

Earthquake jolts Turbat
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An earthquake of mild intensity jolted different areas of Turbat city in Balochistan on Wednesday. According to National Seismic Monitoring Centre of PMD, tremours measuring 4.2 on Richter scale were felt in Turbat. People of the areas where quake was felt rushed of their homes in panic reciting Kalma e Tayyeba and verses from Holy Quran.

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LONDON: A Police officer removing a protester from outside the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office as members of 'Workers for a Free Palestine' gathered in a protest against arms exports to Israel, in Britain.

Nine arrests during London protest against Israel arms exports

LONDON (Reuters): British police on Wednesday arrested nine people during a protest against arms exports to Israel that briefly blocked the street outside the foreign ministry, high-lighting pressure on the new Labour government over its stance on the Gaza war.

Pro-Palestinian protesters in Britain have been campaigning for a government ban on arms sales to Israel following its offensive on Gaza in response to the Oct. 7 attack. Last week new Foreign Minister David Lammy, who has said he wants a balanced position on Israel and Gaza, said a blanket ban on arms exports to Israel would not be right, but he would follow a quasi-judicial process in assessing whether sales of offensive weapons that could be used in Gaza could proceed.

London's Metropolitan Police said protesters arrived outside Britain's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and blocked pedestrian and vehicle access. Police then said the protest could only continue if it left the central arch of the street clear. "When the group failed to comply with the conditions, officers intervened and made nine arrests, quickly restoring access," a Met Police spokesperson said.

While in opposition, Lammy earlier this year said the government should suspend the sale of UK arms if there were a clear risk they might be used in a serious breach of humanitarian law. Now in government, he said last week he requested on his

Protests and politics as Netanyahu addresses US Congress

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Dozens of Democratic lawmakers planned to skip Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to Congress on Wednesday, expressing dismay over the thousands of civilian deaths and the humanitarian crisis from Israel's campaign in Gaza.

The longtime Israeli leader will make a record fourth speech to a joint meeting of the Senate and House of Representatives at 2 p.m. EDT (1800 GMT), passing British wartime leader Winston Churchill, who made three such speeches. Netanyahu's speech was expected to focus on coordinating the Israeli and US response to the volatile situation in the Middle East, where there is a growing danger of the Gaza war spilling over into a wider regional conflict.

He was also expected to call for stronger action against Iran, which supports Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah, both militant groups fighting Israel, and has drawn increased US condemnation over its recent nuclear advances. Republican leaders in Congress orchestrated the visit, but it was likely to be less confrontational than in 2015 when Republicans side-stepped then-President Barack Obama, a Democrat, and Netanyahu used his speech to criticize Obama's Iran policy. This time, Netanyahu will seek to bolster his traditional links to Republicans but also look to ease tensions with President Joe Biden, a Democrat whose support he will rely on for the remaining six months of the president's term. Washington is preoccupied with the fallout from Biden's announcement on Sunday that he was ending his reelection bid and endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris for the Democratic presidential nomination to challenge Republican Donald Trump.

first day in office an assessment of the legal situation and that he hoped to be able to communicate any decisions with "full accountability and transparency."

Labour was elected with a huge majority earlier this month, but lost some seats to pro-Gaza candidates. Campaign group Workers for a Free Palestine, which organized the protest, said that was a sign the gov-

ernment should take a stronger stance on restricting arms sales, and called on Lammy to "practice what he preached in opposition." While the previous Conservative government was a strong supporter of Israel's right to defend itself following the Oct. 7 attack, Reuters found that the value of Britain's approvals of new arms licenses dropped sharply after the start of the war.

Israel carries out new raids in Gaza

CAIRO/GAZA (Reuters): Israeli forces carried out new raids in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, hours before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to address the US Congress.

The latest Israeli attacks destroyed homes in towns east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza and thousands of people were forced to head west to seek shelter, residents said. The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said it had received distress calls from residents trapped in their homes in Bani Suhaila, east of Khan Younis, but were unable to reach the town.

Medics later said two Palestinians had been killed in an airstrike on Bani Suhaila, where the armed wing of the Palestinian Islamist militant group Hamas said fighters had detonated a bomb against an Israeli army personnel carrier. The Israeli military, which is trying to eradicate Hamas after the Oct. 7 attack on Israel, said it had been operating in areas from which fighters had been able to fire rockets into Israel and attack Israeli troops.

Gaza health officials said Israeli military strikes in the past 24 hours had killed at least 55 people, the latest casualties in a war that health authorities in the enclave say has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians. "Where should we go? Shall we cross into the sea?" said Ghada, who has been displaced with her family six times during the

war, via a chat app from Hamad City in northwest Khan Younis.

"We are exhausted, starved, and want the war to end now, now not an hour later," Residents said they had been ordered to head west toward a designated humanitarian area but that the area was now unsafe. The Israeli military issued the evacuation orders on social media, and some residents received orders to leave by phone. Israeli forces also had mounted airstrikes on several areas of central and northern Gaza, including one on Al-Bureij camp in central Gaza which health officials said killed nine people.

In the southern area of Rafah, the military said it engaged in close-quarter combat with militants. "During scans in the area, the troops located a tunnel shaft, a large number of weapons, and night vision equipment inside a children's bedroom in a civilian building," the military said. One soldier was seriously hurt during combat on Wednesday, said the military, which has so far lost 326 troops in Gaza.

The Palestinian Health Ministry does not distinguish between combatant and non-combatants in its fatality reports but local health officials say most of the Palestinians killed have been civilians. Israel says at least a third are fighters. Meanwhile, SpaceX Chief Executive Elon Musk said that his Starlink satellite Internet service has been activated in a hospital in

Gaza, where many medical facilities have been destroyed by the war, with the help of the United Arab Emirates and Israel.

The Gulf Arab state's foreign minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, thanked the billionaire entrepreneur for supporting the UAE field hospital in Gaza, where many medical facilities have been demolished and medicines are scarce. "Starlink is now active in a Gaza hospital with the support of @UAEmediaoffice and @Israel," Musk posted on X.

The announcement came more than five months after the Israeli government gave approval for Starlink's use in the hospital in Rafah, a flashpoint city in southern Gaza. Residents said on Tuesday that Israeli forces had blown up several homes in Rafah, near the Egyptian border, where Israel said its operation aimed to dismantle the last Hamas battalions. The high speed Internet would enable potentially life-saving medical consultations via real-time video calling, the UAE foreign ministry said in February.

Hamas started the war in Gaza on Oct. 7 when it attacked Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking over 250 hostages back to Gaza, according to Israeli tallies. Israel responded with an offensive that has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry, and turned the coastal strip into a wasteland.

Pak Army rescue foreign climbers from K2

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Army commandos has successfully rescued foreign climbers from Holland, Singapore, and Ecuador on Wednesday who fell ill due to severe weather conditions while attempting to summit K2.

According to media, the climbers experienced health issues during their expedition, prompting an urgent rescue operation. The mountaineers expressed deep gratitude to the Pakistan Army for their timely intervention, which provided crucial medical aid and ensured their safe evacuation from the treacherous environment.

The climbers praised the swift response of the Pakistan Army personnel, emphasizing that their lives were saved thanks to the efficient rescue operation. "We are grateful to the Pakistan Army for rescuing us in such dire circumstances," one of the climbers stated. "The bad weather made it impossible to continue, and we fell ill. The timely action of the Pakistan Army saved our lives."

Senate Body coincides to raise number of SC judges

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice has coincided to increase the number of judges of the Supreme Court. However, the Senate Body asked for details of cases pending in the higher judiciary.

Chairman Committee Farooq H Naik said that the number of judges of the Supreme Court will be decided upon analysing the details submitted by the Ministry of Law and Justice. The law minister said that the registrar's office would furnish the details of the cases.

Farooq H Naik was of the opinion that the load of cases in the superior court increased but the number of judges remained the same (17). Anusha Rehman said that the bill has been pending since January 2023. The only need is to decide how many judges should be there in the top court. The Federal Law Minister said that 24 judges may be required in the apex court.

The federal law minister further said that the judge of one court deals with hundreds of cases, but the judge of another court deals with a few cases. He further said that the Bar Councils have suggested that the hearing under Article 184-3 cases should be done by the senior 5 judges only. The committee postponed the bill until the next session.

Govt afraid of PTI's popularity, says Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif said on Wednesday that the government of "Ali Baba and 40 thieves" was afraid of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) popularity.

He said whatever odds the government may stack against the PTI, neither would they make any deal nor flee the country, adding that the PTI is an idea that can never be killed.

He said the PTI had been facing all sorts of troubles for the last 20 months, stressing that his party would continue to overcome all legal and constitutional barriers.

"Banning political parties and silencing critics is a hallmark of this fake government. It will not affect anything as people stand by the PTI. Proscribing the PTI will be the most foolish decision of the government as it will harm itself in the end," he added.

Pakistan fully prepared to protect citizens

Prime Minister says TTP's Afghan-based terror attacks unacceptable



Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday denounced the terror attacks in Pakistan involving Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) using Afghan soil saying that was "unacceptable" as Pakistan was fully prepared to protect its citizens but desired to resolve the matter peacefully.

The prime minister, in his remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him, pointed out the surge in terror incidents, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan causing the killing of the personnel of the army, police and civil armed forces.

He called the terrorism wave a machination against Pakistan as it was taking place at a time when the coalition government was making efforts for the country's development as it reached a Staff Level Agreement with IMF despite challenges and announced a three-month relief package for 96% of domestic power consumers.

Highlighting the role of Afghanistan in the surged wave of terrorism, the prime minister said the government was in interaction with them as Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif also visited there. "But how is it possible that we hosted millions of their people here without any complaint? We treated them like our brothers and never considered them as a burden. But we were rewarded in the form of TTP attacks on our citizens to mar the country's peace and business. This is not acceptable," he remarked. He said Pakistan was ready to face any kind of situation as its valiant armed forces had sacrificed their lives to safeguard the country and its people.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also highlighted that the perpetrators of the May 9 riots, who had also attacked parliament, PTV and besieged the PM House in the past,

had resorted to new tactics to malign the country and its armed forces as a malicious campaign was run against Army Chief General Asim Munir from the official website of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. "We will not tolerate any such steps against the country, its innocent people, and armed forces," he said and called for national unity to protect the national interest.

The prime minister apprised the members of a decision to abolish the visa fees for 126 countries as a "quantum jump" to bring ease of doing business and attract businessmen, tourists and travelers to Pakistan. The decision, made after a threadbare discussion, would be tabled before the cabinet for its consideration, he added. He said the deficiency of the visa fees would be made up by foreign exchange earned through investment and tourism, including religious tourism of which Pakistan has immense potential.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the visitors would get visas within 24 hours through the electronic travel authorization form. Besides, the E-gates would be established at Gwadar Port and nine airports - initially in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi airports. The prime minister strongly condemned the unprecedented human rights abuses of Israel against Palestinians as around 40,000 Palestinians had been killed including thousands of children and women.

He said despite the resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council and UN General Assembly and the decision by the International Court of Justice, Israel was unbudged from its oppression which was highly condemnable. The prime minister drew attention to the attacks on Pakistan's missions in Germany and London. He said the Foreign Office had timely taken up the matter and that the envoys of the countries concerned should be given demarches to seek the protection of Pakistan's mission.

Biden seeks \$101m 'aid' for Pakistan: Lu

WASHINGTON: US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, Donald Lu said that US President Joe Biden has requested \$101 million in aid for Pakistan to support democracy and human rights in the country.

Lu, whom Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan blamed for toppling his government in 2022, made the statement before a committee of the American House of Representatives, which was summoned to discuss the United States budget for South Asia. The assistant secretary stated that the funds would be allocated to combat terrorism, support economic reforms, and provide debt relief.

Lu highlighted that this financial assistance aims to stabilise Pakistan's economy, which is in dire straits even after the government

secured a 37-month-long International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. The staff-level agreement caps negotiations that started in May after Islamabad completed a short-term, \$3 billion program that helped stabilize the economy, avert a sovereign debt default, and set challenging revenue targets in its budget to get IMF approval.

The new agreement introduced increased tax on agricultural incomes, underscoring the need to increase government revenue and reduce recurrent deficit to win the lender's approval. Under the IMF deal, the highest effective tax rate can rise to as much as 45% from the current 15%. It will be implemented from 2025, a move that was termed "unprecedented" by brokerage and investment banking firm JS Global.

Moving forward, he also expressed concern over the situation of women and minority groups in Afghanistan, noting that relations with the Taliban government cannot normalise until the rights of Afghan citizens are respected. The senior State Department official also demanded the Afghan Taliban to release all American prisoners in their custody.

The US remains the largest aid donor to impoverished Afghanistan nearly three years after the Taliban seized Kabul as the last US troops completed a chaotic pullout following 20 years of war with the Islamist militants. Since the US withdrawal was completed on August 30, 2021, Washington has provided more than \$17.9 billion in assistance to Afghanistan. — Agencies

PTI-led opposition alliance announces country-wide protest

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led opposition alliance announced a country-wide protest on Friday for the release of 'innocent' prisoners including party chairman Imran Khan.

Speaking to media persons after a meeting of the Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ayem—an opposition alliance led by the PTI—former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser said that they would be holding 'peaceful' protest demonstrations across the country on Friday.

He said that they are protesting for the three prime

demands including the end of sky-rocketed inflation, the establishment of peace, and the release of the PTI founder and all other political prisoners who have been behind the bars in 'fabricated' cases. "The incumbent federal government enjoys a fake mandate," Asad Qaiser added. Speaking on the occasion, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai claimed that Imran Khan is the 'most popular' leader in Pakistan at present. The PkMAP chief vowed to struggle for the release of all political prisoners, including the PTI founder. "The entire nation is

requested to participate in the protests for the great cause," Mahmood Khan Achakzai added. The PkMAP chief said that they are ready to take every step to take Pakistan out of crises. Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) Chairman Allama Raja Nasir Abbas said that the government is mulling to impose Article 6 against the PTI founder. "Imran Khan has the support of 99 percent of Pakistanis and Article 6 is being imposed on the entire nation," the MWM chairman said. Allama Raja Nasir Abbas said that those who have consistently failed in the past are being given another chance to govern.

Murad launches revival of natural route of Dhoro Puran to Shakoor Lake

F.P. Report

BADIN: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the federal government constructed Left Bank Outfall Darin (LBOD) during the 1980s, but the excavation of its Spinals blocked the natural waterways. As a result, the lands of Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, and Nawabshah started submerging during floods and degraded, turning saline; the wetland ecosystem was completely damaged, and livelihood opportunities shrank.

"Keeping in view these problems, particularly the livelihoods and the damaged wetland ecosystem, the Sindh government decided to revive the natural route of Dhoro Puran to construct a Spinal Escape regulator at RD 210 and rehabilitate Dhoro Puran up to Shakoor Lake." This, he said, while speaking at the mammoth gathering just after inaugurating the LBOD system. Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Secretary Irrigation Zareef Khero, elected representatives of the area, and the notables attended the programme in large numbers.

The CM, sharing the background of the LBOD project, said that from 1984 to 1997, the LBOD Stage-I project was executed by Wapda to relieve waterlogging and salinity in 1.27 million acres of land in Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, and Badin Districts. Mr Shah said that the LBOD spinal drain connects the drainage network to the sea through a tidal link. The LBOD spinal drain collects surplus drainage and distributes it through a weir to two branch drains - the Kadhan Pateji Outfall Drain (KPOD) and the Dhoro Puran Outfall Drain (DPDOD).

The spinal drain system was designed to direct the high salinity drainage into the KPOD and then to the sea. The KPOD connects to the sea via a 26-mile-long canal, called the Tidal Link. The CM said that 204 drains from three divisions, totalling 1735 miles in length, would discharge into the LBOD. These include 108 drains from Badin, spanning 813



miles; 51 drains from Mirpurkhas, covering 454 miles; and 43 drains from Sanghar, extending over 336.6 miles. Mr Shah recalled that the Wapda (fed govt) handed over the LBOD Spinal to the Sindh Irrigation Department in 1993, but the system could not perform and caused damage during the heavy rains of the 1994 monsoon. Therefore, the system was returned to WAPDA in 1995.

WAPDA handed over the LBOD System again to the Sindh Irrigation Department in February 2002. LBOD project: Murad Shah said that the LBOD project includes a Spinal Drain of 261.12 km, KPOD/DPDOD of 99 km, Tidal Link of 43 km, Surface Drains of 1666 km, and 1673 Drainage wells. Its benefited area is spread over 1.270 million acres.

The cost of the project was Rs.33.44 billion. Commencement: July 1986, and transferred to Irrigation dept on February 1, 2002.

Conceptualization & Problem:

Talking about the conceptualisation and problems, Murad Shah said that on July 4, 2022, heavy rain began and the LBOD's drainage network efficiently carried stormwater to its outfalls. He added that the drains worked effectively due to desilting and de-weeding processes.

The CM said that the LBOD system was intended to manage 125 mm of rainfall in 48 hours with a five-day evacuation period, Murad Shah said and added that the recent heavy rainfall of 2020 and 2022 caused widespread devastation and exposed the defects, shortcomings, and vulnerabilities of the existing drainage system on the left bank of the river Indus. Mr Shah said that the people of districts Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Nawabshah have always suffered due to flooding as their lands have been degraded and turned into saline; the wetland ecosystem is completely damaged and degraded and livelihood opportunities have shrunk.

During monsoon 2022, the spinal gauges have raised over to their ever-maximum Gauges of 2011. The spinal was designed for passing 4600 causes, whereas at present about 12000 causes water passing through it to sea. Breaches in LBOD system: Two major breaches in Puran Dhoro occurred in RD 7 and 8 on August 28, 2022. The breach of RD 8 of Puran Dhoro was closed on the very next day while the breach of RD 7 Puran Dhoro took five days to plug. Problem: All dhoras currently flowing within the LBOD system, including Pithoro, Hakro, Naro, Digri, Puran, and Pangrio, follow their old natural routes, ultimately combining into Dhoro Puran and outfalling into Shakoor Lake.

