural goods have a shorter life span. Our aim is to improve Pakistan’s national economy and bring the business community out of these difficult situations. Chairman Progressive Group Khalid Usman said this is not just a matter of an election. If you connect the dots, everything will be clear. The business community is going through the most difficult times in the history of Pakistan which is bringing these people together on one platform. Muhammad Ali Mian, Mian Abuzar Shad, Vice Chairman PIAF Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary, Vice President Lahore Chamber Adnan Khalid Butt, Candidate nominated by PIAF for Lahore Chamber Election Rana Nisar, Sheikh Fayyaz, Ahsan Sheikh, Amir Ali, Malik Ahad Amin, and PIAF executive committee members and a large number of members from different markets were present. General Secretary Shah Alam.

Most Asian markets rise after US rally ahead of inflation report

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets rose Tuesday, building on a tech-led surge in Wall Street equities as investors returned to the sector after last week’s losses, while attention turned to the upcoming release of key US inflation data. Joe Biden’s decision to drop out of the presidential election race and endorse Vice President Kamala Harris had little major impact on sentiment, analysts said, though there is much debate about who she chooses as her running mate. However, analysts warned the road will likely be bumpy over the next few months. Saira Malik at Nuveen said Biden’s decision to pull out of the presidential race “adds even more uncertainty around what has already been a tumultuous 2024 geopolitical landscape. “Mr Biden announced he will endorse... Kamala Harris, but the exact path forward is uncertain. “If this news gives former President Trump a

bump in the polls, that could provide a further boost to areas of the market that have been pricing in increased prospects for a Republican sweep in November. “One thing does seem certain: More twists and turns in the political roller coaster in the months ahead.” Traders are also hoping for more policy announcements to kickstart the stuttering Chinese economy after last week’s closely watched Third Plenum of leaders unveiled few measures save a pledge to help local governments financially. This week has seen a more upbeat start after a sell-off last week that came on the back of a tech retreat fuelled by profit-taking and

reports the White House was planning a fresh crackdown on firms supplying chip tech to China. But optimism for another healthy earnings season, particularly among semiconductor makers, saw a bounce on Monday, with market darling Nvidia among the big winners along with Broadcom and Texas Instruments. This week sees releases by Google parent Alphabet, Tesla and Spotify. Tech firms have led the rally in markets this year, helping push all three main indexes in New York to multiple record highs, thanks to expectations the Federal Reserve will cut borrowing costs. After last week was devoted to the US election and assassination attempt

on Trump, the central bank’s monetary policy is back in focus ahead of Friday’s report on personal consumption expenditure, the Fed’s favoured gauge of inflation. The figure has come down steadily in recent months, giving central bank officials room to begin cutting rates, with bets on a September move increasing. In New York, all three main indexes rose, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq up more than one percent each. And most of Asia followed suit, with Tokyo, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Wellington, Jakarta and Taipei in positive territory. However, Hong Kong and Shanghai edged down.

Lost & Found

I have lost my documents (Bachelor of Science Electrical Engineering (BSEE) original Degree and Transcript of European University of Lefke, Northern Cyprus), at Bilal Coach Stand Buner on 23-10-2022. The finder please contact to Abdur Rahman S/o Bakht Razaq of Daggar Kalay, Tehsil Daggar, District Buner. Contact No. 03305627250, Passport No. MQ9158882, Student ID No. 154311.

ANKARA (APP): Oil prices increased on Tuesday following growing rate cut signals from the US Federal Reserve (Fed) and moderate investor profit-taking while global demand uncertainties and cease-fire attempts in Middle East limit price rises. International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$82.48 per barrel at 11.55 a.m. local time (0855GMT), an increase of 0.10% from the closing price of \$82.40 per barrel in the previous trading session. The American benchmark West Texas Interme-

diate (WTI) traded at \$78.52 per barrel at the same time, a 0.15% rise from the previous session that closed at \$78.40 per barrel. Analysts expect the US Federal Reserve (Fed) to cut interest rates 3 times by the end of the year, according to the pricing for the future policies of the bank. Meanwhile, the signals received from the latest data point to a cooling in the labor market as one of the factors that reduce the risk perception on the grounds that it opens up space for the Fed’s expan-

sionary policy steps. Low interest rates decrease the value of the US dollar against other currencies and supports upward price movements by influencing demand positively. On Monday, the US dollar index reached its highest level by increasing 0.2% to 104.42 deterring more expensive oil trade and curtail price rises on the back of profit-taking from higher prices on Tuesday. While, the American Petroleum Institute (API) will release its US crude oil inventory estimates later in the day.

The market expectation is that stocks will increase by 700,000 barrels. The increase in stocks could put downward pressure on prices by pointing to a decrease in oil demand in the US, the world’s most oil-consuming country. The Energy Information Administration will disclose official figures on Wednesday. On the other hand, ongoing concerns over economy growth in China continues to weigh on prices, negatively affecting the demand outlook in the world’s largest crude oil importer.

Vietnam targets GDP

HANOI (APP): Vietnam aims at an average GDP growth rate of around 7 percent per year, lifting GDP per capita income to approximately 7,500 US dollars by 2030, according to the government’s comprehensive action plan. The plan looks to continue tracking the country’s industrialization and modernization by 2030, with a long-term vision extending to 2045. Vietnam aspires to become among the top three industrial powerhouses in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with the industrial sector contributing over 40% of GDP.

were recorded at US 5,432.929 million against the exports of US \$ 5,932.358 million during July-June 2022-23, showing a decline of 8.41 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$2,707.225 million against the exports of US \$2,025.741 million last year, showing an increase of 33.64 percent. UAE was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$2,082.206 million during the year under review against the exports of US \$1,475.832 million, SBP data revealed. Among other countries, Pakistani exports to United Kingdom (UK) stood at US \$2,012.643 million against US \$1,968.432 million last year while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$1,512.458 million against US \$1,600.413 million last year, data said. During fiscal year 2023-24, the exports to Holland

were recorded at \$1,383.094 million against \$1,445.738 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$1,121.772 million against \$1,151.241 million. Pakistan’s exports to Spain were recorded at \$1,449.465 million against the exports of US \$1,375.019 million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$554.008 million against \$522.271 million last year. The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$666.516 million against US \$768.548 million. Similarly, the exports to France during the year under review were recorded at US \$507.739 million against US \$570.094 million while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$556.163 million against US \$701.013 million. Pakistan’s exports to Saudi Arabia were recorded at US \$710.335 million compared to US \$503.851 million last year whereas the exports to Türkiye stood at US \$335.137 million against US \$323.398 million.