The LBOD spinal drain intersects this natural drainage route at four locations: RD 275, RD 251, RD 239, and RD 210. These intersections lead to flooding in the vicinity of all dhoras currently flowing within the LBOD system, including Pithoro,

Hakro, Naro, Digri, Puran, and Pangrio, following their old natural routes, ultimately combining into Dhoro Puran and outfalling into Shakoor Lake. Construction of Syphon: Construction of Dhoro Puran Syphon at Spinal Drain RD 275+500. Construction of Dhoro Pangrio Syphon at Spinal Drain RD 210+800 would divert the MMD and Digri Dhoro discharge into Dhoro Puran via a siphon at RD 275, connecting to Hakro Dhoro. This will reduce the excess load on the Spinal Drain and activate Dhoro, enhancing overall drainage efficiency.

During heavy rainfall in 2022, Pangrio Dhoro posed a significant threat to the LBOD system and its vicinity. This siphon will manage the higher discharge from Pangrio Dhoro by diverting it into Dhoro Puran, which outfalls into Shakoor Lake, mitigating risks and enhancing the system's capacity. In 2022, the system carried a stormwater discharge of 12,000 cusecs, far exceeding its design capacity of 4,600 cusecs. This caused elevated levels in the spinal drain, leading to blockages and backflow in the main drains of the LBOD system, ultimately resulting in breaches and overtopping in Nawabshah, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, and Badin.

LBOD Spinal Drain Rehabilitation: The Irrigation department carried out the rehabilitation of the LBO Spinal Drain, and the Desilting of the Drainage system in Sanghar. Mirpurkhas and Badin. After the revival of natural dhoras through the construction of siphons and the rehabilitation of the LBOD system, the excess load on the spinal drain will be alleviated. This will lower the spinal drain levels, providing unimpeded access to the main drains of the LBOD system, including the drainage networks of Nawabshah, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, and Badin.

The High Flood Level of the Spinal Drain recorded in 2022 was 27.53 feet. The top level has now increased by 4 feet, reaching 31.53 feet. The CM said that several left-

over areas, including Khipro, Umerkot, Digri, Sindhri, and Tando Mohammad Khan, lack drainage systems. Consequently, these areas experience flooding during heavy rainfall. Mr Shah said that once the dhoras are activated and rehabilitated, drainage systems for the leftover areas will be constructed and connected to the dhoras.

This network will ultimately outfall Shakoor Lake, following the natural drainage route. Social Benefits: According to Murad Shah the construction of syphons and rehabilitation of the LBOD system will mitigate the risk of flooding in surrounding areas, enhancing the safety and well-being of local communities. By addressing drainage issues, the project will protect agricultural lands from waterlogging and flooding, ensuring more stable and productive farming conditions, and supporting farmers' livelihoods.

The CM said that enhancing drainage efficiency and reducing excess water will boost agricultural productivity, leading to higher crop yields and economic stability for farmers. Protect infrastructure by preventing blockages and breaches in the drainage system, saving costs on repairs and maintenance. The project improves natural drainage routes, lessens environmental impact, promotes healthier ecosystems through water diversion and enhanced drainage, and supports sustainable water management practices.

Those who spoke on the occasion included Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro and MPA Arbab Lutf. Secretary Irrigation Zareef Khero played a documentary special made on LBOD, its issues and their resolution. Earlier, the chief minister inaugurated LBOD Syphons to revive the old natural route of Dhoro Puran to Shaker Dandha and the Spinal Escape Regulator at RD 210 and rehabilitation of Dhoro Puran up to Shakoor Lake. Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro briefed the CM about the technical works carried out by the Irrigation department.

Int'l moot on 'strengthening Pakistan-US relations' hosted

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Beaconhouse National University (BNU) Lahore, hosted an International Conference on July 24, 2024, titled "Strengthening Pakistan-US Relations." The event featured distinguished diplomats, practitioners, and academics from both Pakistan and the United States.

The keynote speaker, H.E. Donald Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, discussed the importance of the US-Pakistan relationship, emphasizing the long history of partnership and cooperation between the two nations. He highlighted the US's recognition of Pakistan's potential, particularly its dynamic young population and economic opportunities. Ambassador

Blome appreciated Pakistan's contribution to counter-terrorism and underlined the US's commitment to supporting Pakistan in various areas, including countering regional threats, economic collaboration, renewable energy, climate management, and education. He underscored that the US-Pakistan partnership goes beyond security and includes significant investments in health, trade, and development sectors.

Seven dead, in Punjab road mishaps

F.P. Report

LAHORE: At least seven people died and 1,172 others injured in 1,116 road accidents that took place in different cities of Punjab during the 24 hours, police and rescue sources said on Wednesday.

As many as 530 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 642 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. The data analysis showed that 680 drivers, 40 underage drivers, 145 pedestrians, and 354 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The statistics showed that 231 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 246 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 80 accidents and 78 victims, and at third Multan with 60 accidents and 54 victims.

According to the data, 1,021 motorbikes, 77 autorickshaws, 86 motorcars, 19 vans, 10 passenger buses, 26 truck and 97 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road accidents.

Meanwhile, two people including a child were killed and two others injured in separate incidents of violence in different cities of Punjab, police said on Wednesday.

According to details, a landlord brutally tortured a child for plucking jambolan fruit from his orchard in Shujabad which resulted in his instant death. The culprit fled the scene. Unidentified armed men gunned down 40-year-old Muhammad Rafique in Kabirwala area of Khanewal district and escaped the scene after committing murder.

4 drowned

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Two women and one man drowned while the other two women were rescued in Karachi's Turtle Beach, according to police and rescue officials on Wednesday.

According to police, family members were engulfed with high tides during swimming, as a result 40-year old Arshad and 30-year old Naureen Shera drowned on the spot while three women rescued and shifted to nearby hospital. However, one woman died and other women were under-treatment.

Happy Birthday Asian Nelson Mandela!

26TH July 1955, is the birth date of one of the most influential leaders of our time. Asif Ali Zardari nicknamed 'Asian Nelson Mandela', who is arguably the most important person in bringing about consistency of democratic process in Pakistan. Schooling and graduation from United Kingdom and the first democratically elected president of Pakistan in 21st century after long time of martial law in Pakistan, certainly deserves celebrating.

For the restoration of democracy and human rights in Pakistan, Asian Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for 14 years of prison with brutal third degree torture in which his tongue was cut, and the botched attempt was made to cut his neck and throat to kill him, and his family was ruined but he never compromised over the restoration of democracy and human rights in Pakistan. He helped to restore democracy in Pakistan after the military rule of Pervez Musharraf. He facilitated the transition of power from the military to a civilian government.

During her tenure of Presidency from 2008-2013, Asian Nelson Mandela worked to strengthen civilian institutions like the parliament, judiciary, and the free press. He signed the 18th Amendment which devolved more power to the provinces. He also worked to improve Pakistan's relations with neighboring nations including India, with increased trade and people-to-people contacts among the nations. Asian Nelson Mandela, had launched programs like the Benazir Income Support Program to provide cash assistance to the poor.

My leader Asif Ali Zardari, I proudly say Asian Nelson Mandela despite holding constitutional posts, has always stood by his people be it human made calamities or natural. He has always put aside all VIP security protocol at all for the president, which is given to all high officials of the state. VIP security protocol consists of four circles of security commandos protecting a high profile person of the state and paid

visits to his people to help them in difficult times. Thank you Asian Nelson Mandela!

In 2011, Asian Nelson Mandela waded through knee-deep water to visit the flood-affected areas to help the victims in Shaheed Benazirabad. Despite the security officials' warnings that the enemies of Pakistan could attack him, he set aside all threats because he was out to visit different bazaars and streets without any VIP security protocol to comfort the affected people. The Asian Nelson Mandela's Shaheed Benazirabad visit highlighted the severity of the flood in the international media, and the international community, the UN and countries like US and China announced aid for the flood victims.

In 2010, Asian Nelson Mandela, not only visited the city of Sukkur on the banks of the Indus river in the southern province of Sindh, he also travelled along the one-mile long Sukkur barrage, surveyed the churning Indus waters, met flood victims and visited all flood-ravaged areas of Sindh. He also visited the flood affected areas of southern Punjab and K.P along with US Senator John Kerry.

And when entire Pakistan's minority populations were under attack Churches and temples were being set on fire by mob, Asian Nelson Mandela, recommended nomination of a Hindu female Worker of Pakistan Peoples party for Senate in 2018. And now again Deputy speaker of Sindh assembly is From 1% population of province of Sindh. Anthony Naveed nominated by none but Asian Nelson Mandela.

Hindu community has had been facing unfair and unjust treatment and also been regularly subjected to forced conversions, rape, and oppression in Pakistan. Asian Nelson Mandela being a co-chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party, directed his party to bring legislation to end human rights violations with Hindu community in province of Sindh and Pakistan. The Sindh Hindu Marriage Registration Act 2016 passed by Pakistan Peoples Party to ensure human rights of Hindu community in

Pakistan.

And at the inception of this tenure of Presidency, Asian Nelson Mandela, on July 23, 2024 signed an amendment to the Christian Marriage Act, 1872, raising the minimum age of marriage for both males and females to 18 years and it is widely hailed by Christian community. Before the February, 8, 2024, elections Asian Nelson Mandela had pledged to enact more effective legislation for the protection and rights of minority communities, notably the Christians, since the PPP has led the fight for the rights of Pakistan's Christian community, there is close association between the Christian community and the PPP.

Asian Nelson Mandela wrote the history, while transforming his country and region. Now, much needed landmark legislation is long awaited in the view of change in the dynamics of demography. We are in 21st century and 100 years back in the 20th Century, hardly 10 percent people in the world lived in cities. In 2000, this proportion had risen to over 50 percent and by 2025 it will be over five billion worldwide. So issues like hate speech, hate crime, xenophobia and racism are obvious, which the world has been witnessing in different forms recently. Pakistan's mega cities like Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Quetta, Hyderabad etc. are in the phase of the tip of the iceberg phenomenon.

In capital city of Pakistan Islamabad, people hail from province of Sindh are the worst hit of hate speech, hate crime, xenophobia and institutional racism. And situation is so grave that sindhi officers are denied their due promotions in the government service. We now need solid legislation to put end to institutional racism while signing UNCERD to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, institutional racism in particular. Zardari, Asian Nelson Mandela is the only ray of hope for the patriots and marginalized communities and victims of institutional racism in Pakistan. Asian Nelson Mandela is the last hope for Pakistan.

Happy Birthday Asian Nelson Mandela!


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WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES PESHAWAR
GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
CORRIDENDUM



The NIT published in Daily Aaj and The Frontier Post "Auction Notice for Recyclable Material at WSSP Transfer Stations and Land Fill Sites", on July 13, 2024 the following is added to the said NIT.

Lot #	Name of Site	Location	Estimated Amount of Recoverable Per month	Token Money (Security)	Date / time & place of Auction
4	Recyclables Zone D Transfer Station	Warsak Road STP, Behind Prime Hospital, Warsak Road	1,819,821	400,000	8th August 2024 at 11:00 am WSSP Zone – E office, Ring Road near Landi Arbab Overhead bridge.
5	Recyclables Land Fill Site (LFS)	Shamshatoo	2,420,569	500,000	

General Manager HR/Admin/ Procurement
Local Government Complex, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Plot # 33, Street No. 13, Sector E-8, Phase-VII, Hayatabad, Peshawar. Office Phone # 091- 9219098.



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:	Peshawar	Branch code	0016
Branch	Peshawar	Branch code	0016
Auction Date	26 th July-2024	Time	10:30 AM

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Munawar Taj	17301-5467075-6	Post Office Wadappa Wad Paga, Tehsil Peshawar, District Peshawar	10.7	2 Kantay, 1 Anguthi, 1 Bindiya, 1 Jhoomar
Sarfraz Khan	17201-6866852-9	Basher Abad, Akber Pura, Nowshera	7.6	1 Har, 2 Kantay
Muhammad Faisal Khan	17301-1299491-1	Ittihad Colony, Peshawar	5	2 Kantay
Amir Masih	33105-6478609-7	Post Office Khas, Chak 215 G B Hamza, Tehsil Sumandri, District Faisalabad	23.4	2 Kantay, 1 Bindiya, 1 Haar
Muhammad Perveez	17301-9360985-9	Post Office Wadappa Wad Paga, Tehsil Peshawar, District Peshawar	17	1 Necklace
Waqas Ahmed	17301-2057581-7	Dala Zaak Road, Post Office Wadappa Wad Paga, Tehsil / District Peshawar	22.45	1 Chain, 2 Kantay, 2 Anguthi
Khizar Ahmed	16101-0385683-5	Mohalla Umar Abad Butt Seri, Post Office Shahbaz Garhi, Tehsil / District Mardan	5.5	2 Junkay
Ali Ismail	17301-8013979-5	Dakki Nalbandi, Peshawar City	32	2 Karay
Ismat Ullah	17201-4147075-5	Taruu Jaba, Pabbi, Nowshera	21	2 Chorya

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

Microfinance

PHC extends status quo against NAB’s probe into BRT scam

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) divisional bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Dr. Khurshed Iqbal extended status quo of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) construction companies’ owners against the National Accountability Bureau’s (NAB) inquiry into corruption and embezzlement allegations while adjourned further hearing till 19th till September, on Wednesday.

The counsel including Naem Bukhari, Waseem Sajjad and Shumail Ahmed Butt advocates informed the court that negotiations are underway between the parties to reach a settlement. They stated that the parties are making efforts to resolve the issue amicably and will soon submit a

written report to the court.

The NAB prosecutors, including Deputy Prosecutor General Azim Dad and Special Prosecutor General Muhammad Ali requested the court to fix the case for early hearing, arguing that the petitioners are already availing interim relief and should not be allowed to delay the proceedings.

However, PHC observed that the parties are trying to reach a mutually acceptable solution, it would be appropriate to adjourn the hearing and extended the interim status quo till 19th September.

It is worth noting that NAB is currently investigating corruption allegations against several BRT construction companies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including allegations of

embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, and irregularities in the award of contracts.

Anti-Narcotics court discharges six persons due to non-compliance

Special Judge Anti-Narcotics Court Safi Ullah Jan discharged six accused in a case of allegedly smuggling six kilograms hashish and three kilograms heroin due to non-compliance with legal requirements, on Wednesday.

The counsel Musa Ameer Khan advocate informed that on November 10, 2023, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) raid team foiled an attempt to smuggle narcotics through a car in the Karakhano Market and arrested three accused, Noor Muhammad, Shoaib, and Aziz Ullah.

The court was told that

based on the identification of the arrested individuals, six more accused, Atta Muhammad, Mehraban Shah, Irfan Ullah, Shakir Ullah, Yasin Reza, and Jan Sher, were also nominated in the case.

The lawyer Musa Ameer Khan advocate argued that the ANF officials did not comply with legal requirements and did not issue any notice to the accused. He claimed that the SHO ANF had acted illegally and that there was no evidence against the six accused, therefore, they should be discharged from the case.

The special judge Anti-Narcotics Court accepted the arguments and discharged the six accused from the case, while directing that proceedings against the other accused should continue.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry in a group photo during his visit to Rescue 1122 headquarters.

TDAP authorities meets SACM, promotion of exports discussed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-member delegation of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) called on Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordhor on Wednesday, and discussed the usage of local clusters for promotion of export with him.

The TDAP delegation was consisted of the Director General (DG)

Nauman Bashir and Deputy Director Zahid Mohammad. Chairman, All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA), Minhajuddin and Sartaj Ahmad Khan were also present on the occasion. The delegation discussed matters relating to the efforts of the authority for promotion of the national exports.

Speaking on the occasion, the Special Assistant to Chief Minister stressed upon the need for promotion of different clusters of the province for trade and

export purposes wherein he said TDAP can play crucial role. He also welcomed the role of the authority in linking various trading sectors of the province with foreign markets.

The authorities of TDAP especially informed the Special Assistant regarding the upcoming proposed exhibition in Chitral regarding various trading sectors wherein an investment conference will also be organized in which investors from all major cities of the country will participate. Furthermore,

stalls regarding investment and trade sectors will also be erected during the exhibition.

The Special Assistant assured the participation of all subsidiary organizations of the Industries Department including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), KP Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT) and other stakeholders in the event and extending of all possible cooperation in this regard.

UET signs MoU to strengthen academia-industry linkages



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Peshawar's Department of Mechanical Engineering and Frontier Foundry Steel (FF Steel) (Pvt) Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the Conference Hall, UET Peshawar here today. Prof. Dr. Qaiser Ali, Vice Chancellor, UET Peshawar and Muhammad Khurram Shahzad, Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO), FF Steel signed the MoU. Dr. Nasiru Minallah, Director, Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), UET Peshawar gave a detailed briefing to the participants regarding

the agreement. He informed that the purpose of the agreement is to promote research culture in the industry. Both parties agreed to strengthen academia-industry linkages. Under the agreement, UET students will be offered internships, trainee engineer programs, career counseling and other opportunities at FF Steel.

Prof. Dr. Qaiser Ali, Vice Chancellor, UET Peshawar welcomed the officials of FF Steel and appreciated their efforts. He stated that in developed countries, linkages between academia and industry are very strong; however, there is a significant gap between industry and academia in Pakistan. He emphasized that there

is a dire need to bridge this gap enabling the industry to benefit from research conducted in educational institutions. Similarly, the industry should also benefit academia, particularly students, he added. He stressed the importance of creating internships, scholarships and practical training opportunities for students within the industry. He suggested that the industry could provide laboratories and other facilities in universities which would benefit both parties. He expressed hope for fruitful results from the agreement in the near future.

Muhammad Khurram Shahzad, Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO), FF Steel, pledged to work for mutual collaboration between industry and academia. He said that FF Steel has many production units across the country that can be utilized to benefit students. He stated that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FF Steel mostly provides opportunities to graduates of UET Peshawar. Our technical team will soon meet with the authorities of UET Peshawar to identify areas

where we are facing challenges, so that improvements can be made, he added.

Prof. Dr. Hamidullah, Secretary Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BOASAR), UET Peshawar said that linkages between academia and industry are essential. He informed the officials of FF Steel that each department at UET Peshawar has an Industrial Advisory Board, which is actively engage in promoting linkages with the industry. He emphasized that such agreements should be purposeful to promote research and train students according to market demand.

Prof. Dr. Rizwan Mahmood Gul, Dean, Faculty of Mechanical, Chemical and Industrial Engineering, Prof. Dr. Siraj ul Islam, Dean, Faculty of Architecture and Allied Sciences, Prof. Dr. Misbah Ullah, Advisor Finance, Prof. Dr. Afzal Khan, Prof. Dr. Abdul Shakoar, Dr. Shaukat Ali Shah including other senior officials of UET Peshawar and FF Steel were also present on the occasion.