In brief

Waseem shines in Scrabble Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Waseem Khatri of Pakistan made a scintillating start at the Scrabble Players Championship (formerly North American Scrabble Championship) at South Bend, USA. At the halfway mark of the four-day championship Waseem is currently No. 1 with 11 wins and a spread of 1095. Alec Sjöholm of USA is 2nd while Joshua Castellano of Canada is 3rd, said a press release. Another Pakistani, former world youth champion Moiz Baig returning to competitive scrabble after a gap of one year is also in tremendous form, currently lying 4th ahead of many stalwarts. Waseem, the 2022 runner-up at this championship is averaging an incredible 487 points per game; the highest among all. The two young Pakistanis are placed in the top division along with some of the best scrabble players in the world. The field includes a former world champion, a former world youth champion, 5 former North American champions, one Canadian champion and one British champion.

Pakistan shines at World Strength Lifting C'ship

KAZAKHSTAN (Monitoring Desk): The 11th World Strength Lifting and Incline Bench Press Championship 2024 in Kazakhstan saw a stellar performance by the three-member Pakistani national team, which clinched 1 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze medals. The team, comprising Captain Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Naveed, and Maryam Aqeel Shah, was coached by Aqeel Javed Butt. Today, the victorious team was congratulated by Director General Sports Board Punjab Pervez Iqbal. The meeting also saw International Strength Lifter and President of the Pakistan Strength Lifting Federation Ijaz Gul, Waqas Zafar, and Manzoor Shaheen praising the team's achievements. This commendable performance highlights Pakistan's growing prowess in the international strength lifting arena.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka's 'A' teams to tour Pakistan

LAHORE (Web Desk): Pakistan Shaheens will play four additional four-day and six 50-over matches this year when Bangladesh 'A' and Sri Lanka 'A' visit Pakistan in August and November, respectively. Following the second four-dayer against Bangladesh 'A' in Darwin, Australia, which will conclude on 29 July, both Pakistan Shaheens and Bangladesh 'A' will go toe-to-toe in two four-dayers from 10-13 August and 17-20 August in Pakistan (Venues TBC). The four-dayers will be followed by three 50-over matches on 23, 25, and 27 August. In November, Sri Lanka 'A' will visit Pakistan for five matches against Pakistan Shaheens. The four-dayers will be played from 11-14 November and 18-21 November, while the 50-over matches will be held on 25, 27, and 29 November. Venues will be announced in due course. Separately, Pakistan Emerging team will also defend their ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup title in October, while the Pakistan U19 team will feature in an U19 50-over Tri-Nation Tournament and ACC Asia Cup U19 in November/December. The ACC will announce details of the two tournaments in due course.

Pakistan qualify for Women's Asia Cup 2024 as India crush Nepal



Gull Feroza and Muneeba Ali steered Pakistan home with an unbroken stand of 107

DAMBULLA (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan women's team on Tuesday, qualified for the ACC Women's Asia Cup 2024 semi-final, courtesy of India's statement 82-run victory over Nepal.

Pakistan were second in the Group A standings of the eight-team tournament following their 10-wicket victory over the United Arab Emirates (UAE) earlier today.

The Green Shirts had put one foot in the semi-finals with a thumping victory and wanted Nepal to lose their final group-stage fixture against former champions India.

However, even if Nepal had managed to beat India, they needed to win the match by a hefty margin to topple Pakistan's net run rate but that was not the case in the end.

Opting to bat first, India registered a massive total of 178/3 with opening batter Shafali Verma leading the charge with a quickfire half-century. Verma top-scored for India with a 48-ball 81 which featured 12 fours and a six.

She was also involved in a magnificent 122-run opening partnership with Dayalan Hemalatha, who contributed significantly

with a 42-ball 47.

Sita Rana Magar was the pick of the bowlers for Nepal, picking up two wickets for just 25 runs in her four overs. In response, Nepal's batting unit struggled against a Deepti Sharma-led India bowling attack and were restricted to 96/9 in the allotted overs.

Opening batter Sita Rana Magar remained the top-scorer for Nepal with a

22-ball 18, followed by Bindu Rawal (17), Rubina Chhetry (15) and Indu Barma (14) while the rest failed to make it into the double figures.

Deepti Sharma returned magnificent figures of 3/13 in her four overs while Arundhati Reddy and Radha Yadav chipped in with two wickets apiece.

Former champions India topped the Group A standing of the Women's Asia

Cup 2024 with six points in three matches, followed by Pakistan with four points in three matches.

India will face the second-placed side of Group B in the first semi-final while Pakistan will take on the group topper of the other group in the second semi-final. Both knockout matches will be played here on Friday, June 26 while the final is scheduled for Sunday.

ACB proposes Youth Tri-Series with Pakistan, UAE

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) is exploring the possibility of organizing a Youth Tri-Series involving Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the near future.

This initiative was discussed during the ICC's annual Board Meeting, which took place this week in Colombo.

ACB Chairman Mirwais Ashraf and CEO Naseeb Khan were present at the meeting, where they engaged in talks with representatives from Cricket South Africa, Cricket New Zealand, and Cricket West Indies.

The discussions centered on potential white-ball

series opportunities leading up to the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

"Afghanistan Cricket Board's Chairman, Mr Mirwais Ashraf, and CEO, Naseeb Khan, attended the ICC Board Meeting which was held this week in Sri Lanka and was attended by representatives from other member countries," the ACB said as quoted by cricketpakistan.com.pk.

"During the meeting, ACB's leadership presented recent achievements, activities, and future plans for the Afghanistan Cricket Board. They also held discussions with representatives from Cricket South Africa, Cricket New Zealand, and Cricket West

Indies about potential white-ball bilateral cricket ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025."

The proposed Youth Tri-Series, featuring Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the UAE, would be a significant addition to the cricketing calendar, with dates and venues yet to be finalized. Additionally, ACB is considering A-team tours to Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

"The discussions also included A team tours to Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, and the possibility of a Youth Tri-Series against Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, with the dates and venues to be confirmed," it said.

UK dressage star Dujardin out of Olympics after 'error of judgement'



LONDON (AFP): British dressage star Charlotte Dujardin withdrew from the Paris Olympics on Tuesday after a video emerged showing her making "an error of judgement" during a coaching session.

Dujardin, a three-time Olympic champion and joint most decorated British woman Olympian, said she had withdrawn from all competition while authorities investigated the incident.

"A video has emerged from four years ago which shows me making an error of judgement during a coaching session," she said in a statement, days before the Games. It was not immediately clear what the video showed.

"Understandably, the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) is investigating and I have made the decision to withdraw from all competition - including the Paris Olympics -- while this process takes place.

"What happened was completely out of character and does not reflect how I

train my horses or coach my pupils, however there is no excuse. I am deeply ashamed and should have set a better example in that moment."

Dujardin was eliminated from the European Championships in 2019 after blood was found on her horse, Mount St John Freestyle, in a post-competition check.

The FEI said the action taken then did not imply there was any intent to injure the horse.

Dujardin, 39, could have become Britain's most decorated woman Olympian in Paris. A medal of any colour would have taken her clear of Laura Kenny, with whom she is currently tied on six medals.