Raids on bakeries flayed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Traders in provincial capital flayed the district administration and food department teams for frequently raiding various bakeries and hotels, posting videos of their kitchens on social media, causing significant damage to businesses. In their attempt to showcase their performance, they destroy the established businesses of our trader brothers, said president Traders Association, Ghulam Bilal Javed. He emphasized if the aim is to improve society, the administration should adopt corrective measures rather than destructive ones. If any wrongdoing is observed, impose fines, shut down operations, or give punishments, but you do not have the authority to shut down businesses, he added.

Forensic audit of IPPs demanded

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chairman of Ittefaq Group of Hospitals, Abdul Hameed Gorwara, in a statement, has called for exposing the details of the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) that have made the lives of Pakistani citizens miserable. He has demanded a complete audit of IPPs by an honest team. Gorwara has urged for strict accountability of those who have looted the nation's wealth and are living luxurious lives abroad. He suggests bringing them back through Interpol and making them stand trial in court.

Gorwara emphasized the need to investigate the entire issue from the inception of IPPs. He stated

ed that those who have embezzled national resources and are selling expensive electricity to the public, making their lives difficult while amassing billions themselves, should be held accountable for every penny. He urged the authorities to make the details of agreements with IPPs public. He pointed out that IPPs receive a monthly capacity payment of 150 billion rupees, including payments to non-operational and partially operational plants.

A forensic audit of all IPPs is necessary, and if corruption is found, Pakistan can take the matter to international courts. Gorwara mentioned that the more research done on IPPs, the more shocking revelations come to light. He highlighted the sky-

rocketing electricity costs, leading to the closure of businesses and industries on a large scale. He noted that an IPP set up at a cost of 50 billion rupees has so far received payments of 400 billion rupees. With water already above the head, the continuous rise in electricity prices will result in the shutdown of industries.

He suggested converting imported coal plants to local coal. He mentioned that 52% of IPPs are owned by the government and 20% by China. The terms and conditions of the agreements made with IPPs should be made public, detailing which agreements were made during which periods and under what terms. He proposed that IPPs should be prepared for a review of these agreements.

PHC orders constitution comprehensive policy to end commercial on fertile land within six months

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) disposed of writ petitions against establishment of Industrial Estates and Housing Societies on agriculture land while ordered Chief Secretary, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to personally look into the matter and convene a meeting of the high officials include Senior Member Board of Revenue, Secretary Food Department, Secretary Agriculture Department, Secretary Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Department and Director General Environmental Protection Agency to make a policy decision so that the grievances of the petitioners are alleviated with the approval of the provincial cabinet within a period of six months.

PHC's divisional bench comprised Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali heard writ pleas filed by Ifthah Ullah along with others against establishment of Industrial Estate and Housing Societies on fertile land in Charsadda, Swabi, Nowshera and other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The judgement is authored by Justice Ijaz Anwar.

This consolidated judgment shall decide the instant as well as the connected W.P No.2442-P/2021, W.P No.2861-P/2023, W.P No' 4222' P/2023, W.P No.822-P/2022, W.P No.535-P/2022 and W.P No.80-P/2022 as adjudication of common questions of law and facts are involved in all these petitions'

2. Brief facts of the case are that the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Ministry of Industry, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Small Industrial Development

Board (SIDB) intends to acquire the land measuring 08 Kanal and 15 Marla for the establishment of "Small Industries Estate Swabi" at Mouza Kunda Maira and Mouza Ambar Tehsil, Lahor, District Swabi'

In this regard, Notification under Section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 ("Act") was issued on 22.04.2021 and Corrigendum to the said Notification was issued on 31.05.2021. It is alleged that out of the proposed land, huge portion of fertile agricultural land measuring 108 kanal, 11 marla belong to the petitioners.

It is averred in the petition that despite the availability of barren land in the area, the respondents initiated the process to acquire their lands which are highly fruit and crop yielding. Feeling aggrieved, the petitioners filed objection petition under section 5-A of the Act before the Deputy Commissioner/ Land Acquisition Collector, Swabi.

In the meanwhile, the petitioners filed a writ petition No.2148- P/2021, which was disposed of on 08.09.2021 with direction to the Deputy Collector to decide the objection petition of the petitioners within 30 days.

The Commissioner Mardan Division vide order dated 21.12.2021 has dismissed the objection petition of the present petitioners. Hence, the instant Constitutional Petition filed before PHC. The respondents have filed their comments wherein it is stated that the requisite notifications under Sections 5, 6 and 5-A were issued solely in consideration of feasibility of land and the importance of the project. The proposed project will provide employment opportunities to the

local people. It is further stated that only 03 Marla and 08 Sarsai land was acquired earlier from the petitioners for the establishment of motorway through mutation No.155 dated 24.05.2001, against which due compensation was paid to them.

Furthermore, the petitioners and other landowners will be compensated for the land in accordance with law and even if they are aggrieved they have every right to approach the referee court for further enhancement.

PHC vide order dated 06.10.2022, had appointed Ahmad Sultan Tareen Advocate as a Local Commission in the matter and directed him to visit the site/ spot i.e. acquired land of the petitioners including site at Jehangira, in company of the Managing Director, SIDB, his technical team, experts of the Revenue and Irrigation Departments and in presence of the petitioners/ landowners to confirm as to whether the required land is indeed agricultural or otherwise and submit his detailed report within a fortnight.

The Local Commission has submitted his report which reads as: In compliance with the first direction, the representatives as named above in the heading were present on the spot and accompanied throughout the spot inspection.

A downloadable image of the proposed site from the Google Earth was produced by an expert of the SIDB.

In compliance with the second direction, I traversed by foot around the entire land identified for acquisition obviously in company of attendees named above. Except a quite meagre portion of acquired land, the maximum land is crop producing. However, the land in

view of potentials can be divided into two categories.

The angular area of the land marked with blue lines is typically fit for arable farming with higher agricultural potentials due to availability of irrigation source; and standing crops as seen in some fields making part of this area of the land are the evidence of its stated potentials. The other category of the land marked with yellow lines is though tillable but it is a semi-arid area with uncertain crops yield due to dependence on rain and weather effects.

I also visited the site at Jehangira as identified by the parties accompanying the Commission.

The said site mainly comprises of the area with sandy hillocks and abysses seemingly unmanageable for viable road infrastructure and other facilities to ensue the feasibility of industrial plots to be allotted after development of the area.

In compliance with the third direction, I seek to submit the following suggestions: The angular area of the acquired land marked with blue lines may be excluded from the proposed acquisition of land. If remaining area marked in yellow lines is commensurate to needs for establishment of SIE, the individual interest of land owners should yield to the public interest. If after exclusion of the land mentioned above, remaining land is deemed less for the establishment of SIE, the area marked with orange lines can be included being an adjacent area making part of another revenue estate left untouched which SIDB still seems reluctant to include for some unknown reasons albeit its inclusion may improve the shape of landscape of SIE.

The foregoing report is submitted for perusal and appropriate orders, please.

Subsequently, this Court vide order dated 14.10.2023 has directed the respondents to submit their reports. Similar, directions were also issued to the worthy Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit the policy of the Provincial Government regarding the zones in which housing societies and industrial estates are to be established, so it may not destroy the agricultural land producing food grains etc.

In compliance of the said order, the respondents as well as the worthy Advocate General have submitted their reports which are placed on file.

The relevant portion of the report submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is reproduced as under: Suggestions: The area may be investigated in the light of Land Use Plan and Building Control Act 2021 to the effect of existence of Industrial estate in agriculture area as of present.

Before development and acquisition of site, Environmental Impact Assessment may be made of the site to ascertain that whether the impact on sensitive receptor is curable or not. The environmental and social impact on human population, nearby University of Swabi may be thoroughly checked to anticipate adverse impact, if any, of the proposed site. Apparently, the site is not feasible at its present location. It is, therefore, humbly prayed that the Honorable High court may be pleased to accept the instant report in the best public interest, please.

W.P.No.2861-P/2023 8. It is averred in the petition that

for the last few years the property dealers are purchasing agricultural properties in District Charsadda and converting the same to illegal plotting without having any NOC. The petitioner being aggrieved by the inaction of official respondents to stop illegal mushroom growth of unregistered and illegal housing societies, has filed the instant petition with the prayer that the official respondents be directed to impose complete ban on establishment of illegal colonies/townships and not to grant NOCs to illegal housing schemes.

W.P.No.4222-P/2023; It is alleged in the petition that the petitioner is the owner of the agricultural property measuring 4 Kanal out of the total disputed property measuring 10 Kanal 10 Marla where upon the private respondent No.7 is planning to introduce the housing society namely "Mashallah Risalpur Residential Plots". Feeling aggrieved, the petitioner filed applications to the official respondents but to no avail; hence this petition.

The respondents, along with the comments, have placed on file a letter dated 16.10.2023, wherein it is stated that no NOC has been given to the said housing scheme by the official respondents.

W.P.No.822-P/2022 filed Raza Khan and 19 others, the petitioners being aggrieved by the Notification dated 22.04.2021 followed by Corrigendum Notification dated 20.01.2022 issued under Section 4 of the Act, have filed the instant petition with the prayer that the said notifications be declared illegal and set aside.

W.P. No.535-P/2022; Through this petition, the petitioners have challenged

the legality of Notifications dated 22.04.2021 and 3 1.05.2021 issued by the Land Acquisition Collector, Swabi under section 4 of the Act and prayed that the said notifications be declared as illegal for its being based on mala fide, PHC verdict stated.

W.P. No.80-P/2022; the instant Constitutional Petition against the acquisition of their agricultural land for the establishment of Small Industrial Estate at Mouza Kunda Maira and Mouza Ambar, District Swabi vide Notification bearing No.67/DC/ACQ dated 22.04.2021 and Corrigendum Notification bearing No.84/DCAITLA dated 31.05.2021, and the order of respondent No.5 dated 21.12.2021.

The petitioners prayed that the said notifications and order be declared illegal and without legal authority. We have perused the record and considered the respective contentions of the parties, PHC verdict.

In all these petitions, the concerns of the petitioners are somewhat similar. They own agricultural property and are resisting its acquisition by the government and other private persons for the purposes of establishing of industrial zones and housing schemes.

We have also noticed that the provincial government has issued different notifications, whereby the establishment of housing schemes and carrying commercial activities on agricultural property have been prohibited PHC judgement.

It is also the matter of great concern that as compared to the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have very less property for agricultural purposes. We are also mindful of the fact that presently

agriculture is the backbone of our economy, the verdict stated.

However, it is a matter of deep concern that in the garb of setting up industrial zones as well as establishing housing schemes, huge agricultural properties have been devoured under the nose of provincial government. Unfortunately, the various departments of the provincial government lack coordination on the matter and a uniform policy in this regard is missing.

Indeed, the matter at hand i.e. the establishment of housing schemes and industrial zones, is a policy matter of the provincial government, and this Court would not ordinarily interfere in the same.

However, it appears from the record that the officers at the helm of affairs have shut their eyes on the matter and the unscrupulous elements of the society are exploiting the non-serious attitude of the government and converting huge agricultural/fertile land for residential and commercial purposes.

The record clearly reflects that, in the case of SIDB, even the notification under section 4 of the Act has been issued without Environmental Impact Assessment from the Environmental Protection Agency. The Environmental Protection Agency too was awakened from deep slumber by this Court when its report was solicited in the matter. Such complacent attitude of the provincial government is pushing this society towards anarchy.

The provincial government can use the complaints of the petitioner as an opportunity for taking remedial measures and effective steps to properly address this untended issue and resolve it in an effective manner.



In brief

Two including woman lost lives F.P. Report

SWABI: Two including a woman was killed and two injured in separate occurred in different areas of the district, police said on Wednesday. According to police, assailants opened fire on their rivals when they were going to Shah Mansoor Judicial Complex for a hearing. The firing killed a woman while her father and brother sustained wounds in the incident that occurred within limits of Maneri Payan. Reason behind the killing was stated to be an old enmity arisen over a family dispute. Meanwhile, famous local footballer, Qaim Ali lost his life due to wounds in the hospital. He was critically injured when a tree fell on him in village Bachai.

Free medical camp underway

BAHAWALPUR (INP): In line with directives of Punjab Chief Minister, a week-long free medical camp has been established in the remote areas of Cholistan under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa. The camp is aimed at providing better health facilities to residents of remote areas of Cholistan. In this context, CEO Health Dr. Amir Bashir stated that treatment and medical facilities are being offered at the free medical camp for Cholistan residents. He mentioned that not only are medications provided to patients, but medical tests are also being conducted, including hemoglobin, ultrasound, blood, urine tests, and vaccinations for Cholistan children. He further noted that more free medical camps would be organized in various areas of Cholistan. Dr. Aamir Bashir emphasized that a significant number of Cholistan residents have benefitted from the services offered at the free medical camp. The Cholistan community has expressed gratitude towards the Chief Minister of Punjab and health department officials for their sincere efforts.

DC visits DHQ hospital F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The district administration is committed to ensure provision of best medical facilities to public on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab. Deputy Commissioner Naeem Sindhu paid a surprise visit to the district headquarters hospital. Inspection of medical facilities in emergency and gynecological wards. The Deputy Commissioner also inspected the CT scan machine. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu checked the stock of medicines and also met the patients. It is the responsibility of the administration and the health department to provide health facilities to the public. According to the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, not only health facilities but also free medicines are being provided to the people. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu issued orders to further improve the sanitation arrangements in the hospital premises. MS DHQ Hospital Dr. Kashif Bajwa was also present on this occasion.

Man arrested

CHAKWAL (INP): A man has been taken into custody after allegedly harassing a 9-year-old girl during a bus journey from Abbottabad to Chakwal. The incident was reported to the Virtual Women Police Station by the girl's mother, who detailed the harassment and provided the bus location.



QUETTA: Activists of Balochistan Labour Federation holding a protest rally for acceptance of their demands.

Confiscated goods destroyed at FC Complex

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: The Directorate of Intelligence and Investigation, Customs and Collectorate of Custom Enforcement, Peshawar on Wednesday destroyed a substantial quantity of confiscated goods at FC Complex Shakkas in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber District.

The items destroyed included a wide range of contraband such as narcotics (heroin, opium, methamphetamine, and hashish), counterfeit cigarettes, fireworks, alcoholic beverages, prohibited medicines, goods of Indian origin, betel nuts, expired products and items infringing intellectual property rights. Dr. Karam Elahi, Director, Directorate of Intelligence and Investigation, Customs, Peshawar

initiated the destruction ceremony by setting ablaze the confiscated goods.

Addressing the ceremony, Noor-ul-Huda Mallick, Deputy Director, Directorate of Intelligence and Investigation, Customs, Peshawar said the detention, seizure and subsequent disposal of the smuggled and prohibited goods through auction or destruction are standard procedures following legal adjudication.

As part of the federal government's anti-smuggling initiative, the customs department have intensified its operations across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leading to a significant increase in seizures. The customs department maintained that a zero-tolerance policy against products detrimental to public health and safety; such as drugs,

narcotics, and counterfeit goods.

The total value of the confiscated items is estimated to be in millions of rupees, Mallick said and added that Pakistan Customs remains steadfast in its commitment to eradicating the smuggling of illicit goods and protecting the public interest. The ceremony was attended by representatives from various law enforcement agencies, including the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Customs, District Police Officer of Khyber, Federal Investigation Agency, Anti-Narcotics Force, Deputy Commissioner IR, Department of Plant Protection, Peshawar, and Pakistan Tobacco Company. Members of trade and business community and media outlets were also present at the occasion.

KDA initiates removal of glaciers

F.P. Report

KAGHAN: Following the directions of Director General Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) Shabbir Khan, the authority on Wednesday initiated significant operation to break and remove melting glaciers at different locations with an aim to ensure the safety of tourists.

In line directions of DG KDA, Deputy Director Ameen-ul-Hassan has constituted a specialized team led by Building Inspector Faizan Khan which was actively engaged in the removal of melting glaciers through use of heavy machinery.

It should be mentioned here that the melting glaciers pose potential threats to thousands of tourists visiting popular spots in the Naran Valley, including Chitta Katha Lake and the Saif-ul-Muluk Road. The administration has issued a cautionary advisory to all tourists. Visitors are strongly urged to refrain from taking photographs on melting glaciers due to the prevailing weather conditions. Additionally, tourists are advised to avoid dangerous routes prone to sliding to prevent any possible accidents.

Due to increasing temperatures in the region, glaciers at various tourist spots in Kaghan and Naran have started melting. A couple of days ago, two tourists from Punjab were buried under the snow while taking photos when a glacier suddenly collapsed, resulting in their tragic deaths.

Youth shot dead in Attock

F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Unidentified armed men gunned down a youth in village Basia of Attock on Wednesday and escaped the scene.

According to details, the incident took place in jurisdiction Rangoo police station where unknown accused shot death a youth identified as Qasim s/o Riaz. Body of the deceased hailing from Formul area was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident started investigations.

Country on verge of destruction: Siraj

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) former Emir Sirajul Haq urged all stakeholders to get United and ink a fresh social contract for smooth running business of the government. He was addressing a convention held for representatives of local government at Ahyaul Uloom Balambat as chief guest. JI elected local government representatives, party workers, JI office bearers and area elders attended the event.

The former provincial minister Inayatullah Khan, former MPA Izazul Mulk Afkari, JI district general secretary Hafiz Yaqub ur Rehman, Arshad Warasi, Arshad Zaman and others also spoke on the occasion. Sirajul Haq said that all institutions and political parties had failed to run the affairs of the government according to the wishes of general public. He said the country was on the verge of destruction as the entire system had failed to steer the nation out of crises. He said the people had lost trust in parliament, judiciary and establishment as well.

"The major political

parties and their leadership have also disappointed the nation", Mr Haq remarked, adding the fall of Dakhla and the creation of Bangladesh was the result of such disappointment in 1971. He said that keeping in view the current political and economic situation, the whole political leadership should get united to save the country from being burnt. He said that all stakeholders including politicians, judges, Generals and bureaucrats should come on a single table to ink a new social contract. He said that if a home is destroyed none could live in peace. The JI former chief suggested that all related institutions should play their positive role for protecting the motherland.