"I will cooperate fully with the FEI, British Equestrian Federation and British Dressage during their investigations, and will not be commenting further until the process is complete," she said.

Dujardin was due to compete in both the individual dressage and the team event alongside Carl

Hester and world champion Lottie Fry at the Paris Games.

She is expected to be replaced in the team by Becky Moody.

Dujardin won individual and team golds at London 2012 while riding Valegro, with the pair retaining the individual title and winning silver in the team event at Rio 2016.

Olympic and equestrian authorities have taken an increasingly strict line against alleged improprieties relating to the treatment of animals in recent years.

During the delayed Tokyo Games in 2021, at which Dujardin won two bronze medals on Geo, a German modern pentathlon coach was thrown out for striking a horse.

Authorities launched a review of the sport, resulting in the equestrian element being removed and replaced with an obstacle course in Los Angeles in 2028. The dressage competition at Paris 2024 begins on July 30 at the Chateau de Versailles.

Moeen disappointed over Naseem's unavailability

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): England all-rounder Moeen Ali expressed his disappointment over Naseem Shah's unavailability for The Hundred 2024, scheduled to run from July 23 to August 24.

Moeen Ali, who was named Birmingham Phoenix captain last week, claimed that Naseem Shah was their first-choice pacer and was anticipated to deliver notable performances to the side.

He further revealed that the Pakistan pacer's absence has damaged the team's balance before reiterating that a player should be free to play cricket if there are no obligations.

For the unversed, Naseem Shah, who was signed by the Phoenix in the £125,000 category, was denied the No Objection Certificate (NOC) by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

According to the details, the cricketing body made the decision in a bid to prevent Naseem from potential injuries and to ensure his workload management as he is Pakistan's first-choice pacer in all three formats.

Considering Pakistan's upcoming busy season which includes World Test Championship (WTC) matches against Bangladesh, England and West Indies while also playing an ODI tri-series against New Zealand and South Africa ahead of the Champions Trophy 2025, the PCB is unwilling to take any risks regarding Naseem Shah's fitness.

For the unversed, Naseem also missed the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India due to a shoulder injury.

The right-arm pacer suffered the injury during the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023 fixture against India which resulted in him ruling out of the tournament remainder.

The incident occurred in the 46th over of India's innings when he walked off the field favouring his bowling shoulder on the reserve day allocated for the blockbuster clash between two Asian giants.

Briefly, after Pakistan's 228-run defeat against arch-rivals India, the PCB called up Zaman Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan as backup pacers for the rest of the tournament, as a precautionary measure to provide a cover for injured Naseem and Haris Rauf.

Later, the PCB confirmed that Naseem Shah was ruled out of the Asia Cup 2023 and Zaman was added to the Pakistan squad.

IOC mulls Palestinian call for Israel Olympics ban

PARIS (AFP): The International Olympic Committee was Tuesday weighing a Palestinian call for Israeli athletes to be barred from the Games over the war in Gaza, three days before the Opening Ceremony in Paris.

As the Israeli Olympic team settled into the Athletes' Village, the IOC was studying a letter sent by the Palestine Olympic Committee to president Thomas Bach asking him to ban the Israelis, citing the bombings of the besieged Gaza Strip as a breach of the Olympic truce.

The letter sent on Monday "emphasized that Palestinian athletes, particularly those in Gaza, are denied safe passage and have suffered significantly due to the ongoing conflict."

It said "approximately 400 Palestinian athletes have been killed, and the destruction of sports facilities exacerbates the plight of athletes who are already under severe restrictions."

The IOC is likely to reject the Palestinian call but it highlights how the rising death toll and growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza is impacting the Paris Games.

The war broke out after the October 7 attack on southern Israel that resulted in the deaths of 1,194 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

Israel's retaliatory military offensive has killed at least 37,124 people in

Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to the territory's health ministry.

France's foreign minister has already had to intervene to stress that Israeli athletes are welcome at the Games after a far-left French politician called for them to be barred over the Gaza offensive.

'Best Athletes' Village'

Competitors were flooding into the Olympic Village to take up residence in the compound in northern Paris, with national flags hanging from many windows. Some of the biggest names set to perform at the Olympics -- gymnast Simone Biles and Spanish tennis pair Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz -- have been spotted at the village.

Reviews of the food and accommodation were broadly positive but some people reported issues with the transport to and from sports venues.

"Usually at Olympics, the transport takes a bit of time to work out," Tom Craig, a player in the Australian hockey team, told AFP. "We've heard about some teams getting taken to the wrong venue, but it hasn't happened to us. One day we got a bit lost but it was fine."

American gymnastics coach Sam Mikulak, a veteran of four Olympics, praised the village as the best he had seen. "Ten out of 10. It's the best set up, the best conditioning space (gym), very organised," he told AFP.

Craig also praised the cardboard beds, which were chosen for environmental reasons.

Some reports have wrongly described them as being intended to deter athletes from jumping under the sheets together. "They're very comfortable. You don't know you're sleeping on cardboard," he said.

Meanwhile, Britain's joint most decorated woman Olympian, dressage specialist Charlotte Dujardin, withdrew from the Games after a video emerged showing her making "an error of judgement" during a coaching session.

It was not immediately clear what three-time Olympic champion Dujardin had done but Olympic and equestrian authorities have taken an increasingly strict line against alleged improprieties relating to the treatment of animals in recent years.

During the delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021, a German modern pentathlon coach was thrown out the Games for striking a horse.

In other developments, as organisers put the final touches to the plans for Friday's Olympics opening ceremony on the Seine, videos posted online showing US pop star Lady Gaga in Paris sparked rumours that she will be among the performers. The line-up for the ceremony, which marks the first time a Summer Olympics has opened outside of the main stadium, is yet to be fully announced.

Murray to retire after Paris Olympics



LONDON (Agencies): Andy Murray has confirmed he will retire from tennis after the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The 37-year-old is planning to play in the singles and doubles at what will be his fifth Games.

"Arrived in Paris for my last ever tennis tournament," Murray wrote on X. "Competing for Team GB has been by far the most memorable weeks of my career and I'm extremely proud to get to do it one final time!"

The Scot's first Games appearance was in Beijing in 2008, when he lost in straight sets to Lu Yen-hsun in the first round.

Four years later, Murray swiftly put the disappointment of a Wimbledon final defeat by Roger Federer

behind him, defeating the Swiss in straight sets at London 2012 to win gold.

The Briton became the first male tennis player to win two Olympic singles titles when he beat Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro at Rio 2016.

"Sir Andy has lived and breathed the values of tennis throughout his long career, championing equality and helping to send the message that our sport is for everyone," International Tennis Federation president David Haggerty said.

"Sir Andy's love of tennis will see him continue to be involved in helping to grow and develop our sport globally." The three-time Grand Slam winner had career-saving hip surgery in January 2019.

Murray, a two-time

Wimbledon champion, played competitively at SW19 for one last time earlier this month when he was knocked out of the doubles in the first round alongside his brother Jamie.

A back injury had threatened Murray's participation at Wimbledon and he left it until the final moment before pulling out of the singles. He had hoped to play mixed doubles with Emma Raducanu, but she pulled out of that planned pairing because of a wrist injury concern.

Speaking after his defeat at Wimbledon, Murray said: "It is hard because I want to keep playing, but I can't.

"Physically it's too tough now. I want to play forever. I love the sport."

The Scot said earlier this year that he was "not planning to play much beyond the summer" but hoped to compete in Paris.

Dan Evans, the British number three, will partner Murray in the doubles.

The opening rounds of the tennis in Paris begin at Roland Garros on 27 July and the event concludes on 4 August, with medal rounds being played from 2 August.

De Bruyne won't be leaving Man City says Guardiola

LONDON (AFP): Pep Guardiola insists Kevin De Bruyne will not leave Manchester City this season after reports the Belgium star could move to Saudi Arabia.

De Bruyne has just one year left on his current City contract and the midfielder revealed recently he has spoken with his wife Michele about his future plans.

"For Michele an exotic adventure is OK," De Bruyne said in a hint that he could end his successful spell at Premier League champions City.

Saudi Pro League club Al-Ittihad were believed to be interested in De Bruyne. But UK press reports on Tuesday said City manager Guardiola had rejected any thought of the 33-year-old being allowed to walk away this season.

Speaking ahead of Manchester City's friendly against Celtic in North Carolina, Guardiola told reporters "Kevin isn't leaving".

De Bruyne returned after missing the first half of last season due to injury and helped City make history with a fourth successive



Premier League title.

He has been with City since joining from Wolfsburg in 2015, winning 15 major trophies including six Premier League titles and one Champions League crown.

While Guardiola is adamant, his influential playmaker will stay at the Etihad Stadium this term, it remains to be seen if he can persuade the Belgian to remain in Manchester longer than that.

"My eldest (child) is now eight years old and knows nothing but England. He also asks how long I will play at City. Once the time comes, we will have to deal with it in a certain way," De Bruyne said in a recent interview.

"At my age, you have to be open to everything. You talk about unbelievable amounts in what may be the

end of my career. Sometimes you have to think about that. "If I play there for two years, I will be able to earn an incredible amount of money."

Meanwhile, Guardiola claimed City would not make major changes to his squad before their Premier League season kicks off against Chelsea on August 18.

Crystal Palace winger Eberechi Eze has been linked with the champions, while City goalkeeper Ederson has potential offers from Saudi Arabia.

"Of course, until the last day, we have chances (to make transfers), I don't rule it out the option to have new players but I think there is an 85.90 per cent chance we will have the same squad," Guardiola said.

"I feel comfortable, because the quality of human beings we have in the squad is difficult to be replaced, and the quality is there. "But we'll see, I don't know in the last moment if someone comes for some players and they leave, we're going to decide.

"If someone leaves, we're going to talk about that."



In brief

IRSA releases 320,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 320,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 323,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1515.60 feet and was 117.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 181,500 cusecs and 190,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1197.60 feet, which was 149.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 27,100 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 210,000, 195,400, 139,300 and 77,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 49,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 38,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF seizes 330 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 9 operations across the country managed to recover 330 kg drugs and arrested 8 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 826 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport. 900 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for the UK at a courier office in Lahore. 12 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from UK at courier office in Rawalpindi. 250 kg hashish was recovered from Pasni road area in Balochistan and 7.2 kg opium, 2 kg heroin and 36 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of 2 suspects netted near Ravi Toll Plaza Lahore. 8.4 kg ice recovered from 3 women in two operations conducted near M-1 Motorway Islamabad. In 8th operation, 18 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on Ring road Peshawar. In 9TH operation, 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Charsadda interchange toll plaza and 2 suspects were arrested. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

ICT ramps up efforts to combat dengue threat

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to combat the rising threat of dengue fever, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has launched a city-wide surveillance and crack-down operations to prevent the spread of the disease. Under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, all the Assistant Commissioners have been deployed across the city to conduct intensive dengue surveillance activities. The ICT's administration spokesman said the district administration is working to eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites and ensure hospitals are equipped to handle dengue cases. He said the AC Shalimar led an intensive dengue surveillance effort, which resulted in the lodging of FIRs and the arrest of several commercial property owners where positive dengue larvae were discovered. This action targets those failing to comply with health regulations, holding them accountable for endangering public health.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan agree for enhanced high-level dialogue, exchanges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Turkmenistan on Tuesday, noting the positive trajectory of the bilateral relations, agreed to further enhance high-level dialogue and exchanges at the leadership level, besides strengthening the bilateral dialogue mechanisms.

The bilateral ties were discussed in the Third Round of Pakistan-Turkmenistan Bilateral Political Consultations held here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar led the Pakistan side while the Turkmenistan side was led by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, according to a Foreign Office press release.

The two sides reviewed

Pakistan-Turkmenistan bilateral relations, including bilateral trade and investment, energy cooperation, connectivity and people-to-people linkages.

The two sides agreed to intensify joint efforts to further expand and deepen bilateral cooperation including political, economic and defence domains. It was also agreed to develop closer economic engagement in the priority areas of trade and investment, energy, connectivity and information technology. The two sides also discussed the projects of TAPI Pipeline and TAP Electricity Transmission Line.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister expressed Pakistan's commitment to further enhancing bilateral trade and economic ties commensurate with its true potential.

He underlined the need for early finalization of the Transit Trade Agreement and liberalization of the visa regime to facilitate businesspersons.

The two sides also agreed to promote bilateral parliamentary engagement and enhance cultural exchanges, educational scholarships including training of diplomats and people-to-people contacts.

It was agreed to work closely to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and dialogue in multilateral settings including at the United Nations and Economic Cooperation Organization. Regional and global issues of mutual concern were also discussed including the situation in Afghanistan and the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Over Rs 80 bln disbursed among beneficiaries under Benazir Kafaalat scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.80 billion among over 76,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June).

"Till July 22, over Rs. 80 billion has been disbursed among over 76,00,000 beneficiaries which make 81 per cent of the total beneficiaries", said an official source.

The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (April-June) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to the beneficiaries is continued across the country to disburse Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families.

The beneficiaries can receive their payment through the nearest centers after receiving the message from 8171. The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint,

can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program.

The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly.

However, the beneficiaries can also contact the officials on WhatsApp numbers including 03018472841 (Hyderabad District), 03018472838 (Karachi Division), 03175370095 (South Punjab), 03202399616 (Central Punjab), 03028238564 (North Punjab), 03492883482 (Balochistan), 03155212820 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), 03155213094 (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan).

The messages from the Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171, and messages from

any other number should not be trusted. The officials of BISP have been directed to ensure the smooth disbursement of Kafaalat payments to the women without any deductions.