Former provincial minister for local government Inayatullah was of the view that the existing local government had totally failed due to government apathy. He said the mayor, tehsil and village council chairman were powerless with no development funds. They said the local government representatives in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been crying for their rights since

their election but to no avail. He demanded the KP government to provide adequate funds and powers to the LG representatives for strengthening the system or abolish it.

DC assumes charge: The newly posted deputy commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan after assuming the charge of his office held an introductory meeting with government officials. Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Additional Assistant Commissioners and heads of other government departments attended the meeting. All the Assistant Commissioners gave a detailed briefing on public issues, medical, educational facilities, development projects, lack of certain facilities, tourist spots places in their areas.

The DC asked the officials to ensure timely implementation of orders and good governance policy issued by the provincial government. He directed them to work as team work with officers of all departments. He directed the ADCs, ACs and AACs to dispose of revenue cases expeditiously on merit basis.

Community participation in policy making stressed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Transparency International Pakistan organized a Community Dialogue in Flood Affected District for Raising Awareness against Corruption and Improving Climate Governance Accountability through Communities Participation in Climate Planning and Decision Making in District Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The dialogue aims to empower local communities in District Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to actively engage in and influence climate-related decisions. CEO of Saiban Development Organization welcomed the participants. Nasreen Memon, Project Coordinator, Transparency International Pakistan provided participants with a comprehensive overview of the basics of climate change and its far-reaching consequences.

She explained the evident effects of climate change in Mardan and discussed the gendered and sectional vulnerabilities to it.

Saeed Alam, Climate Change expert spoke on strengthening community-based disaster risk reduction and mitigation and adaptation strategies. He highlighted the importance of empowering local communities to develop and implement effective adaptation measures. Saayad Saadat Jehan, Deputy Director (Communication) at KP Information Commission spoke on social accountability tools for transparent climate action. He emphasized that citizen participation in climate decision making is crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability in government actions.

Nasreen Memon provided an overview of TI Pakistan's Legal Advice Centre and highlighted the

importance of transparency and effectiveness in climate action through the involvement of citizens and community participation in climate decision making. Farhan Zaid, a focal person for the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) shared valuable insights on the DDMA's proactive measures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, both before and after disasters, focusing on district-level strategies to enhance preparedness and response.

Iqbal Hussain Khattak, Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief, concluded the session with his remarks, highlighting provincial government's efforts to tackle climate challenges in KP. He reflected on the critical role of community involvement in climate governance and reaffirmed the government's dedication to collaborative climate action.

Zulfiqar defends Ph. D thesis

F.P. Report

KARAK: A Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph. D) scholar Zulfiqar Ali Anjum defended his thesis in Management Sciences at Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak, on Wednesday.

The Ph. D Zulfiqar Ali Anjum dissertation was supervised by Dr. Faqir Sajjad ul Hassan, Head of the Management Sciences Department, and his Co-supervisor, was Dr. Arif Ullah. The panel of examiners included Dr. Shah Wali Associate Professor of Management Sciences at IM Sciences Peshawar; Dr.



Nauman Khan, Associate Professor at Comsats University, Attock Branch; and Dr. Hassan Ahmad Shah, Management Sciences department at KKKU.

Expressing his gratitude, Zulfiqar Ali Anjum extended heartfelt thanks to his Supervisors and Examiners

for their unwavering support and guidance throughout his PhD journey. Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Faqir Sajjad Ul Hassan commended the department's commitment to academic excellence, noting the successful completion of five PhDs within a short span of time.

Digital tourism: A key source to explore KP's breathtaking beauty

KAGHAN (APP): Nestled in the Upper Kaghan Valley, the pristine Anso and Saiful Malook lakes, renowned for its breathtaking beauty and enchanting tales, are now basking in the limelight of the digital age. Wasal Khan and his family, eager to capture the magic of these iconic destinations, recently visited these lakes and are now sharing their unforgettable pleasures experiences with relatives and friends through social media.

As the Khan family, led by Wasal, a property dealer of Peshawar, posed for selfies along with loved ones against the stunning backdrop of the waterfall cascading from Malaka Parbat's hills at Hamalya mountains range, their joy was palpable. With smiles all around, Wasal, his wife, and their three children plan to boast about their adventure on various social media platforms.

To entice friends, relatives, and countless online followers to visit the majestic Saiful Malook lake, a site steeped in the legends of Persian Prince Saiful Malook and fairy princes of Badry Jamal. "I have shared five photos of my Saiful Malook visit with my relatives at Peshawar who also planned to join him in few days," said Wasal, adding the boating inside Saiful Malook lake has doubled my family joy.

"The impact of digital sharing goes beyond just showcasing a beautiful spot. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp have become powerful tools in promoting adventure and heritage tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," said Wasal, adding digital media have transformed how travelers discover new destinations and become integral in boosting local economies.

"Through the lens of digital media, the picturesque Saiful Malook and Anso lakes are not just a serene getaway but a burgeoning symbol of the potential for tourism-driven economic growth in Pakistan." This trend is a boon for the local hospitality and transport industries, creating new opportunities for the youth and supporting the broader economic landscape. As the digital media continues to evolve in Pakistan, it brings with it the promise of revitalizing and expanding the tourism sector, making sites like Saiful Malook, Anso and Dudipath lakes are not just beautiful destinations but also catalysts for economic development.

"In today's modern digital era, the convergence of scenic beauty and social media has set the stage for a new chapter in tourism in Pakistan. Saiful Malook,

Mahodhand, Dudipath and Anso lakes are just one example of how the digital age is reshaping the travel industry in world including Pakistan, offering both stunning vistas and promising economic benefits," said Abu Zafar Sadiq, President Alpine Club of Pakistan while talking to APP. Being a home of plenty of ancient archeological, cultural and heritage sites, he said that Pakistan is a unique country blessed with six world heritage sites and second highest mountain peak of K-2 that required proper projection on digital, social and electronic media imperative for increasing tourism's revenue.

Moenjodaro in Sindh, Buddhist Ruins at Takht Bhai and neighbouring city remains at Sahri Bahlol in Mardan and Taxila, ancient Indus and Gandhara civilizations, five highest mountains peaks of above 8,000 meters including the second highest K-2 (8611m), 108 highest peaks of above 7000 meters in globe, Kalash culture in Chitral and numerous historical monuments needs proper projection on digital media. Abu Zafar said that Pakistan had earned only \$8.8 billion from tourism sector in 2017 which was extremely low compare to SAARC countries. The world travel and tourism council report

2021 revealed that the travel and tourism sector contributed only \$8.8 billion, approximately 2.9% of total GDP of Pakistan in 2017 against \$15 billion, which accounts for 5.7% of total GDP in 2019.

Alike in 2020, the tourism growth had decreased by nearly 25%, falling to \$11.6 billion or 4.4% of GDP while jobs in the tourism industry also fell 11.1% from 3.45 million in 2019 against 3.63 million in 2020 mainly due to COVID-19 and security challenges. "Advancements in technology have given rise to virtual tourism. Tourists can easily take virtual tours from their homes and the 360-degree videos as well as virtual reality experiences allow potential visitors to explore destinations like Saiful Malook lake and Lahore's Badshahi Mosque, Karimabad Bazaar in Hunza, Takht Bhai world heritage site and Shangri-la Resort in Skardu before booking flights.

He underscored the need of appointing digital professionals, bloggers and social media experts to promote the tourism industry through small videos to promote adventure and mountain sports here. Abu Zafar said Pakistan was the most suitable country for adventure sports especially for skiing at Nalthar Gilgit Baltistan and Malam Jabba Swat. Khyber-

Pakhtunkhwa's Swat valley, Naran, Kaghan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and a lot more regions in the country were the most beautiful places where holding of rivers rafting, paragliding and adventure sports can help attract foreign tourists.

"Today is an era of digital tourism. Technological advancements were transforming the travel and hospitality industry fast in developing countries including Pakistan, and that negative perceptions and opinions could be changed through effective and responsible digital media strategies and policies besides special programs, videos and features through social and electronic media to explore Pakistan's tourism treasures," Manzoor said.

The scientific advancements and modern technological inventions have virtually turned the globe into a town and our amazing tourism sites may be effectively highlighted through IT tools and apps before the world. Besides online booking platforms and digital marketing campaign, he said tourism departments need to hire services of reputed tourism firms and international v loggers to attract foreign tour groups to KP.

In developed countries like USA, UK, China, he said the culture of publicity of tourism desti-

nations through brochures, booklets and pamphlets were replaced by digital tourism and Pakistan could fully exploit its tourism sites by using digital platforms including global positioning system (GPS), and artificial intelligence.

He said the services of noted bloggers and social media groups may be hired for projection of tourism sites of Pakistan. Ambassador Manzoor said 'one belt and one road initiative (OBOR) had proved a game changer for China, adding CPEC being a major component of OBOR was aimed to improve infrastructure and transportation networks besides help promote tourism in Pakistan especially in GB and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

KP Culture and Tourism Authority's spokesman told APP that digital tourism was being promoted in KP through small videos packages. He said camping pods were established at new tourists' destinations besides Kalash culture events are being organized in Chitral. Sheikh Badin tourist resort located at the confluence of DI Khan and Lakki Marwat districts would be constructed and a tourist wing for merged areas mandated to monitor and oversee tourism-related promotion and digital tourism activities in KP.



GAZA: Palestinians flee the eastern part of Khan Younis. Nearly the entire population of 2.3 million is now displaced as Israelis bombardment continue.

Nigeria's president warns youth not to join 'sinister' protests

ABUJA (BBC): Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu has urged young people not to join nationwide cost-of-living protests planned for next week, saying they are the work of "sinister" people "capitalising" on the country's economic woes. Organisers are said to have drawn inspiration from events in Kenya.

Protesters in the East African nation are now calling on President William Ruto to resign after winning key demands - including the scrapping of planned tax rises and the dismissal of almost the entire cabinet. Nigeria's last mass demonstration was three years ago, against a reviled police unit accused of extra-judicial killings. The #EndSARS movement achieved its aim of disbanding the force but was met with a violent crackdown in which dozens of protesters were killed. As demonstrations planned for 1 August in Nigeria draw nearer, President Tinubu has urged organisers to drop their plans.

"Capitalising on the economic hardship in the country, some men and women with sinister motives have been reported to have been mobilising citizens, particularly youths, to stage a protest," he said. The speech was delivered on the president's behalf to a gathering of traditional leaders by the secretary to

the government, George Akume. Referring to India, which has been hit by religious clashes, and Sudan, which has been destroyed by a civil war, he added: "Let's learn from India and Sudan's experiences. We are a country with more than 200 million people. Therefore, we can't afford to have this kind of situation." Trade union bosses are urging Mr Tinubu to sit down with the protest organisers, and not to dismiss their concerns as "sponsored political dissent". "A situation where most Nigerian families are forced to eat one miserable meal a day and eating from the dustbin beckons for serious intervention by the government," said the Nigeria Labour Congress. But Mr Tinubu's camp has accused supporters of defeated presidential candidate Peter Obi of planning the protests, and galvanising support on social media with hashtags such as #TinubuMUSTGo and #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria. "Obi should be held responsible for anarchy," said presidential adviser Bayo Onanuga in an online post.

Mr Obi's Labour Party has issued a statement denying this, calling the allegations a "figment of the author's imagination" and branding the government "puerile". "Labour Party, Peter Obi and our supporters are not planning any protests," the statement

continued, but pointedly added: "The people have the right to protest and it is within their constitutional right". Mr Obi rallied young people, mostly in southern Nigeria, in the 2023 election, but came third. He alleged that the result was rigged in Mr Tinubu's favour, but a court dismissed his case. Local media say there is also opposition to the planned protests from a group of small-scale retailers, called the Self Reliance for Physically Challenged Traders of Nigeria, who say they "do not want to experience the turmoil and violence that occurred during the #EndSARS protests, which left deep scars on our nation." Across the continent in Uganda, there are similar fears from President Yoweri Museveni who warned protesters against "playing with fire" and accused them of undermining his government while "we are busy producing wealth" for the country.

A number of demonstrators were arrested trying to make their way to parliament to protest against what they say are high levels of corruption in government. On the same day in neighbouring Kenya, police tear-gassed hundreds of protesters in the capital city, Nairobi. Many were attempting to reach the main airport and shut down operations.

World's hottest day recorded, climate monitor says

BRUSSELS: July 21 was the hottest day ever recorded globally, according to preliminary data from the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service. The global average surface air temperature reached 17.09 degrees Celsius (62.76 degrees Fahrenheit), the warmest since records began in 1940, the EU climate monitor said in a statement.

The new high slightly exceeded the previous record set in July last year of 17.08C (62.74F), it said. "What is truly staggering is how large the difference is between the temperature of the last 13 months and the previous temperature records. We are now in truly uncharted territory and as the climate keeps warming, we are bound to see new records being broken in future months and years," the EU climate monitor's director, Carlo Buontempo, said in a statement.

In recent weeks, heatwaves have scorched large swaths of the United States, Europe and Russia. Gaza has also been hit by a heatwave, making living conditions even more difficult for Palestinians who have been displaced due to Israel's war in the enclave.

Every month since June 2023 has now ranked as the planet's hottest since records began, compared with the corresponding month in previous years. Scientists say human-induced global warming is behind the scorching temperatures. Some scientists have also suggested that 2024 could outrank 2023 as the hottest year since records began as climate change and the El Nino natural weather phenomenon, which ended in April, have pushed temperatures ever higher this year. — Aljazeera

German court rules in migration case

BERLIN (AP): A German court has ruled that there is no longer a general danger to all civilians from the long-running conflict in Syria, rejecting a claim to protected status by a Syrian man who had been convicted in Austria for involvement in smuggling people into Europe.

The ruling by the top administrative court of North Rhine-Westphalia state, Germany's most populous, was announced. Justice Minister Marco Buschmann said it was "a decision that one can understand, if one assumes that there are now regions in this country that are very dangerous but also other areas where there isn't necessary a danger to life." It wasn't immediately clear what consequences if any the ruling would have for German authorities' practice in handling claims for protection from Syrians, who so far largely have been deemed to face such a threat. It could still be appealed.

The court in the western city of Muenster ruled in the case of a man from Hasaka province in northeastern Syria who arrived in Germany in 2014. German authorities denied him protected status because he had previously been involved in smuggling people from Turkey to Europe, an offense for which he was given a several-year sentence in Austria. But a court obliged them to recognize him as a refugee. The Muenster court reversed that ruling on appeal.

The presiding judge said the man didn't face political persecution in Syria and his previous offenses barred him from being given refugee or other protected status, the court said in a statement. It also found that he didn't qualify for a lesser degree of protection in part because there is no longer a "serious individual threat to the life or physical integrity of civilians as a result of arbitrary violence in the context of a domestic conflict in Hasaka province, but also generally in Syria."

Thousands flee wildfires near Canada's Park

TORONTO: Thousands of residents and tourists have fled the largest national park in the Canadian Rockies after authorities warned wildfires were fast approaching, raising fears of another record fire season in the country. Jasper National Park said that "multiple wildfires" were burning in the park, located about 370km (230 miles) west of Edmonton in the western province of Alberta.

"We acknowledge this is a stressful time and appreciate patience as this is an evolving and complex situation," the park said in a social media post. It added that Parks Canada, which manages the country's 48 national parks, "had aircraft out assessing the wildfires at first light to get eyes on wildfire activity and behavior, identify impacted infrastructure and set firefighting objectives for the day".

Photos and videos shared on social media overnight showed a line of bumper-to-bumper cars and trucks crawling through smoke to try to get out of the park and the town of Jasper, home to 4,700 residents. "It's wall-to-wall traffic," Edmonton resident Carolyn Campbell

told The Associated Press news agency in a phone interview from her vehicle. Campbell said it took hours to move just 7km (about four miles), and while they had enough gas, she was worried for others who fled with little in the tank. "[The smoke] is pretty thick. We've got masks in the car," she said.

In April, federal officials said Canada risked another "catastrophic" wildfire season amid higher-than-normal spring and summer temperatures across much of the country. A heat wave descended last week, accentuating drought conditions, and several wildfires broke out. The new blazes have prompted worries that the country could see another brutal wildfire season like last year's record summer, which forced evacuations across the country and sent massive plumes of smoke into the United States.

More than 6,600 wildfires burned 15 million hectares (37 million acres) across Canada last year, an area roughly seven times the annual average. Experts have said that climate change has extended the Canadian wildfire season and made it easier for blazes to start and spread.

About 170 fires were burning across Alberta, according to official figures, with about a third still uncontrolled. Jasper National Park and town officials have scrambled to clear up traffic gridlock, find fuel for vehicles and help vulnerable people get to safety while marshalling resources to battle the fires.

Evacuees were told they had five hours to clear out and to carry with them key documents, pets, medication and any other emergency supplies. Fires threatening from the northeast have cut off highway access east to Edmonton. Another fire roaring up from the south forced the closure of the north-south Icefields Parkway. That left one route open - west to the neighbouring province of British Columbia where officials scrambled to find places for people to stay. "B.C. will do everything we can to provide safe refuge for evacuees from Jasper, and are working as quickly as possible to coordinate routes and arrange host communities on our side of the border," Bowinn Ma, BC's minister for emergency management, said in a social media post. — Aljazeera

Dozens arrested in Uganda anti-govt protests

KAMPALA (BBC): Dozens of people have been detained in the Ugandan capital Kampala after joining scattered anti-corruption protests in defiance of an official ban. Lawyers said around 60 people, including a prominent TV presenter and three young protest leaders, were hurriedly brought before courts and remanded in custody following a march on the country's parliament.

President Yoweri Museveni, who has ruled Uganda for almost four decades, had warned before the event that protesters were "playing with fire". The march was organised on social media amid anger over long-running allegations of corruption involving several high-profile public officials. The protests were partly inspired by demonstrations last month in neighbouring Kenya which forced President William Ruto to drop planned tax rises.

Police previously announced that they had refused to give permission for the march and would not allow any demonstration that threatened

Uganda's "peace and security". Riot officers were seen manning roadblocks, while members of the security forces sealed off roads and stood guard around the parliament building. Pictures showed marchers holding signs that read "Stop corruption" and calling the parliament a "den of thieves". Another said: "We are peaceful protesters". Others showed protesters being manhandled by police and pushed into the back of riot vans. "We are tired of corruption," protester Samson Kiriya told AFP news agency through the bars of a van after being arrested.