The staff has been deputed to monitor the process of payment disbursement and take immediate action against the agents responsible for deductions from the beneficiary's payments. The BISP is currently supporting 9.3 million deserving families and acting as a lifeline for those facing economic hardship. The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) program, also known as the 'Benazir Kafaalat Programme', is the core initiative of BISP and was launched in 2008. Since its inception, the UCT/Kafaalat initiative has grown to the extent that it is now the largest single cash transfer program in Pakistan's history.

Metro Bus Service providing world class travel facilities to citizens: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Tuesday said that Metro Bus Service was providing world class travel facilities to the citizens.

Chairing a high level meeting regarding new feasibility study of the Metro Bus Service he said, in proportion to the population of the city, it has become necessary to increase the frequency of buses and routes.

It was informed in the briefing that Metro Bus Service was providing travel

facilities on six routes.

NESPAK representatives briefed the Commissioner regarding the new feasibility study of metro bus service.

Work is in progress regarding the new feasibility study of the Metro Bus Service in proportion to the growing population. Work is being done to increase the number of buses from 100 to 150. Increasing the number of metro bus service routes from 6 to 10 was being considered, the meeting was briefed.

The Commissioner directed NESPAK representatives to complete new feasibility study of the Metro Bus Service in first week of August. Metro Bus Service was providing quality travel facilities to the citizens, the Commissioner said.

After the new feasibility report comes out, the public would have better travel facilities through the Metro Bus Service, Aamir Khattak said adding, the fixed fare of metro bus service is a great convenience for the citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar holds talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov. —APP Photo

Muqam chairs meeting regarding state properties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam here on Tuesday chaired the meeting regarding Azad Jammu Kashmir state properties.

Secretary Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Wasim Ajmal Chaudhry, Additional Secretary Syed Khalid Gurdizi, Joint Secretary Muhammad Hamid Khan and Administrator Jammu and Kashmir State Properties attended the meeting, said a press release.

The minister directed the officers concerned to prepare a feasible and comprehensive plan for maximum utilization of the properties of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He stressed the need for comprehensive strategies to ensure the protection of these assets and their effective utilization in the interest of these areas and its people and added that the rent of all properties should be re-evaluated.

Amir Muqam directed the administrator to make a comprehensive plan in consultation with the Secretary of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Earlier, the administrator informed the meeting about the steps taken on the instructions of the federal minister in this regard.

Bike lifter arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a bike lifter and street criminal and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Kahuta Police Station managed to net a bike lifter namely Umar and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Sadder, Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

Ashrafi urges political parties to play role for country's stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday stressed all the political parties to be united and work collectively to bring stability in the country, keeping aside the political differences.

Addressing a press conference, he said that unity is the need of hour to steer the country out of prevailing challenges.

Maulana Tahir Ashrafi announced to hold a series of activities including press conferences, seminars and conventions under the title

"Pakistan's Stability" which will take place from August 1-30. The challenges being faced by the country and their solutions will be highlighted during these month long activities, he said.

The Chairman PUC also emphasized on implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) and said, "Terrorism and extremism should be eradicated through implementation of NAP in letter and spirit".

Ashrafi also expressed concern over the lack of punishment for criminals involved in the incidents of

May 9, over a year ago, and called for ensuring swift justice.

On the occasion of Independence Day, Pakistani flags will be hoisted at all mosques and madrassas across the country, he added.

Ashrafi said that PUC's initiatives aims to foster a sense of national unity and address pressing issues affecting the country's stability.

He also condemned the desecration of the Pakistani flag in Frankfurt, Germany. He said that "the Pakistani flag is our red line".

CPO chairs meeting to enhance law and order in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani chaired a meeting at the Police Lines Headquarters here Tuesday to review crime situation. Key decisions were made in the meeting to enhance law and order in Rawalpindi.

The meeting was attended by top police officials including SSPs, CTO, SPs, SDPOs, SHOs and heads of other departments.

CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani emphasized the urgency in solving cases such as robbery and murder, stressing the timely arrest of suspects while giving a timeline regarding the acquisition of evidence. It should be ensured that negligence and recklessness are intolerable, 1787. The CPO reiterated the need for a swift response to emergency calls and the timely registration of FIRs.

He underscored a zero-tolerance policy towards negligence and inefficiency, urging swift legal action on complaints received through the Complaint Management System.

There has been a significant reduction in heinous crimes, special focus

should be placed on street crime and crime hotspots, the CPO instructed the police to intensify patrolling duty. The police chief also mandated a crackdown on drug peddlers to eliminate the drug menace from society.

He also highlighted the need for prompt issuance of challans and arrests of traffic offenders to curb prevent of vehicle and motorcycle theft. Strict action must be taken against organized and dynamic gangs, he added.

Moreover, CPO Khalid Hamdani commended officers and Jawan to perform diligent duty during Muharram. He reaffirmed the commitment of Rawalpindi Police to prioritize the safety and security of citizens, stating it as their foremost duty.

The CPO also stressed on improving investigation quality, ensuring timely submission of challans, and thorough follow-up on cases to secure convictions. He urged supervisory officers to rectify any shortcomings in ongoing investigations and personally oversee crime scenes for effective outcomes.

WASA on high alert to cope with flooding: MD

RAWALPINDI (APP): Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi was on high alert to cope with urban flooding, said Managing Director (MD) WASA, Muhammad Saleem Ashraf here on Tuesday.

He informed that rain emergency was declared in Rawalpindi and all arrangements were finalized to cope with flooding.

Heavy machinery and personnel were deployed in different areas particularly in low-lying areas to ensure drainage of stagnant rain water, he added.

Nullah Lai was being monitored and the flow of water in Nullah Lai was normal on Tuesday, he said and informed that, today, 7 feet water level was recorded at Katarian and 5.5 feet at Gawalmandi Bridge.

Traffic flow was also normal at Committee Chowk underpass, he said.

According to the Meteorological Department, 60 mm of rain was recorded in Shamsabad, 48 mm at PMD and 61 mm at Saidu, WASA spokesman informed. The Met Dept had predicted that the rain would continue for two days, he said.

Pakistan's digitisation, end to gender digital divide PM's top priority: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said Pakistan's digitisation and end to the prevailing gender digital divide is the top priority of the Prime Minister whereas the digital ecosystem diagnostic report is the guiding document for the government's vision.

She was addressing the launching ceremony of the Country Digital Ecosystem Diagnostic Report jointly prepared by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the title Pakistan's Transformative Digital Future: Growth Strategy and Roadmap here.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja congratulated the team SDPI and ADB for preparing a comprehensive analytical report and termed such reports evidence providing baseline data helpful in setting future KPIs and goals in the field of digitisation.

She announced that the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication would focus on implementing most of the Report's recommendations.

"The IT sector exports surged to record \$3.2 billion this year which is the highest ever. The Prime Minister has strong focus on digitisation of the country as the IT exports are breaking records every month. The prime minister vision and target is \$25 billion in IT exports, and we are striving to meet it," she added.