Those detained included well-known television and radio presenter Faiza Salima as well as three protest organisers - George Victor Otieno, Kennedy Ndyamuhaki, and Aloikin Praise Opoloje. Bernard Oundo, president of the Uganda Law Society, said one hearing saw 50 people charged. "This was a rushed trial. They were arrested and taken to court in a very short time and remanded to prison without securing them bail," he said. "We will ensure

these people receive justice." On the eve of the march, Uganda's main opposition leader, Bobi Wine, said security forces had besieged the Kampala headquarters of his National Unity Platform party. He said some of his party officials had been "violently arrested" and that the offices had been turned into a "military barracks". Writing on X following the march, Mr Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, said: "Salutations to all who have courageously marched and are still marching against corruption and misuse - even in the face of very brutal actions by the military and police!"

"The cowards have been picking up young people whose only crime is lifting up a placard." He added that legal and welfare teams would be made available to those who needed them. Earlier this year, the UK and US imposed sanctions on a number of Ugandan officials, including parliament speaker Anita Among and three former or serving ministers, over alleged involvement in corruption.

Failed asylum seekers to be sent back to Vietnam

LONDON (BBC): The Labour government scrapped the plan, which would have seen some asylum seekers sent to the east African country, with in hours of taking power, describing it as a "gimmick" and a waste of money. But the government will now use a plane intended to remove people to Rwanda to send around 55 people to Vietnam instead, Labour sources said.

They are being removed under a returns agreement, rather than deported to a third country. It will be the first time a flight has returned failed asylum seekers to the country since 2021, the sources said. In the first quarter of 2024, almost one in five registered arrivals on small boats were from Vietnam - the highest number of any nationality. The government has never disclosed full details of its contract to remove people to Rwanda. But it is understood the resources allocated to the scheme are now being used for the Vietnam flight. The people due to be removed are likely to have been in the system for some time, well before Labour took power. A Labour source said: "The Tories had created chaos in our asylum and immigration system. Tens of thousand of people are

in the system and being allowed to stay here in hotels or asylum accommodation forever." The Labour government has set up a new returns and enforcement unit, with up to 1,000 new staff to speed up removals for those with no right to be here."

Meanwhile, the government also announced the contract for the Bibby Stockholm barge, which houses asylum seekers off the coast of Dorset, would not be renewed beyond January. The Home Office said the move was part of a commitment to clear the asylum backlog and fix the system. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper told the Commons the Rwanda scheme had cost taxpayers £700m and resulted in only four people being removed to the country voluntarily. The scheme was aimed at deterring people from crossing the Channel in small boats but was stalled by legal challenges. Ms Cooper said by scrapping the scheme the government would save £220m on further direct payments to Rwanda over the next few years, as well as up to £750m that had been put aside to cover the scheme this year. She said some of the money saved would be invested in a new Border Security Command, bringing together Border Force

officials, police and intelligence agencies to tackle people-smuggling gangs. The government has also redeployed Home Office staff from the scheme to work on enforcement and returning failed asylum seekers.

Labour has confirmed it will resume processing of all asylum claims, including individuals who arrived in the UK illegally. It says it plans to return people with no right to be in the UK to their home countries. However, the Conservatives have accused Labour of giving an effective "amnesty", by sending the message that "if you arrive by small boat, you can claim asylum". Shadow Home Secretary James Cleverly questioned how people who had been refused asylum from countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Syria could be returned.

He told the Commons: "Has [the home secretary] started negotiating returns agreements with the Taliban, the ayatollahs of Iran or Assad in Syria?" So far this year, more than 15,000 people have crossed the Channel in small boats. The figure is higher than numbers for the same period in the previous four years, although in 2023 as a whole there was a drop compared to 2022.

US Senator Bob Menendez to resign after corruption conviction

WASHINGTON: United States Senator Bob Menendez has announced that he will resign next month following his conviction on corruption charges, including bribery and acting as an agent for Egypt's government. The decision came as Menendez's fellow Democrats piled pressure on him to step down or face becoming the first politician to be expelled from the Senate since 1862.

"I will be resigning from my office as the United States Senator from New Jersey, effective on the close of business on Aug. 20, 2024," Menendez's letter said. "While I fully intend to appeal the jury's verdict, all the way and including to the Supreme Court, I do not want the Senate to be involved in a lengthy process that will detract from its important work," the letter added. Democratic New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy will appoint a replacement for Menendez, who has represented New Jersey in the Senate since 2006 and

served as chairman of the influential Foreign Relations Committee before giving up that post after being charged last year.

Menendez's current six-year term ends on January 3. Murphy said in a statement he had received the letter but did not provide details on when he would finalise a decision for naming Menendez's temporary replacement. Menendez, 70, was found guilty on July 16 by a jury in a Manhattan federal court on all 16 criminal counts he faced - also including obstruction of justice, wire fraud and extortion - after a nine-week trial. Two co-defendants also were convicted.

The case centred on what prosecutors called bribery schemes in which the senator and his wife Nadine Menendez accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, gold bars and car and mortgage payments from three businessmen. In exchange, Menendez steered billions of dollars in US aid to Egypt and tried to influence the criminal prosecutions of two of the busi-

nessmen, prosecutors said. Menendez, who plans to appeal, faces decades in prison. US District Judge Sidney Stein has set the politician's sentencing for October 29, a week before the November 5 election. The Senate received a copy of Menendez's resignation letter, according to Senator Peter Welch of Vermont, who was presiding in the chamber. Menendez's resignation will temporarily reduce the Democratic majority in the Senate to 50-49 until Murphy's appointee is sworn in to finish what remains of Menendez's term.

Democratic US Representative Andy Kim is running for the seat in November and is favoured to win in Democratic-leaning New Jersey. Numerous Democrats had called for Menendez to resign, including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Cory Booker, New Jersey's other senator. Murphy, the New Jersey governor, had urged the Senate to expel Menendez if he did not quit. The trial was Menendez's

second after a 2017 trial ended when the jury could not reach a unanimous verdict. Menendez was then censured by the Senate ethics committee for accepting gifts from a wealthy longtime friend in exchange for official favours. Menendez was first appointed to his Senate seat in 2006 after serving 13 years in the US House of Representatives. He then won election three times to the Senate. He earlier served in the New Jersey legislature and as a mayor. For decades, he has been a forceful voice on US foreign relations, most recently advocating for additional aid to Ukraine and Israel as Democratic President Joe Biden pushed Congress to allocate more money to foreign allies embroiled in conflicts.

US Representative Rob Menendez, the senator's son, continues to represent a New Jersey congressional district across the Hudson River from New York City, similar to the district his father previously represented. — Aljazeera

UN Yemen envoy warns of a 'devastating' regional escalation

NEW YORK: The UN envoy for Yemen has said that recent developments in the Red Sea, Israel and inside the country "show the real danger of a devastating region-wide escalation".

In a briefing to the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Yemen, Hans Grundberg warned of the danger of an escalation following new Houthi attacks on commercial shipping and the first confirmed Israeli air strikes on Yemen in retaliation for Houthi drone and missile attacks on Israel. "I

remain deeply concerned about the continued targeting of international navigation in the Red Sea and its surrounding waterways," Grundberg said.

"Recent developments suggest that the threat against international shipping is increasing in scope and precision." The Houthi attacks on Israel and the Israeli strikes on Yemen's port of Hodeidah and its oil and power facilities represent "a new and dangerous level" of violence, he said. Commercial ships have been

sunk and damaged, disrupting trade, civilians have died, the Houthis still detain the crew of the Galaxy Leader, a cargo ship they hijacked in November, and the United States and the United Kingdom continue air strikes on military targets in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, he said. "It is alarming that there are no signs of de-escalation, let alone a solution," Grundberg continued. The Houthis have launched missiles and drones at Israel and disrupted global trade through the

Red Sea in response to Israel's assault on Gaza. Israel says the Iran-aligned Houthis have launched 200 attacks against it since the war began, many of them intercepted. But a rare Houthi drone strike last Friday hit Tel Aviv, killing one person and prompting Israel to announce its first strikes against the group. The air strikes hit near Hodeidah and killed six people, local medics said. Israel said it shot down a missile launched by the Houthis. — Aljazeera

JOHANNESBURG (AFP): Police in South Africa have arrested five suspects, including three Mexicans, after uncovering a multi-million dollar crystal meth lab on a remote farm. Officers raided the lab, in the northern town of Groblersdal, after getting tipped off about "suspicious activities", a statement from an elite police unit

known as the Hawks said.

It added that the lab was operating on an industrial scale, producing the highly addictive drug for both local and international markets. South Africa is one of the largest meth markets in the world and a transit location for illicit drugs, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and

Crime. Four men - two South Africans and two Mexicans - appeared in court in Groblersdal in connection with the case but were not asked to enter a plea. Their next hearing will be on 1 August. Gonzales Jorge, aged 51, Gutierrez Lopes, 43, Simphiwe Khumalo, 35, and Frederick Botha, 67, were arrested follow-

ing a search of the farm last Friday that found crystal meth with an estimated street value of 2bn rand (approximately £84m; \$108m). Officers also found chemicals used to manufacture the drug, such as acetone. The owner of the farm was among those arrested, news agency AFP reported the police as saying.

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China brokers deal between Palestinian factions

CHINA has done it again. After brokering a deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran – of course the process was more complicated because Oman and the United Arab Emirates played a decisive role – in 2023, Beijing has brought together Hamas and Fatah and 12 other Palestinian organisations to agree to form a national unity government. The agreement was finalised in Beijing on Tuesday.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi oversaw the signing of the agreement by Hamas' Mousa Abu Marzouk and Mahmoud al-Aloul, vice chairman of the Central Committee of Fatah. This is seen as a way to pre-empt Israel's attempt to control Gaza in a post-war situation. Abu Marzouk said, "Today we sign an agreement for national unity and we say that the path to completing this journey is national unity."

Hamas and Fatah have been at loggerheads for 18 years now, ever since Hamas gained control of Gaza, and Fatah remained in control of the West Bank. National elections were not held in Palestine for these 18 years. One of the components of the agreement is that there will be elections and it will be fought on a national unity platform.

Mustafa Barghouti, secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative (PNI), explained the four elements of the agreement. First, the establishment of an interim national unity government, second, formation of a unified Palestinian leadership before the elections, the free elections of a new Palestinian National Council, and a general declaration of unity in the face of Israeli attacks. These are indeed the crucial elements which are necessary to hold two territories of Palestine together and also the two parties governing in each of the territories. Unity between the two wings is a necessary prelude to deal with an aggressive Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in negotiating the ceasefire, in settling the issue of hostages and the restoration of passages of transition between the two Palestinian territories and Israel. A large number of Palestinians work in Israel. It might seem bizarre but that is the kind of interdependence that binds the two irreconcilable rivals.

Will this Beijing agreement succeed is a question that cannot be avoided because there was a similar agreement between Hamas and Fatah, mediated by Saudi Arabian King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz at Makkah in 2007. Interestingly there were four elements in the Makkah agreement too. The four were: first, end to internecine strife which resulted in the shedding of the blood of Palestinians; second, the formation of a national unity government through a constitutional system; third, to activate and reform the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which is the umbrella organisation of all Palestinian factions and Fatah was the largest among them; fourth, effective partnership based on laws passed by the Palestinian National Council, and the affirmation of political pluralism. Unfortunately, in the years that followed the Makkah agreement, Fatah and Hamas each asserted their own power in the West Bank and in Gaza respectively.

It is quite evident that the divisions among the Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, are one of the major reasons that Israel has been sidestepping the issue of final negotiations as stipulated in the Oslo Accords. It is the final negotiations that are expected to bring a closure to the festering issue of the Palestine-Israeli issue. But the internal feuds between the Fatah and Hamas were exploited by Israel. It will need a united Palestine to negotiate hard with an intransigent Israel. Palestinian unity is a precondition of talks between Palestine and Israel. So, whatever their differences, and however sharp they may be, it is necessary for Fatah and Hamas to stand together, to push Israel into accepting the territorially defined state of Palestine.

Trump's words

GIVEN the direct bearing it will have on the United States' support for the "pro-independence" cause he espouses for the island, the leader of the secessionist-minded Taiwan authorities Lai Ching-te must be one of the keenest followers of the US presidential election situation. Lai's hard-line "pro-independence" speech at a meeting of the Democratic Progressive Party on Sunday, shortly after US President Joe Biden announced he was ending his reelection bid, must be taken with a pinch of salt.

Lai's true motive was to take advantage of the DPP gathering to raise the morale of his crestfallen colleagues amid the pessimism gripping the party at the prospect of Republican candidate Donald Trump occupying the White House for a second time. Unlike Biden's stress on a "united front" against Beijing, based on the US' global alliance network, Trump has held to his hallmark "America first" principle during his ongoing election campaign as well. Which means, if Trump wins the election in November, the Lai authorities will face a big change in US policy. In an interview with the media published five days before Lai's we are-not-alone bravura on the weekend, Trump said that on taking office again, he would demand Taiwan pay for US protection, and accused the island of taking the chip industry and jobs away from the US. He also dodged the question of whether he would defend the island should Beijing have to resort to national reunification by force. After the Biden administration's frequent playing of the "supporting Taiwan independence card", Trump's words have taken the wind out of the DPP's sails. Biden had said he would send troops to defend the island. The "pro-independence" forces in Taiwan have always taken the US' protection for granted, bragging the "rock-solid" and "iron-clad" ties with the US as their largest strategic and political assets.

However, Trump has made his point crystal-clear by saying "Taiwan should pay us for defense ... You know, we're no different than an insurance company." That Cho Jung-tai, head of the island's "executive yuan", responded by saying that Taiwan is "willing to take on more responsibility" and would defend itself only serves to expose the Lai authorities' anxiety at the prospect of more conditional US support. By continuing to stress "values" in his speech, a catchword of the Biden administration in its clique building, Lai showed the DPP is caught in a dilemma, trying to butter its US bread on both sides. Yet the studied silence his authorities have maintained over Trump's remark in the same interview that "I mean, how stupid are we? They took all of our chip business. They're immensely wealthy", clearly indicates the Taiwan leader's concern that only paying for US protection may not be enough to satisfy its backer.

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Govt has "made up its mind" to...



Netanyahu in a politically unfamiliar Washington

Osama Al-Sharif

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is no stranger to Washington, the White House or the halls of Capitol Hill. In fact, on Wednesday, he will set a record: speaking to a joint session of Congress for the fourth time over a period of more than two decades – surpassing Winston Churchill, who spoke there on three separate occasions. This will be an honor that takes its place in the annals of US political history. Netanyahu understands the inner mechanics of US politics, he knows how to manipulate the two main parties and he is quite an emotional and charismatic orator.

The last time he was invited to speak, in March 2015, he received 28 standing ovations, one less than he received in 2011.

In 2015, Netanyahu snubbed then-President Barack Obama by blasting the impending nuclear agreement with Iran as a "very bad deal," which the White House was pushing for against Israeli objections. Back then, at least 30 US lawmakers had boycotted his speech amid rising tensions between the Obama administration and Netanyahu.

This time, the controversy is much more profound. Netanyahu has pushed ties with President Joe Biden to the brink by obstructing a ceasefire deal in Gaza, Israel's indiscriminate use of lethal force in the battered enclave, the impeding of aid delivery to more than 2 million hapless Gazans and claims that the US administration was withholding the delivery of much-needed armaments to the Israeli army.

The rift between the two men and bipartisan squabbling in Washington, in addition to the International Criminal Court prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant for Netanyahu, pushed defiant Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson to invite the Israeli premier to speak before Congress.

Netanyahu had asked for a month's delay to make his planned speech. He faces political turmoil at home, as his army finds itself bogged down in Gaza while appearing

unable to confront an

audacious Hezbollah in the north. The families of more than 150 Israeli hostages are putting pressure on his far-right government to conclude a ceasefire deal and bring the captives home. This is anathema to him. A pause in the war will kick-start a series of investigations over how the debacle of Oct. 7 was allowed to take place, which will almost certainly end his political career.

Netanyahu's poll numbers have fallen, while his political rivals are ready

same.

Before Biden announced on Sunday his intention to withdraw from the 2024 presidential race, pundits in Israel believed that Netanyahu would most likely endear himself to the Republicans, whose candidate, former President Donald Trump, had all but ensured his election for a second term.

But Biden's sudden decision has upended the US political scene. Vice President Kamala Harris, a critic of Israel's behavior in Gaza and the West

The rift between the two men and bipartisan squabbling in Washington, in addition to the International Criminal Court prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant for Netanyahu, pushed defiant Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson to invite the Israeli premier to speak before Congress. Netanyahu had asked for a month's delay to make his planned speech. He faces political turmoil at home, as his army finds itself bogged down in Gaza while appearing unable to confront an audacious Hezbollah in the north.

to pounce. His ultranationalist partners, who reject any hostage deal that ends the war, threaten to abandon him and bring the coalition down if he offers any concessions. Against the policy of the Biden White House, they want an open confrontation with Lebanon, even if that means igniting a regional war with Iran that will suck in the US.

Traveling to Washington must have presented itself as a much-needed respite. Netanyahu is more popular with US lawmakers than with Knesset members. As the longest-serving prime minister in Israel's history, Netanyahu has grown an enlarged ego that is blinding him to the damage he has done to Israel's image and standing abroad. He still believes he can navigate the corridors of Congress for the benefit of Israel and himself; the two, for him, are the

Bank, is now the likely Democratic presidential contender. The odds of a landslide Trump victory have changed. Now, Netanyahu, the opportunist and manipulator, must change his tone and attitude. His speech will focus on the special US-Israel alliance above bipartisan politics. He will avoid besmirching Biden and instead praise the president's unwavering support for Israel's war against Iran's proxies, starting with Hamas, and summon backing for a long and inevitable confrontation with Tehran, a common enemy and a threat to the Middle East, in his view.

He will talk about the calamity of Oct. 7. He will mention the hostages, including American nationals who are suffering under Hamas' barbarism. He will appeal to those who see Israel's survival as the foundation of a shared Judeo-

Christian culture. And, yes, he will have his standing ovations.