The minister said Information Technology is a resilient and robust sector that is growing with every passing year, whereas the PM has not slashed the budget of the IT sector and therefore was given the highest budgetary allocations in the ongoing fiscal year. Shaza Fatima said: "The country required complete digital transformation in the next few years, where digital economy, governance, and society are the key pillars of digitization."

The government, she said, is working on national policy on digitization whereas the Islamabad smart city project is also in the offing to develop a model of a digital city whereas the mapping of the federal complete was completed in this regard.

"First of all every individual

needs to have internet access, however, the gender digital divide is highest in Pakistan and there is no concept of progress without it. We are preparing a comprehensive digital plan that will be rolled out by the prime minister," she added.

She added that internet, device availability, and training will build up and grow in the digitisation realm whereas the government has allocated Rs 8 billion budget for IT training for different sectors and individuals belonging to various strata of society.

"There is no alternate route to growth and development for the country. It's an opportune moment for Pakistan to avail the opportunity and take it as a challenge for exploring further opportunities," she said.

Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam on the occasion said that digitisation is imperative for the country's growth and economic stability in line with the growing regional and global trends in digital modernization.

Pakistan, she said, is facing severe competition due to emerging technologies and rap-

idly expanding digitisation, however, the Prime Minister is aware of all the challenges and therefore has aligned his vision to transform the challenges into opportunities by ensuring grassroots-level digitisation.

Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri in his welcome remarks said the study is a diagnostic study on Pakistan's future in IT, whereas the current government is giving extreme importance to IT and digitisation.

He added that a special group has been formed at the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication with the clear objective of pursuing digital initiatives in various sectors to minimize human interference like FBR to advance revenue mobilization.

Dr Suleri said digitisation will help the country in improving governance system, whereas during last fiscal year 80% transactions have been done online worth Rs 840 million.

"Without proper diagnosis, we won't be able to embark on the fourth digital technology revolution. Strategic infrastructure and digital governance are important for improving public

service delivery and digital government," he said.

The country, he said is gradually moving towards digital society and the launch event is not showcasing the report but unveiling the vision of digital Pakistan. "We focus more on knowledge and research partnerships that work on analytics," he added.

The Deputy Country Representative of ADB-Pakistan commended the authors and experts for developing the research document and anticipated that insights from the study would add value to the process of guiding policymakers for improved investments in digitisation sector.

"ADB is ready to support the government and move this journey. The Report provides the comprehensive status of the current stage and future opportunities to proceed in the IT and digitisation sector," he added.

Dr Jordanka Tomkova, IT and Digitisation expert presented the technical insights of the report. She said the report is a collaborative effort and a joint journey accomplished in six months.

In the global context, digitisation is a complex thing that involves many elements to join whereas all the countries need to forge collaborations in achieving the goal, she added.

Dr Tomkova said there is a four-pillar approach to embracing digitization through digital infrastructure, government, society, and economy.

She mentioned that Pakistan's E-Government Development Index was underperforming at regional, sub-national, and international levels, whereas it ranks high in knowledge, technology, and creative outputs with a 40th rating in the global innovation index.

Pakistan's performance is an asset as it is ranking high on future technologies, digital economy, and others but low on human security, she said, adding, "Connectivity and coverage are rising in Pakistan especially mobile penetration with skyrocketing figures: 80% 3G coverage and 76% 4G coverage." Digital infrastructure, she said is a huge industry and economic growth indicator which is growing in Pakistan with the rise in mobile phone access.

Israel tanks advance deeper in southern Gaza

CAIRO/JERUSALEM/GAZA (Reuters): Palestinian residents of eastern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip fled their homes on Tuesday as Israeli tanks advanced deep into the area after Israel ordered the population to evacuate.

The tanks pushed into the Khan Younis town of Bani Suhaila and several districts nearby were bombed for a second day, forcing tens of thousands of civilians to seek refuge elsewhere. Israel said its action - the latest in a series of major assaults in recent weeks in parts of Gaza where it had long since claimed to have rooted out Hamas - was intended to prevent the militant group's fighters from regrouping.

Gaza health officials said Israeli military strikes since Monday killed at least 80 Palestinians in the Khan Younis area - adding to a death toll of more than 39,000 in nearly 10 months of warfare, according to Gaza authorities' figures. The Israeli military said Hamas and other groups used those areas to renew attacks, including firing rockets.

Many of the newly displaced families said they had to spend the night in the streets as they searched in vain for a space as western Khan Younis and central Gaza areas were overcrowded. Some of them said they had to flee under Israeli fire. "For us, the most basic of essentials in our lives are not available," a woman, Ibtihal Al-Breim, told Reuters in Khan Younis. "Basic needs (like) water which we had to carry, the electricity, of course, is cut off, food is cut off, let alone the expensive prices, and there's no work."

"And then suddenly you're told now you have to leave. Without prior warning, suddenly rockets began

falling on us. We had to leave and I wasn't intending to leave - but then there were quadcopters and aircraft, we saw the tanks with our own eyes," she added. UN officials described scenes of despair on Tuesday as Israeli airstrikes hit the area. "The situation is impossible," the UN's Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA said on X.

In a later post, it said there was nowhere safe to go in Gaza. "People are exhausted from the continuous displacement and unlivable conditions & they are trapped in increasingly small & overcrowded areas," it said. The Israeli military said dozens of militants had been killed in Khan Younis by its tanks and warplanes or in close-quarter combat. Weapon caches and tunnels used by the militants had been destroyed, it said.

Palestinian medics said one person was killed in an Israeli airstrike on the area on Tuesday. The Gaza health ministry does not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. Health officials have said most of those killed have been civilians. Residents in Khan Younis said tanks remained stationed deep inside Bani Suhaila, east of downtown Khan Younis. Soldiers were seen searching inside the town's main cemetery, while others commandeered roofs of high-rise buildings, firing their guns toward the western areas from time to time, residents said.

In the Bureij camp in the central Gaza Strip, where six Palestinians were killed by an Israeli airstrike on a house, some residents said they had received calls from Israeli security officers ordering them to leave their homes. Some families headed towards the Nuseirat camp to the west. Later on Tuesday, residents said Israeli forces had blown up several

homes in Rafah, where Israel said its operation since May aimed to dismantle the last Hamas battalions.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is in Washington this week, told families of hostages held in Gaza that a deal that would secure their release could be near. Hamas-led fighters triggered the war on Oct. 7 by storming into southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 250 captives, according to Israeli tallies. Hamas and other militants are still holding 120 hostages; Israel believes around a third of them are dead.

Netanyahu was in Washington and is expected to meet US President Joe Biden later this week after making an address to Congress. Speaking in the US capital on Monday to families of hostages, he said: "The conditions (for a deal) are undoubtedly ripening. This is a good sign." Months of efforts mediated by Egypt and Qatar to reach a ceasefire gained momentum in recent weeks under a proposal outlined by Biden in May.