But these are not normal times for Israel and the US. Many Democratic lawmakers have decided to boycott his speech. Others will try to interrupt him, pointing to the genocidal war Israel is carrying out in Gaza with American weapons.

Outside the Capitol, thousands will gather, calling for the arrest of Netanyahu, the war criminal. They will include Jews, Muslims and Christians. This will not be the hospitable Washington that Netanyahu is used to visiting. Israel has become a divisive issue for Americans, from the iron-clad grip of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee over US politicians to the billions of dollars American taxpayers are forced to rain on Israel.

And the divisiveness will not go away anytime soon. Netanyahu will return to a politically embroiled Israel that is facing the fallout from the historic advisory opinion issued last week by the International Court of Justice on the illegality of its occupation of Palestinian territories, as well as its open-ended war in Gaza and beyond. Meanwhile, the new Democratic candidate will have to bring back millions of disenchanting Muslim, Arab and young voters who had shunned Biden in the primaries, largely over Israel and the Palestinians.

Netanyahu's Washington visit will have some shining moments, but only within the sanctuary of the US Congress. Outside, he will be denounced just like he is now in Israel. Many Israelis are realizing that Netanyahu is becoming a liability for their country, which has become dependent on the support of the US. Netanyahu's respite from his Washington visit will be short-lived.

His egotistical brand of politics is not only shaking the foundations of the Israeli state but also the quiescence of the special US-Israel rapport. This will be an unfamiliar Washington for Netanyahu and he must know there will not be a fifth visit to Congress.

Where will the AI super-cycle lead?

Dambisa Moyo

THE current pace of advances in generative artificial intelligence makes it difficult to forecast how the technology will affect the economy, business and society. Nonetheless, it already seems clear that the new AI applications will produce a narrow cohort of winners and lead to a smaller workforce, confronting governments with big policy challenges.

Consider how AI will affect the three key components of growth: capital, labor and productivity. In terms of capital, the massive volume of investment required to power AI innovations ensures that there will be a smaller, more concentrated set of winners. Big Tech firms with monopolies in their respective markets are the only ones that can afford the enormous costs associated with developing, training and powering large language models.

Most of these costs come from running high-end graphics processing units and from powering and cooling enormous data centers. Sam Mugel, the chief technology officer of Multiverse, estimates that training the next generation of large language models will soon cost at least \$1 billion. In 2023 alone, the so-called magnificent seven — the top technology companies in the US — allocated a combined \$370 billion to research and development. That is roughly equal to the EU's total R&D budget (counting both businesses and the public sector).

With respect to labor, it is too early to anticipate the winners and losers, or how the gains and losses associated with AI will be distributed across the economy. While a 2023 report from Goldman Sachs estimated that AI could "expose the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs to automation," a World Economic Forum survey of 803 companies points to a much lower net loss, owing to job creation related to investment in the green transition and climate change adaptation.

In any case, many fear that AI will contribute to long-term structural unemployment, creating a jobless class that will include both skilled and unskilled workers. But while the projections above provide a baseline of what might occur, there is ample scope to refine our thinking on the issue. After all, the scale of the problem will depend on which jobs are lost at different points of the AI value chain.

We have not yet seen what job losses at one link in the chain will mean elsewhere in the technology sector, let alone the broader economy. The impact on jobs could vary widely as we move from chip manufacturers, AI infrastructure and AI applications to sectors such as healthcare, education and telecommunications — all of which are poised to benefit from AI innovations. At the technology's base, there is already enormous growth and job creation as chip manufacturers (such as Nvidia) build fabrication facilities and invest in the production capacity that

will drive the AI revolution.

It is less clear how many jobs will be created or lost elsewhere, because no one can predict all the ways a new technology will be used or what knock-on effects it may have. Early indications of AI's impact on long-term efficiency and productivity gains are encouraging — at least for those workers who will still have jobs. For example, a 2023 study of 5,000 workers by Erik Brynjolfsson, Danielle Li and Lindsey R. Raymond found that AI tools boosted worker productivity by 14 percent, on average, and by 34 percent for new and low-skilled workers.

Technological advances have a long track record of enhancing global connectivity in trade and telecommunications, expanding access to public goods like healthcare and education, driving innovation, improving living standards and ultimately powering broad-based economic growth. There is no reason to think that AI will not do the same.

Moreover, AI will likely diffuse across the wider economy faster than previous technologies did, which means that AI-related productivity and efficiency gains could happen sooner rather than later. Earlier general purpose technologies (such as the steam engine, electrification and personal computers) required vast outlays to build the underlying infrastructure. It took more than 40 years for electricity to become widely accessible in the first half of the 20th century and it took roughly a decade for smartphones to surpass 90 percent adoption in the 2010s. AI, by contrast, can be deployed through existing digital platforms and devices.

The upshot is that the AI super-cycle will likely drive productivity gains and stronger economic growth — to the tune of \$16 trillion globally by 2030, in PwC's forecast. But these gains will accrue largely to the owners of capital and less so to a potentially shrinking labor force. In an era of less labor-intensive growth, many companies and industries will adapt their business models — namely, by increasing the ratio of capital to employment — and governments will need to reassess tax and welfare policies.

If greater economic gains are flowing to the owners of capital, taxes will need to change accordingly. For example, a much higher corporate tax rate may be necessary to capture the excess profits generated by automation and a smaller workforce.

With respect to welfare, the threat of rising structural unemployment from AI will reinvigorate debates about hitherto radical proposals such as a universal basic income.

We must reflect on AI's effect on inequality both within countries — between capital and labor — and among countries. A widening gap between technology leaders, such as the US and China, and the rest of the world — particularly the poorest economies — bodes ill for an already-fraught geopolitical environment.

We need a Fossil Fuel Treaty now

Ruleta Camacho Thomas

AS we still assess the damages caused by Hurricane Beryl in the Caribbean, and as Typhoon Gaemi pounds Southeast Asia, the devastating power of extreme weather events like these has once again been thrust into the global spotlight.

Hurricane Beryl was the earliest ever formed hurricane of this level to strike our region, another first for major climate events in recorded history. The storm swept through Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, St Lucia, and then the Cayman Islands, before hitting the Yucatan Peninsula and then the Gulf of Mexico. Its impact was felt all the way in the United States' Midwest.

The Caribbean, a region known for its stunning beauty and vibrant culture, has become the unfortunate poster child for climate vulnerability. Each hurricane season brings with it a looming sense of dread, as communities brace for storms that are growing stronger and more unpredictable. Each year, such extreme weather phenomena are getting worse, and this year they started even earlier. The devastation wrought by Hurricane Beryl is a harrowing reminder of this harsh reality. Homes are flattened, infrastructure obliterated and lives tragically lost. The economic toll is staggering, with recovery efforts stretching the limited resources of these nations to their breaking point.

The escalating frequency and intensity of such hurricanes underscore a stark reality: The continued use of fossil fuels is fuelling climate change, making these catastrophic events more severe and frequent, striking small island

nations like those in the Caribbean the hardest. As islander citizens, we bear the brunt of these impacts while being the least responsible for the climate crisis.

The science is unequivocal: Climate change, driven by the relentless burning of fossil fuels, is amplifying the severity of extreme weather events. The warming atmosphere holds more moisture, leading to heavier rainfall, while rising sea levels exacerbate storm surges. The Caribbean's geography makes it especially susceptible to these changes, with low-lying islands facing the threats of powerful hurricanes, rising seas, ocean acidification, droughts and high temperatures.

This inequity is a glaring injustice that the international community must address with urgency and determination. It is not

our lives with increasing regularity.

The climate crisis and its effects on coral reefs and marine life, vital for the biodiversity and economies of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), pose a significant threat to these nations due to the concentration of people, assets and infrastructure in coastal zones. Many SIDS rely heavily on tourism, fisheries and agriculture, which are heavily impacted by climate change. They often lack the financial, technological and technical resources needed to implement effective climate adaptation and resilience measures, which leads to more poverty and emigration.

Our lives with increasing regularity. The climate crisis and its effects on coral reefs and marine life, vital for the biodiversity and economies of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), pose a significant threat to these nations due to the concentration of people, assets and infrastructure in coastal zones. Many SIDS rely heavily on tourism, fisheries and agriculture, which are heavily impacted by climate change. They often lack the financial, technological and technical resources needed to implement effective climate adaptation and resilience measures, which leads to more poverty and emigration.

enough to offer post-disaster aid; we must tackle the root cause of these increasingly destructive storms. It is high time for a binding international treaty to regulate fossil fuels and protect our island communities.

Such a treaty would enforce strict limits on fossil fuel extraction, promote a just and equitable transition to clean and fair energy sources which will continue to facilitate economic growth, and hold countries accountable for their contributions to global heating. It would also include provisions to support the most vulnerable nations, ensuring they have the resources to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate breakdown.

The time for half measures and incremental changes is over. The world needs bold, decisive action to combat the climate emergency. For the Caribbean and other small island

states, this is not just a matter of environmental stewardship; it is a matter of survival. The establishment of a Fossil Fuel Treaty would signal a global commitment to ending the fossil fuel era and ushering in a more sustainable, equitable and safer future for all.

Hurricane Beryl's destructive path has already faded from the headlines, but we must not forget the lessons it imparts as it leaves permanent scars on our people's lives and livelihoods.

The climate crisis is here, and it is accelerating. The victims of this crisis — those in the Caribbean and beyond — deserve more than sympathy; they deserve action. The call for a Fossil Fuel Treaty is a call for justice, for resilience, and for the protection of our planet. We urge governments to heed this call with the urgency and resolve it demands.

Genocide in Gaza and the decline of a flawed world order

THE current state of the world is the tragic manifestation of history repeating itself, echoing the famous line, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

In 1919, at the end of World War I, the victorious powers – Britain, France, Italy, the United States and Japan – convened for the Paris Peace Conference, which produced the Treaty of Versailles and established the League of Nations, heralding a new era of international relations.

The latter’s primary objective, as outlined in its 26-article covenant, was to promote peace, prevent the recurrence of global conflict, and ensure collective security through negotiation and diplomacy.

The League of Nations operated through an executive council initially consisting of representatives of the four victors: Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Germany, which was defeated in the war, joined as a permanent member in 1926 but withdrew alongside Japan in 1933.

The League of Nations failed spectacularly in achieving its foundational goals, ultimately declaring its own demise on April 20, 1946. It proved incapable of resolving international issues or enforcing its authority over nations. For instance, it could not stop Japan from invading China’s Manchuria region in 1931 or prevent Italy from attacking Ethiopia in 1935. Most significantly, it could not avert the outbreak of World War II. It was too weak to contain growing and conflicting colonial interests.

Another set of victors in another world war held another assembly – this time in San Francisco on June 25-26, 1945. Here, they articulated their interests and enshrined them in practical and institutional terms once again, aiming to prevent a repeat of the horrors of World War II, which claimed the lives of 40 million civilians and 20 million military personnel, almost half of them in the Soviet Union.

Their goal was to ensure international peace and security and to foster cooperation among nations. The delegates adopted the United Nations Charter, establishing new rules for governing the post-war world.

The irony was that the same “civilised” victors who championed freedom and humanity in charting the new world order in San

Francisco, were themselves occupying at that time half of the world, wreaking havoc in Algeria, India, Vietnam, Palestine and many other places. They made the charter from its inception a tool of new colonialism, protecting and defending their interests with extreme arrogance.

They demanded that

The League of Nations operated through an executive council initially consisting of representatives of the four victors: Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Germany, which was defeated in the war, joined as a permanent member in 1926 but withdrew alongside Japan in 1933. The League of Nations failed spectacularly in achieving its foundational goals, ultimately declaring its own demise on April 20, 1946. It proved incapable of resolving international issues or enforcing its authority over nations. For instance, it could not stop Japan from invading China’s Manchuria region in 1931 or prevent Italy from attacking Ethiopia in 1935. Most significantly, it could not avert the outbreak of World War II. It was too weak to contain growing and conflicting colonial interests. Another set of victors in another world war held another assembly – this time in San Francisco on June 25-26, 1945. Here, they articulated their interests and enshrined them in practical and institutional terms once again, aiming to prevent a repeat of the horrors of World War II, which claimed the lives of 40 million civilians and 20 million military personnel, almost half of them in the Soviet Union.

other nations respect the charter according to their will, turning it into a selective yardstick imposed on peoples, liberation movements and states to measure their conduct in defending their interests, existence, sovereignty and rights.

Subsequently, the great powers would label at will smaller nations or popular movements as rogue entities and threats to peace and security or as upholders of these values. Then they would either send them to hell or heaven, to face military and “humanitarian” interventions and economic sanctions, or “stability” and “international cooperation”.

The ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the Palestinian territory reveals these existing flaws. At the time of writing this article, the number of martyrs killed by Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip exceeded 38,000 Palestinians, more than half of them children and women. There were more than 80,000 injured.

Entire families have been obliterated by Israeli bombs. About 80 percent of the Gaza Strip’s neighbourhoods and homes have been destroyed, and nine out of 10 people in the Gaza Strip have been displaced from their homes more than

Issam Younis

once. We have reached a point where we measure time in corpses of children.

An article published by the prestigious medical journal The Lancet estimates that the actual death toll in Gaza could reach 186,000. These are deaths directly caused by the

Ahmed Barqawi says, those who assassinate the truth know it is the truth but deny it, distort it, or fabricate a contradictory, non-existent “truth”. The most dangerous aspect of this assassination of the truth is that it enables genocide and all other crimes committed in Palestine.

That the West is enabling

against the Palestinian people.

Beyond exposing white supremacy, what is happening in Gaza also signals the degradation of a civilisation that claims to uphold humanity, justice and reason. The failure to apply rules of justice and accountability confirms not only Western double standards and hypocrisy but also the decline of the order established by the World War II victors, as it is failing to stop bloodshed, genocide, injustice and exploitation in Palestine and the rest of the world.

Indeed, the post-World War II order, governed by narrow national interests, the monopolisation of decision-making, and the subjugation of smaller nations, has maintained neither security nor peace. Instead, it has contributed to the spread of wars, crimes, famine, poverty and racism to an unprecedented extent in human history, bringing the world to the brink of a global war that could leave massive devastation and death in its wake.

This declining system has prevented countries with significant civilisational weight and notable contributions to stability, peace and international cooperation, such as India, Egypt and Brazil, from becoming permanent members and playing a leading role in international affairs.

This declining system has deprived the diverse and changing world of its right to strive for a fairer, more balanced, and more reasonable order, governed by equitable relations that establish peace and international cooperation based on rejecting wars, occupations and exploitation, and respecting human dignity, human rights and justice.

This state of affairs has brought us to a dangerous crossroads: We either seek justice for all or succumb to the law of the jungle; we either establish cooperation based on equality, respect for sovereignty and the right to self-determination or fall for racial and cultural supremacy, injustice and exploitation.

Just as the League of Nations failed, the United Nations is also failing. The current situation necessitates a change in the global system to a more just one that accommodates everyone, treats nations as equals, maintains global peace and enhances international cooperation. It should seek to unite diverse cultures that enrich human life and existence, not divide us into good and evil cultures and encourage false existential conflicts.

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 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.

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.

The second pillar was the powerful grip of the military on foreign policy, which underlined America’s status as the world’s only superpower.

The third and last pillar was making an intellectual and social commitment to (evangelical) Christian conservatism the safeguard of America’s unilateral global leadership. Thus, pastors and evangelists like Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell garnered unprecedented political influence.

Last week, following the Milwaukee convention, observers argued that 39-year-old Vance being chosen as Trump’s running mate marked the beginning of a new phase in the

course of the Republican Party’s history. Although it 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.

Intelligent manufacturing driver for technological progress

The resolution on further deepening reform adopted on July 18 at the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China stressed the importance of expansion of advanced manufacturing clusters, saying the manufacturing sector should be made more higher-end, smarter, and more eco-friendly.

In fact, China is emerging as a global player in intelligent manufacturing because of its economic resilience, innovation capabilities, abundant talent pool, comprehensive industry and supply chains, vast market and concentrated efforts to improve the quality of its products.

First, China’s huge and growing market demand drives the country’s technological progress while continuously injecting new impetus into the economy. China’s huge market not only offers unending scopes to apply research results to industry, in order to improve productivity and product quality, it also accelerates the development of new technologies. China’s strong domestic consumption capacity and leading role in the global supply chains prompt Chinese enterprises to independently develop their technologies, improve production efficiency and quality, and reduce costs, optimizing and upgrading China’s economic structure.

Second, manufacturing, which covers almost all industrial sectors, remains a key driver of China’s economic growth and a major stabilizing factor. And the country’s comprehensive manufacturing capability provides the base for technological innovation and

industrial upgrading, endowing China with unique integration capabilities and the ability to timely respond to challenging times.

China can quickly access any type of supply

has helped promote innovation and sharpen its competitive edge in the industrial sector. A large number of high-quality talents in the engineering and technological sectors, nurtured by the country’s education

ed efforts should be made to achieve technological breakthroughs and high-quality development. In fact, China has made major breakthroughs in fields

Liu Xinjun

prices but also promoted the development of related industries as new growth drivers.

Thanks to well-organized scientific research,

Technology, in collaboration with Tsinghua University, addressed the core manufacturing technology issues with the support of a program devised by intelligent robots. Plus, the innovation of mobile-

the Western economies’ technological blockades in its pursuit of independent R&D in manufacturing, and aeronautical equipment and components such as aircraft landing gear. Local production of high-

China’s intelligent manufacturing is set to reach newer heights. The narrowing gap between China and the West in intelligent manufacturing such as machines used to manufacture machines means China has huge potential to achieve technological breakthroughs and industrial upgrading. Yet China’s intelligent manufacturing needs to shift paths, aiming to make leapfrog achievements through innovation. This is in line with the proposal for the development of new quality productive forces.

In the field of computer numerical control systems and high-end equipment, China has accumulated rich experience and developed high-tech through learning. For example, through technical cooperation with countries such as Germany and Japan, China learned about advanced manufacturing technologies and realized that merely following foreign technologies cannot help China realize healthy, sustained development.

The development of the Tianzhou spacecraft and heavy single-cylinder dye-forging press show China’s potential in path-shifting development. The Tianzhou spacecraft reflects China’s independent innovation capability in high-end manufacturing. The heavy single-cylinder dye-forging press indicated that China can achieve breakthroughs in key technologies.