"Unfortunately, it will not take place all at once; there will be stages. However, I believe that we can advance the deal," Netanyahu said. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters there was nothing new in Netanyahu's stance. "Netanyahu is still stalling and he is sending delegations only to calm the anger of Israeli captives' families," he said.

An Israeli negotiation team is due on Thursday to resume talks that would include hostages being released in return for Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. According to two Egyptian security sources, Israel informed Egypt that an Israeli delegation would arrive in Cairo on Wednesday evening.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari signing the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024 into law in a special ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PTI's politics revolves around violence: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) politics has always been revolving around undermining the state through violence and mischief.

In a statement on Tuesday, he said the founder of PTI has finally confessed to the crime of facilitating and planning the incidents of May 9. The Minister said they always do politics on dead bodies. He said over 200 military installations and General Headquarters were attacked on 9th May last year and members of Imran Khan's family were present outside the Corps Commander House, who kept giving instructions for attacks.

Attaullah Tarar said writing a letter to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to get the country defaulted, the conspiracy of waving cipher, and the desecration of martyrs' memorials are the hallmarks of the PTI. He said they did everything that even the enemy of the country could not do. Attaullah Tarar said the country's security and national interests require strict action against this mischievous and anarchic group.

JI chief asks EC to step down

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan, Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has said that the Election Commission should step down following the Supreme Court's verdict on reserved seats.

While addressing the Faisalabad District Bar Association here on Tuesday, he said that the commission has utterly failed to conduct transparent elections, losing its remaining credibility after the top court's decision. Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman also criticized the government, asserting that it has no legitimacy as it was formed based on fraudulent Form 47.

According to him, the country was in a close ally, with both the government and its supporters unable to resolve the current crisis. He emphasized that the solution lies in upholding the constitution, with every institution working within its constitutional limits. He called for a judicial commission to compile election results based on Form 45.

The JI chief said that his party's sit-in in Islamabad on July 26 would advocate for the people's rights. He demanded a reduction in electricity tariffs, the abolition of the slab system in electricity billing, and the removal of unfair taxes on the salaried class and basic food items. He asserted that the JI believes in peaceful resistance and has the political, democratic, and constitutional right to hold a sit-in. He vowed that the protest would not end until the people's demands are met and sought support from a legal community and the general public. "We must reclaim our rights from the ruling elite. They enjoy luxuries and either move abroad or secure top posts after retirement.

PHC approached for fresh NFC award

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa former Minister for Finance Taimur Saleem Jhagra approached Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking release of fresh National Finance Commission (NFC) Award after merger of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) districts for provincial development.

The petition argued to declare the non-issuance of fresh National Finance Commission Award, despite the change in legal and factual ground realities i.e., the devolution of various subjects on the provinces in the aftermath of 18th Constitutional Amendment and the merger of erstwhile FATA as Newly Merged Districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after the 25th Constitutional Amendment, and the 2017 Census, to be illegal, unlawful and violative upon the rights of the petitioners and the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The writ stated that on the touchstone of the vectors required to be looked into for the issuance of award of NFC, the NFC award be revisited and shares of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa be determined and accordingly awarded, to ensure that disparity is ended. A new NFC Award per the mandate of the Constitution be awarded and the share in National Finance Commission

PHC orders removal of Yousafzai's name from ECL

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-members bench of Peshawar High Court comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal has directed the removal of Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Shaukat Yousafzai's name from the Exit Control List (ECL), on Tuesday.

PTI leader had challenged the travel ban imposed on him. The counsel informed that Shaukat Yousafzai was blocked from traveling to Europe at Islamabad Airport, despite previously being prevented from traveling for Umrah. The lawyer argued that the inclusion of petitioner's name on the ECL was based on FIR in Shangla, where he is currently on bail. The lawyer contended that the travel restrictions were unjustified. FIA Director Legal confirmed that petitioner's name was added to the ECL following a directive from the Home Department.

However, he noted that the Home Department had since cleared Yousafzai, and there were no objections to removing his name from the list. Following these clarifications, the court ordered the immediate removal of Yousafzai's name from the ECL, enabling him to travel freely. It is worthy to mention that Shaukat Yousafzai had served as health and culture minister during the Pervaz Khattak's Cabinet in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

(NFC) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province be immediately released for the provincial development, the petitioner argued. The Council of Common Interests (CCI) in compliance with Article 154 (2) & (3) of the Constitution, 1973, to convene a meeting and take prompt action to address the existing disparities, ensuring equitable allocation of resources through the issuance of the NFC award and related development plans, with due consideration of the increase in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's population, poverty levels, illiteracy

rate, war on terror, revenue generation, and other relevant factors post 25th Constitutional Amendment, along with ensuring proper representation from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the meeting, the writ pleaded.

The writ pleading PHC to direct the convening of periodic NFC meeting per the mandate of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 and Clause 9(5) of the 7th NFC Award issued through President's Order No. 5 of 2010, as well as the meeting of Council of Common Interest.

Dhaka curfews, internet blackout batter economy

DHAKA: During a nationwide curfew and with the army on the streets, an unlikely group of people gathered at Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's office with demands - not student protesters who have been seeking an end to job quotas, but industry leaders.

The country's top business owners asked Hasina on Monday to withdraw the curfew and restore internet service, which has been down for days as part of a complete communications blackout. They pleaded with her to have the army provide security for the Dhaka-Chattogram highway - the economic lifeline that connects the capital to the country's main port city - amid fears of vandalism.

Hasina told them her government was forced to impose the curfew and deploy the army across the nation to "save lives and properties of people". "It [the curfew] will be gradually relaxed," she said. But for millions of Bangladeshi workers, business owners and thousands of companies, "gradually" might not be good enough.

For nearly two weeks, student protesters and security forces have been locked in a tense standoff, and violent clashes have killed at least 146 people. The protests started out against quotas - primarily against the 30 percent of government jobs reserved for descendants of people who found in Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence. On Sunday, the Bangladesh Supreme Court significantly shrunk the quotas, but the students have released a list of eight demands, focused on seeking justice for their comrades

killed in the violence. The government-imposed curfew remains in place, as does the internet block. All of that has brought the economy to a screeching halt amid high inflation and fast-depleting foreign reserves. In the past five days, Bangladesh's economy has suffered losses amounting to more than \$1.2bn, according to an estimate by the country's business community.

Aside from the shutdown of almost all industries, there were economic losses due to vandalism and arson attacks, including on the country's lone metro rail system in Dhaka, and the national television network's premises. Speaking to business leaders on Monday, Hasina blamed the internet blackout on opposition parties, alleging that their activists had ruptured internet cables across the country. She promised the internet connections would be restored soon.

The shutdown and communications blackout have hit the readymade garment sector the hardest. It is responsible for more than 80 percent of the country's export earnings of over \$50bn. All factories have remained closed since Saturday due to safety concerns, and the sector is suffering losses of nearly \$150m a day, SM Mannan Kochi, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, told Al Jazeera.

"The biggest problem is that our international buyers are losing confidence - a loss whose value can't be gauged with just money as it will have a long-term negative impact on the country's most valuable industry," Kochi said. Steelmakers have estimated that in the

past four days, their sector has suffered a loss of nearly \$110m. Suman Chowdhury, general secretary of the Bangladesh Steel Manufacturers Association, said in a statement that because of the curfew, they couldn't release raw materials from the port, resulting in the disruption of production.

"Also, we didn't want to put the lives of our workers in risk and asked them to stay at home," he said. Production and distribution of pharmaceutical products have also been severely disrupted as medicine makers have been unable to receive imported raw materials from the Chattogram port and Dhaka airport.

"Because of the internet shutdown, we couldn't get custom clearance to release our products," said Jahangir Alam, chief financial officer of Beximco Pharma, a generic drugmaker. "Our productions are disrupted as we lack raw materials now." The growing ceramics industry also fears losing export orders worth about \$8m per day, a local newspaper reported, quoting Irfan Uddin, secretary of the Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Associations.

The internet blackout imposed on Thursday night has hit almost all businesses and industries. It has shut down e-commerce and f-commerce, which are Facebook-based businesses popular in Bangladesh. These sectors are estimated to be losing at least \$5m in revenue per day. Shahab Uddin, vice president of the e-commerce Association of Bangladesh, told Al Jazeera that it's not just the businesses that are taking losses. - Aljazeera

US Secret Service chief resigns

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigned after the agency came under harsh scrutiny for its failure to stop a would-be assassin from wounding former President Donald Trump during a campaign rally, the White House said on Tuesday.

The Secret Service, which is responsible for the protection of current and former US presidents, faces a crisis after a gunman was able to fire on Trump from a roof overlooking the outdoor rally in Butler, Pennsylvania on July 13. "The independent review to get to the bottom of what happened on July 13 continues, and I look forward to assessing its conclusions," Democratic President Joe Biden said in a statement. "We all know what happened that day can never happen again."

Secret Service Deputy Director Ronald Rowe, a 24-year veteran of the agency, will serve as acting director, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said. The Secret Service faces investigations from multiple congressional committees and the internal watchdog of the US Department of Homeland Security, its parent organization, over its performance. Biden, who has ended his reelection campaign, has also called for an independent review.

Cheatle faced bipartisan condemnation when she appeared before the House of Representatives Oversight Committee on Monday, declining to answer questions from frustrated lawmakers about the security plan for the rally and how law enforcement responded to the suspicious behavior of the gunman. Several Republican and Democratic lawmakers had called on her to resign. NBC News was first to report that Cheatle would leave her post.

Trump, the Republican presidential candidate, was grazed in the right ear and one rallygoer was killed in the gunfire. The gunman, identified as a 20-year-old Thomas Crooks, was shot and killed by a Secret Service sniper. "While Director Cheatle's resignation is a step toward accountability, we need a full review of how these security failures happened so that we can prevent them going forward," James Comer, the Republican chair of the House Oversight Committee, said in a statement. "We will continue our oversight of the Secret Service."

Cheatle, who has led the agency since 2022, told lawmakers she took responsibility for the shooting, calling it the largest failure by the Secret Service since then-President Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981. House leaders said on Tuesday they planned to form a bipartisan task force to probe the shooting.

PTI done nothing for KP in past: Kundi

Kashif Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has said that vandalism of May 9, 2023 is unpardonable crime and sparing those involved in it could trigger big tragedy in future.

He was talking to media during his visit to Peshawar Press Club (PPC) wherein he had come to express condolence with senior journalist, Bakhtzada Yousafzai over the sad demise of his mother on Tuesday. The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that if those involved in May 09 are spared then those involved in more serious tragedies will also seek forgiveness. Therefore, he called for an immediate action against those involved in the May 09 incidents and awarding them exemplary punishment.

He said that soon after taking oath as Governor, he had announced contesting the case of the province and

not spreading hatred between the province with pledge that he will never turn Governor's House into a den of conspiracies against the Chief Minister's House and rather playing the role of bridge between the provincial and federal government. But, they might have considered that I had exhibited weakness.

The Governor said that he had talked in the interest of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and law and order in it. He said that the PTI leadership may have considered him a 'Youthia' a notion used for the supporters of their party or a member of the provincial or National Assembly to hear their directives silently. He said that during the last period of over ten years, the PTI leadership has done nothing for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that they also have to carry on their politics and want to the promotion of investment and revived sports' activities in its playgrounds.

The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was also critical of nominal allocation for higher education in the province and asked the provincial government to compete with other provinces while allocating higher amount for sector. He said that Punjab has allocated a fund of Rs.5 to 6 billion while Sindh has taken lead by allocating the highest amount of Rs.25 billion for higher education, saying the KP government should have outclassed its counterparts by allocation more than other provinces.

Similarly, he said that the performance of the KP government in health sector is also far behind other provinces and particularly Sindh. He asked the media to check the data of health sector to know that how many patients from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are going to Sindh for medical treatment and how many people from Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan are coming here for the purpose.



ISLAMABAD: Commodore Asim Sohail Malik of Pakistan Navy takes over Command of Combined Task Force-150 from Royal Canadian Navy Capt. Matthews at HQs NAVCENT, Bahrain.

Pak Navy takes over command of task force

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has taken over the command of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) for the 13th time at an impressive change of command ceremony held at Headquarters US NAVCENT, Bahrain. Commodore Asim Sohail Malik of Pakistan Navy assumed the Command from Capt Mathews of Royal Canadian Navy.

CTF 150 is one of the five Task Forces operating within the ambit of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Its mission is to promote maritime security in order to counter illicit activities at sea.

While addressing the audience, the incoming Commander CTF-150, Commodore Asim Sohail

Malik assured that his team is fully geared up to efficiently shoulder this prestigious responsibility to contribute towards Maritime Security and Stability in the region. He lauded the outgoing Commander, Capt Mathews of Royal Canadian Navy and his team for their staunch commitment and commendable services to achieve the set objectives of CTF-150. Commodore Asim Sohail Malik underlined that CTF-150 area of responsibility consists of some of the world's most challenging and important international waters. He assured that his team will strive to further strengthen efforts of this multinational task force to provide a robust security in this vital maritime region. The CCTF also highlighted that Pakistan Navy is com-

mitted to work with coalition navies for ensuring peace and stability within the Area of Responsibility. Pakistan Navy has the distinction of commanding CTF-150 twelve times previously. This being 13th Command, is a manifestation of the trust and respect reposed in Pakistan Navy by the coalition partners.

The change of command ceremony was attended by Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain H.E. Saqib Rauf, Honorary Consul of Canada in Bahrain Mr. Hatim Zubi, Commander Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Vice Admiral George M. Wikoff, Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Al Binali besides representatives of several other navies operating with CMF.