Also, some cases provide valuable experience, which could propel economic development. Innovation in intelligent manufacturing will continue to promote China’s technological progress and industrial upgrading.

China can quickly access any type of supply chain for its products, including those for high-end products and traditional manufacturing products, demonstrating the efficiency with which the country can realize industrial transformation. Such advantages have helped China to play an important role in the global manufacturing system. Third, the abundant number of talents in China has helped promote innovation and sharpen its competitive edge in the industrial sector. A large number of high-quality talents in the engineering and technological sectors, nurtured by the country’s education system, that enter the job market every year provide the impetus for intelligent manufacturing. China has increased investment in vocational and higher education, focusing on cultivating professional talents for intelligent manufacturing. These talents provide the momentum for China’s innovation-driven development. And fourth, concentrated efforts should be made to achieve technological breakthroughs and high-quality development. In fact, China has made major breakthroughs in fields such as aviation, aerospace, high-speed trains, maritime and nuclear power, advancing manufacturing technology. China’s intelligent manufacturing is progressing well, driven by innovations and high-quality development. This progress has not only helped increase the country’s production capacity and reduce production costs and product prices but also promoted the development of related industries as new growth drivers. Thanks to well-organized scientific research, China’s intelligent manufacturing has achieved major breakthroughs in aeronautics. For example, China independently developed the Tianzhou series of cargo spacecraft. It has also increased the cargo capacity of the spacecraft, and helped upgrade and optimize the cabin structure. The manufacturing team at China Academy of Space Technology, in collaboration with Tsinghua University, addressed the core manufacturing technology issues with the support of a program devised by intelligent robots. Plus, the innovation of mobile-hybrid machining robots has helped China to more efficiently manufacture high-quality large components. The independent development of Tianzhou manufacturing technology and equipment raised China’s global status in high-end manufacturing and competitiveness.

chain for its products, including those for high-end products and traditional manufacturing products, demonstrating the efficiency with which the country can realize industrial transformation. Such advantages have helped China to play an important role in the global manufacturing system.

Third, the abundant number of talents in China

system, that enter the job market every year provide the impetus for intelligent manufacturing. China has increased investment in vocational and higher education, focusing on cultivating professional talents for intelligent manufacturing. These talents provide the momentum for China’s innovation-driven development.

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such as aviation, aerospace, high-speed trains, maritime and nuclear power, advancing manufacturing technology.

China’s intelligent manufacturing is progressing well, driven by innovations and high-quality development. This progress has not only helped increase the country’s production capacity and reduce production costs and product

China’s intelligent manufacturing has achieved major breakthroughs in aeronautics. For example, China independently developed the Tianzhou series of cargo spacecraft. It has also increased the cargo capacity of the spacecraft, and helped upgrade and optimize the cabin structure.

The manufacturing team at China Academy of Space

hybrid machining robots has helped China to more efficiently manufacture high-quality large components. The independent development of Tianzhou manufacturing technology and equipment raised China’s global status in high-end manufacturing and competitiveness.

By developing and applying a heavy dye-forging press, China has broken

precision, high-tonnage dye-forging equipment boosted China’s competitiveness in high-end manufacturing, significantly advancing core technologies and bolstering intelligent manufacturing, reducing dependence on foreign technologies and promoting independent development.

Thanks to policy support and intensified research,



Abdul Aleem invites Chinese companies to invest in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister of Investment Board, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Wednesday said that Pakistan is extending business visa facility to investors from 124 countries including China and invited more Chinese companies to invest in different sector of national economy.

Abdul Aleem Khan along with Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi briefed the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong on the investment opportunities existing in different sector of the economy, said a press release.

In this session, the details of the establishment of industries from China to

Pakistan under matchmaking industry were presented. During the briefing, seven major sectors were finalized, which include medical equipment, plastic industry, textile, leather, edible meat, fruit & vegetables and waste.

While giving briefing to Ambassador of China Jiang Zaidong and the Chinese delegation, Abdul Aleem Khan said that there are opportunities in Pakistan to invest in infrastructure, housing and other important sectors.

He invited more Chinese companies to come to Pakistan and invest here. He assured that the Chinese brothers are our guests and their fool proof security would be assured at all costs and welcomed the participation of Chinese

Ambassador in the briefing session.

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong assured all possible support for investment in Pakistan and said that business organizations from China will fully participate in the promotion of trade here.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi said that with China Friendship, brotherly relations, investment is always the top priority for Pakistan.

Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan said that Pakistan-China investment is a joint responsibility of the Board of Investment and the Ministry of Commerce, which will be fulfilled efficiently.

The Chinese Ambassador was accompanied by

Minister of Commerce, Consul, Second Secretary and other Chinese officials.

Meanwhile, French Ambassador to Pakistan Nicolas Galey called on Federal Minister for Investment Board, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and discuss bilateral cooperation and trade activities between both the countries.

Abdul Aleem Khan told Nicolas Galey that work is being done on road network from Karachi to Sukkur and China including Central Asian states which will help to promote business volume. He said that European countries are very important in terms of investment and economic activities in Pakistan.

He further said that for the strengthening of the

country's economy, the privatization of loss-burdened institutions already in process while all these institutions have the potential to earn profits and work in good manner.

Expressing gratitude to Abdul Aleem Khan for participating in the reception of the National Day of France, Nicolas Galey invited him to visit France and meet the Business Association there.

French Ambassador also expressed interest in investment and partnership in business activities by his Government and private sector of France.

During the meeting both held detailed discussions on increasing trade volume between Pakistan and France and also discussed different important proposals.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan meeting with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to Bolster Economic Cooperation.

PSX gains 409.92 points to close at 79,397.01

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 409.92 points, a positive change of 0.52 percent, closing at 79,397.01 points against 78,987.09 points on the last working day.

A total of 386,980,823 shares were traded during the day as compared to 316,245,462 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 14,899 billion against Rs 17,074 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 430 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 228 of them recorded gains and 155 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 47 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were SILK Bank Limited with 36,867,747 shares at Rs 1.10 per share, HASCOL Petrol with 25,777,994 shares at Rs 6.69 per share and PIA Holding Company with 17,163,702 shares at Rs16.31 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 70.00 per

share price, closing at Rs 7,020.00, whereas the runner-up was Hoechst Pakistan Limited with a Rs 48.65 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,598.86.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 95.87 per share closing at Rs 7,506.66, followed by Bata Pakistan Limited with a Rs50.28 decline to close at Rs1,729.72.

Rupee sheds 10 paise against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.50 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.40.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279 and Rs 280.75 respectively.

The price of Euro came down by Rs 1.24 paise to close at Rs 301.55 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.79, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen gained 02 paise and closed at

Rs1.80, whereas a decrease of 82 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.81 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs359.63.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paise each to close at Rs75.82 and Rs74.24 respectively.

Gold rates increase by Rs2,300 per tola to Rs252,800

The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.2,300 and was sold at Rs. 252,800 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs. 250,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 1,972 to Rs. 216,735 from Rs. 214,763 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.198,674 from Rs. 196,866, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

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

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$22 to \$2,413 from \$2,391, the Association reported.

‘Being Red in the Blue Sea’ event held: Global qualitative research innovations presented by Ipsos



F.P. Report

LAHORE: The session unveiled key insights on global best practices in qualitative research, emphasizing the integration of Humanized AI (AI +

Human Intelligence). By comparing international methodologies with local practices, the event highlighted the potential for innovation in Pakistan's research landscape.

The focus was on how combining AI with human insight can enhance consumer understanding and drive business growth.

Cristina Craciun, Global President of Motivational Research at Ipsos Understanding Unlimited, was the keynote speaker. Insights were also shared by Abdul Sattar Babar, CEO and MD of Ipsos in

Pakistan, and Sahira Muzaffar, Director of Ipsos Understanding Unlimited in Pakistan.

Notable CEOs, directors, and marketers from leading blue-chip and multinational companies attended the event.

In her address, Cristina Craciun, highlighted the potential of qualitative research through hands-on practices and interactive sessions during the event.

She emphasized the importance of integrating global best practices with local insights to drive innovation by showcased how

combining AI with human intelligence can transform consumer understanding and foster business growth.

Building on Cristina Craciun's insights, the event underscored the critical need to understand human behavior in an era dominated by deepfake technology and declining trust. The importance of balancing AI with human intelligence was highlighted as essential for navigating these complex challenges.

Attendees learned how global best practices, combined with local insights, can significantly enhance qualitative research methods. This balanced approach is vital for fostering empathy, trust, and deeper consumer connections.

The event proved immensely beneficial for CEOs, directors, and marketers, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to drive business growth and innovation by better understanding and engaging with their consumers.

CAT upholds CCP's order against media industry giants

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a decisive ruling, the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has dismissed the appeal filed by the Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), upholding the Competition Commission of Pakistan's (CCP) directive to major media industry players to refrain from violating competition laws. The CCP's action result-

ed from a thorough enquiry initiated by a complaint from M/s Bol Media Network, M/s Labbaik (Pvt) Limited, and M/s Bol Enterprises (Pvt) Limited against PBA, Broadcaster Advertisers Council (BAC) and Medialogic (Pvt) Limited. Bol alleged in its complaint that Medialogic had denied it ratings through an arrangement concealed within three distinct agreements involving

the PBA, BAC, Pakistan Advertisers Society (PAS), and Medialogic.

The CCP declared the three agreements null and void, finding them to be anti-competitive and in violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010. These agreements effectively excluded non-PBA and non-BAC members from receiving ratings and services from Medialogic, creating barriers to entry

for non-members and new entrants. Medialogic was also threatened with monetary penalties if it provided ratings to non-PBA members. Additionally, non-PBA members were barred from joining the BAC.

PBA challenged the CCP's order in an appeal before the Competition Appellate Tribunal. However, the Tribunal dismissed the appeal on 11th July 2024.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Threeships, Mol Presence, Interasia Accelerate and Al-Thakhira carrying Container and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, EF Emma, Ceylon Breeze and Clipper Eris scheduled to load/offload Container, Cement and

Chemicals are also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

Six ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Mol Presence, Interasia Accelerate and Lusail left the port on today morning while two more ships, EF Amma and Hafnia Seine are expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 131,858 tonnes, comprising 121,120 tonnes imports cargo and 10,738 tonnes export cargo carried in 1,675 Containers (1,146 TEUs Imports and 529 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Five ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, EF Amma, Ceylon Breeze and

Bolan & two more ships, Xin Hai Tong and Bateleur scheduled load/offload Container, Cement, Mogas, Coal and LPG are expected to take berths at QICT, MW-2, FOTCO, MW-4 and SSGC respectively on Wednesday. Meanwhile two more container ships, Seaspan Ganges and ONE Modern are due to arrive at port on Thursday.

FFC and AKBL sign MOU to empower farmers



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) as the nation's Partner in Prosperity, has entered into a strategic partnership with Askari Bank Limited (AKBL) to enhance agricultural financing in Pakistan. The MOU signing ceremony took place at FFC Head Office on Wednesday.

Through this collaboration, FFC and Askari Bank ai-

m to provide easier access to credit and tailored financial solutions for farmers, promoting the adoption of modern agricultural practices.

This initiative underscores FFC's commitment to supporting agricultural development and improving farmer livelihoods across the country. Askari Bank's participation signifies a joint effort towards fostering sustainable growth in the agricultural

sector by facilitating enhanced financial inclusion and productivity.

Senior Management from both the parties expressed their enthusiasm for the collaboration, highlighting its potential to drive transformative change in farming communities across Pakistan, whilst reaffirming their dedication to fostering a conducive environment for agricultural innovation and growth.

Court Notice

In the Court of Sidra Jalal, Civil Judge-III/Illaga Qazi, Matta, Swat. Case No. 39/1. Institution 17-06-23. Next hearing date 31-07-2024. Karim Ullah vs. Siree Jan. Notice to Defendant No. (15/1) Mst. Haseena, (15/5) Shabnam daughter, (15/6) Mst. Kishwar, (15/7) Mst. Naveed, (15/8) Mst. Fatma, (15/9) Mubarak daughters Ahmad Jan, (16) Aman Ullah s/o Sofi Jan r/o Sambat, Tehsil Matta, Swat. Whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 31-07-2024 at 8:00 a.m. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Madeha Rahman Khan, Senior Civil Judge (Family)/Buner at Daggar. Suit No. 104/3 FC, Institution 26-05-2024, date of hearing 30-07-2024. Mst. Tamana vs. Niamatullah Khan. Dissolution of marriage. Notice to Niamatullah Khan s/o Gul Rashed resident of Malakpur, Tehsil Gadezai, District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 a.m. dated 30-07-2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: "Sustainable food production can



help maintain healthy ecosystems, improve water and soil quality and promote climate change mitigation.

This can be achieved through engagement of relevant stakeholders, better planning and effective implementation mechanisms".

This was stated by speakers during the Food Forward: National Multistakeholder Dialogue on Food Systems and NDCs organized by WWF-Pakistan at a local hotel in Islamabad on Wednesday.

They further said that there is a need to develop policy actions that regulate access and use of resources such as land, water, and biodiversity in a sustainable way. The workshop aimed to discuss the current status and mainstreaming of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) related to the agriculture and food systems of Pakistan.

The multistakeholder workshop aimed to foster a

comprehensive dialogue on Pakistan's NDCs focusing on food systems in line with the country's national goals and international commitments.

The workshop introduced the "Food Forward NDCs" an interactive, web-based platform that provides users with tangible, evidence-backed policy options. These options can be tailored to country specific policy priorities within the components of the food system.

Speaking to the workshop, Rab Nawaz, Senior Director Conservation, WWF-Pakistan, shared that we largely rely on agriculture, which is vulnerable to adverse climate change impacts. What we really need to do is to transform our food systems that help meet the requirements of our population and promote a healthy diet. He further

noted that the Food Forward NDCs toolkit provides key policy recommendations for concrete and actionable decision-making on food production and consumption.

Nawaz further emphasized that there is a need to empower women by ensuring the legislation that can enable them to acquire formal rights to land and water and participate in the decision-making processes.

Arif Goheer, Head Agriculture, Global Change Impact Study Center, NDCs Focal Point in Pakistan said that in our upcoming commitments, it is essential to set enhanced targets for key sectors and determine provincial commitments.

He called to conduct a comprehensive financial analysis for achieving set targets, including quantification of losses and dam-

age, and mobilize capital through innovative financing mechanisms.

Nazifa Butt, Head of Climate and Energy, WWF-Pakistan shared that we are mainstreaming NDCs into the key climate-sensitive sectors of Pakistan and over viewing the NDCs processes and requirements for their enhancement.

She emphasized that the increasingly changing needs in the food systems in the country and drastic climatic events call for exploring new avenues and opportunities that transform food systems and amplify our efforts.

Food Forward NDCs is a guidance tool to support the enhancement and implementation of NDC ambitions for agriculture and food systems transformation. It will help countries to strengthen their NDCs by providing easy and

accessible content to identify policy measures and practices and information about climate change mitigation and adaptation and sustainable development benefits.

The workshop included demonstration of the "NDCs Food Forward Tool" and interactive working group sessions with experts and participants. The workshop suggested formulation of NDCs and integration of policy measures and actions broadly focusing on interventions related to food environment and governance, food production, food supply chains, and food consumption in Pakistan. The workshop was attended by officials of relevant government departments, food scientists, and experts from international and national organizations.



The 24 British stars to watch at Paris 2024

LONDON (BBC): Few things bond a nation like the thrill of triumph at an Olympic Games.

Redgrave's return in Sydney. Holmes' double in Athens. Super Saturday in London.

Great Britain has witnessed unforgettable moments which have been a unifier.

Over the next few weeks, 327 Team GB athletes are heading to Paris and dreaming of creating another culturally-resonant chapter.

With the Games starting later this week, BBC Sport has picked out 24 British stars you must set a reminder to watch.

The golden generation
Tom Daley, 30, Diving
Event: Men's 10m synchro

When: 29 July
From fresh-faced teen to knitting-loving veteran, Daley is the first British diver to compete in five Games.

The previously-elusive gold medal arrived at Tokyo 2020 and, after being encouraged to come out of retirement by his son Robbie, Daley defends his title alongside Noah Williams.

Helen Glover, 38, Rowing
Event: Women's Four
When: 28 July (heats), 1 August (final)

Things tend to come in threes, they say, and Glover knows that more than most.

The British rowing legend is a mother of three and in her third comeback - having retired after Rio and Tokyo. Now she is chasing her third Olympic gold medal.

Jade Jones, 31, Taekwondo
Event: Women's -57kg

When: 8 August

Highs of winning back-to-back golds at London 2012 and Rio 2016 were followed by the low of a shock first-round defeat in Tokyo.

There was a chance Jones might not be allowed to compete in Paris. She avoided a ban after a doping violation and bids to become the first fighter to win three taekwondo gold medals.

Andy Murray, 37, Tennis
Event: Men's singles, men's doubles

When: Starts 27 July

Among everything he has achieved, and everything he has seen, Murray ranks the Olympics as one of the most special experiences of his enviable career.

Fittingly, the London 2012 and Rio 2016 gold medalist is signing off in Paris before retiring from playing professionally.

Adam Peaty, 29, Swimming
Event: Men's 100m breaststroke

When: 27 July (heats), 28 July (final)

There was a time when Peaty seemed invincible. Clocking the top 20 times of all-time ensured he dominated his event for nearly a decade.

Injuries and personal issues led to a loss of form and a reevaluation of what was important. Having come through a "self-destructive spiral", Peaty will challenge for a third successive gold medal.

Max Whitlock, 31, Gymnastics
Event: Men's pommel horse

When: 3 August
Another iconic British Olympian in one final hurrah before retirement.

After planning to quit post-Tokyo, three-time gold medallist Whitlock found the fire in the belly still burned.

If he defends the title he won in Tokyo, he will become the first gymnast to win four Olympic medals on the same apparatus.

The next superstars
Dina Asher-Smith, 28, Athletics

Events: 100m, 200m, 4x100m relay
When: 2-3 August (100m), 4-6 August (200m), 8-9 August (relay)

A stacked CV has a glaring omission - Olympic gold.

Asher-Smith comes into the Games in hot form, having won the British 200m title in a championship record 22.18 seconds and a fifth European gold over 100m earlier in June.

She's not the only inform Briton. Daryll Neita, who like Asher-Smith ran her fastest times this season at the London Diamond League last weekend, plans to "destroy" her team-mate on the track., external
Sky Brown, 16, Skateboarding

Event: Women's Park
When: 8 August

Self-taught by watching hours of YouTube videos, 13-year-old Brown won bronze in Tokyo to become Britain's youngest Olympic medallist.

In her second Games having just turned 16, she planned an ambitious double. But narrowly missing out on the surfing event - taking place 9,500 miles away from Paris in Tahiti - could prove a blessing in disguise.

Emily Campbell, 30, Weightlifting

Event: Women's +81kg
When: 11 August

A boundary breaker who is equally as happy to inspire as she is win medals.

Five years after picking up a barbell for the first time, Campbell became the first British woman to win an Olympic weightlifting medal with silver in Tokyo and is heavily fancied to go one better.

Katarina Johnson-Thompson, 31, Athletics
Event: Women's heptathlon

When: 8-9 August

Similarly to Asher-Smith, KJT is one of the most talented and recognisable athletes of her generation. But the medal which matters most continues to be elusive.

Winning a second world title last year bodes well going into her fourth shot at standing on the Olympic podium.

Keely Hodgkinson, 22, Athletics
Event: Women's 800m
When: 2-5 August

An Olympic underdog three years ago, Hodgkinson has evolved into a gold medal favourite in Paris.

Breaking Kelly Holmes' 26-year British record clinched silver in Tokyo and even illness could not stop her winning the European title last month.

Setting a new national record at the Diamond League meet in London at the weekend further underlined her credentials.

Tom Pidcock, 24, Cycling

Events: Mountain Bike, Road Race

When: 29 July, (mountain bike), 3 August (road)

Whether haring down a treacherous Tour de

France descent, or bunny hopping up sandy terrain, multi-eventer Pidcock is filling the void left by Britain's millennial cycling superstars.

Pidcock defends the mountain bike gold he won in Tokyo before switching to the road, where success would make amends for missing this month's Tour after contracting Covid.

The emerging talents
Molly Caudery, 24, Athletics

Event: Women's Pole Vault

When: 5-7 August

A sign of how impressive 2024 has been is the huge shift of expectation for Caudery.

In January, she simply wanted to make the Olympics team. Now, having set a new British women's record last month, and recorded the world's best height of the year, her eyes are firmly on a medal.

Charlie Dobson, 24, Athletics
Event: Men's 400m
When: 4-7 August

When asked who could be Team GB's breakthrough athlete in Paris, hurdles legend Colin Jackson picked Dobson.

High praise indeed. Grabbing silver at the European Championships, for his first major individual medal, has been a tangible marker.

Emma Finucane, 21, Cycling
Events: Women's individual sprint, team sprint, keirin

When: 5-11 August

The pantheon of British Olympians features several cyclists - including Dame Laura Trott. And she believes Finucane can make history by becoming

the first female to win three golds in one Games.

That endorsement came after Finucane dominated the Track Nations Cup in March, when she completed a stunning treble.

Louie Hinchliffe, 21, Athletics

Event: Men's 100m
When: 3-4 August

Leaving university in the UK for a new life in the US was not greeted warmly by Hinchliffe's parents. But the move, aimed to prioritise his athletics career and leading to linking up with American Olympic legend Carl Lewis, has been astute.

Clocking 9.95secs landed the US collegiate title, before his sensational breakthrough year continued by winning the UK Athletics Championships last month to qualify for Paris.

Delicious Orie, 27, Boxing

Event: Men's super-heavyweight
When: 29 July, 2,7 & 10 August

"Some say I'm the new Anthony Joshua, but one day I aim to be even better and dominate."

Like all boxers, Orie talks the talk. He walked the walk by winning gold as the poster boy of the 2022 Commonwealth Games and plans to do the same in his first Olympics.

Andrea Spendolini-Sirieux, 19, Diving

Events: Women's 10m synchro, 10m platform
When: 31 July (synchro), 5-6 August (platform)

Since reaching the Olympic final in Tokyo as a 16-year-old, Spendolini-Sirieux has developed into a world, Commonwealth and European gold medalist.

Even more impressively, the successes came after she considered quitting because of a "fear of diving".

The inspiring stories
Georgina Brayshaw, 30, Rowing

Event: Women's Quadruple Sculls

When: 27 July (heats), 31 July (final)

A first-time Olympian who was left in a coma as a teenager following a horse riding accident.

Brayshaw, who was paralysed down the left side of her body for a year, began rowing in her second year of university. An Olympic medal, which is a strong possibility, would be a remarkable reward for her perseverance after also being overlooked for Tokyo.

Joe Clarke, 31, Canoe Slalom

Events: Men's kayak single, kayak cross

When: 30 July-1 August (single), 2-5 August (cross)

"Tough times don't last, tough people do."

That bullish quote became Clarke's mantra after the reigning Olympic champion was overlooked for Tokyo 2020, despite being in the form his life. Having moved on from the controversy, he is eyeing the ultimate redemption story.

Carl Hester, 57, Equestrian

Event: Dressage
When: 3 August (team final), 4 August (individual final)

When Hester competed in his first Olympics - at Barcelona 1992 - a large portion of Team GB were not even born.

But with age comes more pressure, he says. The oldest member of

Team GB helped the nation win a historic first equestrian medal in 2012 and is desperate to stretch the success to a fourth Games.

Andy Macdonald, 50, Skateboarding

Event: Men's Park
When: 7 August

In a sport which developed as a youth subculture, and is fronted by a host of hip youngsters, there is a certain irony that a 50-year-old is part of Team GB.

Macdonald, born in the US and representing Britain through his Luton-born dad, is no ordinary 50-year-old. The 'Rad Dad' is great pals with Tony Hawk, fronted a MTV show and skated through the White House.

Amber Rutter, 26, Shooting

Event: Women's Skeet
When: 2-4 August

Two important dates were circled on Rutter's 2024 calendar. One was the start of the Paris Games. The other was the due date of her first child.

Rutter gave birth to son Tommy three months ago and is ready to land the Olympic medal which has so far evaded her.

Kimberley Woods, 28, Canoe Slalom

Events: Women's Kayak Single, Kayak Cross

When: 27-28 July (single), 2-5 August (cross)

Canoeing provided salvation as Woods endured bullying which led to depression and self-harm.

Since coming through therapy between 2016 and 2018, Woods' career has soared and, having won her first individual world title last year, is a medal hope in the "hectic" cross event which is making its Olympic debut.

National juniors tennis c'ship from July 28

KARACHI (APP): The Karachi Tennis Association, under the Pakistan Tennis Federation and Sindh Tennis Association, is set to host the Techstirr Pvt. Ltd National Juniors Tennis Championship 2024, commencing July 28th at the DA Creek Club. The event is being sponsored by Techstirr Pvt. Ltd.

Competitions will include Juniors Under 18 Singles and Doubles, Girls Juniors Under 18 Singles and Doubles, Boys Under 14 Singles and Doubles,

Girls Under 14 Singles and Doubles, Boys Under 12 Singles and Doubles, Girls Under 12 Singles and Doubles, and Future Stars (invitational) Singles Under 12. Winners and runners-up in all events will receive trophies and giveaways as per PTF rules. Traveling allowances will be provided to main draw players from out of town, according to PTF rules.

The Organizing Committee includes Sarwar Hussain (Tournament Director), Muhammad Khalid Rehmani (Referee),

and Abrar Qureshi (Organizing Secretary). The last date for entries is July 25th. Entries can be submitted to Muhammad Khalid Rehmani (Referee) via WhatsApp at 0300 3607209. Participants must adhere to ITF and PTF codes of conduct, and a PPIN is required to participate in all national tournaments. Those without a PPIN must submit a soft copy of their B Form with their entry and bring a hard copy and photos when reporting for their matches for PPIN issuance.

Brook attains career-best third position

ISLAMABAD (APP): England batter Harry Brook has achieved a career-best third position in the ICC Men's Test Batting Rankings after notching a century in the second Test of the three-match ICC World Test Championship series against the West Indies which the home side won by 241 runs to go to 2-0 up.

Brook, who scored 36 and 109 in Nottingham, advanced four places while his team-mates Ben Duckett and Ollie Pope have also made significant gains in the latest weekly update to the men's rankings which are carried out on Wednesdays across formats, said a press release.

Left-handed opener Duckett has progressed six places to 16th position after notching scores of 71 and 76

while Player of the Match Pope has advanced from 29th to 21st with scores of 121 and 51. Chris Woakes is back into the top 20 of the bowling rankings for the first time since September 2021 after finishing with four for 84 and two for 28 in the match while spinner Shoaib Bashir has advanced 18 slots to 53rd position after he took his third five-wicket haul in just his fifth Test.

For the West Indies, captain Kraigg Brathwaite has moved up two slots to 40th position with scores of 48 and 47 while wicketkeeper Joshua de Silva (up seven places to 61st), Jason Holder (up two places to 70th) and Kavem Hodge (up 21 places to 75th) have also made good progress. West Indies' new-ball bowlers

Alzarri Joseph and Jayden Seales have made notable improvements to their rankings, Joseph up two places to 33rd after finishing with five wickets in the match and Seales up from 44th to 34th with six wickets.

In the ODI rankings, Namibia left-arm spinner Bernard Scholtz has attained a career-best third position after finishing with three for 23 against Scotland in an ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 match.

Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus and Scotland's George Munsey are among those to move up the batting rankings following their performances in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2. Erasmus is up four places to 27th and Munsey up seven places to 41st position.



MARIJAMPOL, LITHUANIA: Spain players celebrate after their side's victory in the UEFA Women's Under-19 Championship 2023/2024 Semi-Final match between England and Spain at Futbolo stadionas Marijampolje on July 24, 2024 in Marijampol, Lithuania.

Ngannou targets MMA return in October

LONDON (BBC): The former UFC heavyweight champion has not fought in MMA since January 2022 having spent the past two years focused on his boxing career.

Ngannou, 37, left the UFC and signed for the PFL last year and says he will make his promotional debut against Renan Ferreira.

"It's not finalised yet, but we were talking about 19 October," Ngannou said on the JRE MMA Show., external

Ngannou boxed former world champions Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua back to back, with both bouts ending in defeat - Joshua knocking out Ngannou in just two rounds in March.

Ferreira won the PFL's 2023 heavyweight tournament and has 13 wins, three losses and three no-contests on his record.

The 34-year-old Brazilian's most recent win was a 21-second demolition of Bellator's heavyweight champion Ryan Bader in February.

"I've been telling people about this guy for almost

two years," Ngannou said of Ferreira.

"I said 'watch this guy'. Very athletic. Fast hands, one-two, knees - very athletic. So I think it's going to be him."

It was announced earlier this month Ngannou would be taking charge of PFL Africa when a series is launched there in 2025.

Ngannou took a break

from the public eye after the death of his 15-month-old son in April.

The Cameroonian said his son fainted twice before his death in Dubai due to a mild inflammation of the brain.

"At least whenever I die, I'm going to see my kid. I'm not afraid of it. I still want to live but you get to that point," Ngannou said.

Archer wants to play 2025-26 Ashes in Australia

LONDON (BBC): England fast bowler Jofra Archer says he wants to play in the 2025-26 Ashes series in Australia as he plots his return to Test cricket.

Archer has not featured in the longer format since February 2021 having been hampered by back and elbow injuries over the last three years.

The 29-year-old played a full part in England's recent T20 World Cup campaign, however, which has raised hopes his injury problems could finally be behind him.

Archer's pace on traditionally bouncy Australian pitches would

be a major asset to England captain Ben Stokes' bid to regain the urn.

England will continue to take a cautious approach with their management of Archer's workloads and he will not play any red-ball cricket in 2024.

"I am going to use the rest of this year to make sure that is at least a possibility," Archer said, when discussing the next Ashes tour.

"I'm tired of going on Instagram and seeing posts saying 'he's going to be on the physio's bed in the next two weeks' and stuff like that.

"I want to spend the rest of the year proving some people wrong and hopefully play in another Ashes."

Archer was a star of England's 2019 World Cup-winning campaign, bowling the super over in the final victory against New Zealand.

Later that summer the Sussex man bowled with ferocious hostility on his Ashes debut at Lord's, striking a blow to Steve Smith that led to one of Australia's premier batters having to be withdrawn because of a concussion.

England managing director Rob

Key said in April that next year's home Test series against India was a realistic goal for Archer.

Speaking as part of the BBC TV coverage of the opening match of The Hundred, Archer also signalled his intention to play first-class cricket early next summer.

"I will manage myself as best as possible and get myself [through] until at least maybe the start of the Championship next year," Archer explained.

"I'll probably play a few of those [games] and keep building up and getting that workload ready for Test cricket."



MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA: Blake Shinn riding Ithadtobezou after winning race 7.



In brief

320,400 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 320,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 343,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1515.90 feet and was 117.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 198,000 cusecs and 190,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1198.10 feet, which was 150.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 28,700 cusecs and 13,600 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 195,000, 200,900, 144,000 and 75,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 47,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 41,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

8 stolen vehicles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a significant operation, police have arrested two members gang involved in vehicle theft and recovered eight stolen vehicles from their possession in a successful operation. The gang members were identified as Junaid and Ali Muhammad. According to the police spokesman, the operation was conducted on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani in a bid to prevent the city from vehicle theft. During the operation, the Sadiqabad Police, led by SHO Sadiqabad and supervised by SSP Investigation Zunaira Azfar and SP Rawal Faisal Saleem, successfully recovered eight stolen vehicles valued in millions of rupees from various parts of Rawalpindi. These vehicles were promptly handed over to their owners. The arrested gang Junaid and Ali Muhammad, were involved in multiple vehicle thefts across Rawalpindi. Police investigations further revealed that the accused were using sophisticated weapons and tools for their criminal activities. Efforts are currently underway to apprehend other accomplices. SP Rawal assured that all legal procedures will be diligently followed to ensure that the accused faces justice.

Dengue declined to zero

RAWALPINDI (APP): No dengue patient in any allied hospitals of Rawalpindi district is presently admitted which shows dengue has declined to zero after continued follow up campaigns by the district's health administration. The last patient admitted in hospital has also been discharged from the hospital after complete recovery a couple of days ago. According to a report issued by the district's anti dengue department, has revealed that so far 29 patients affected by dengue were admitted to hospitals since Jan 24, all of whom have recovered and went back to their homes. The report shows that there is no dengue patient admitted in any of allied hospitals. During the last week, 80 FIRs were registered on dengue SOPs violations, by the District Health Authority, while 52 challans have been issued. Moreover, 9 places have been sealed along with total fines imposed of Rs.96,500. Anti-dengue teams continued anti-dengue activities.

Tanveer stresses to focus skill training

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries, Production, and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain emphasized the need for focusing on skills education and vocational training, in addition to promoting higher education, to achieve economic development and social prosperity in the country.

Addressing a ceremony held to unveil commemorative postage stamps marking the golden jubilee of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), the minister stated that alongside higher education, skill training would enable graduating students to secure dignified employment upon completion of their education.

Minister Hussain also called for integrating 2.5

million out-of-school children into the educational network to cultivate their productivity as citizens of the country, stressing that education is crucial for economic growth and social prosperity.

He commended AIOU's role in advancing the education sector in Pakistan and reiterated the commitment to providing all necessary resources for promoting quality education.

Speaking at the event, Dr Nasir Mahmood highlighted the university's golden jubilee celebration, emphasizing the significance of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's contribution in establishing AIOU as a national asset.

Dr. Nasir mentioned the recent declaration of an education emergency by the prime minister and

underscored the university's potential role in this national initiative. He outlined a plan involving 200,000 registered teachers with AIOU nationwide, each responsible for a group of 30 children, aiming to educate 5 million children over the next five years.

During the ceremony, Director General Pakistan Post Samiullah Khan and Additional Director General Rizwan Javed Hashmi noted the fruitful collaboration between AIOU and Pakistan Post, sharing a common vision and mission.

They highlighted the joyous occasion of the university's 50th anniversary and announced the issuance of 100,000 special stamps, available at all major post offices across the country.

Complaint lodged against ETPB official in FIA

ISLAMABAD (APP): A formal complaint has been submitted to the Director of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone, against Imran Arif Janjua, a Deputy Administrator at the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) for accepting a substantial bribe in exchange for a government job appointment.

The complainant, Muhammad Shabbir, detailed the incident in his complaint that his nephew, Shehroze Iqbal, is an educated young man who has been struggling to find employment. In an effort to secure a government job for Shehroze, Shabbir was introduced to Imran Arif Janjua by a mutual friend.

Janjua, who is currently posted as the Deputy Administrator of Plazas at the ET Complex near the private hotel in Islamabad, assured Shabbir that he could arrange for Shehroze to be appointed as a Naib Tehsildar. In return for this favour, Janjua demanded a sum of five million rupees.

Shabbir claimed that he paid three million rupees in

cash to Janjua, in the presence of witnesses Muhammad Rafiq (CNIC No. 37405-0374582-7) and Muzamil Hussain (CNIC No. 37405-8414262-5), both residents of Rawalpindi. He promised that the remaining two million rupees would be paid upon the issuance of the appointment letter.

However, despite the passage of six months and the initial payment, Janjua has not fulfilled his promise, nor he has arranged the job for Shehroze.

In his complaint, Shabbir has requested FIA to initiate appropriate criminal proceedings against Janjua. He has also called for an inquiry into Janjua's assets acquired during his service.

The complaint, dated July 22, 2024, was filed by Shabbir urging the FIA to investigate the allegations and take necessary action in accordance with the law.

Upon contacting ETPB Deputy Administrator Imran Arif Janjua, he denied the allegations, stating that the application was

based on false premises.

According to reliable sources, it was revealed that the accused ETPB Deputy Administrator Imran Arif Janjua is a habitual fraudster as the FIA Deputy Director, Abbottabad had also received a formal complaint against him for another scam of Rs. three million rupees.

The complainant Kamran Khan, a resident of Haripur, mentioned that he wanted to take ETPB's property number C-50, located at College Road, Haripur on lease for 30 years. For this purpose, he happened to meet Janjua who demanded nine million rupees as a bribe.

He said initially, he paid him Rs. 1.5 million. After two months, he handed over an additional one million rupees, and later, he gave him Rs. 500,000 more according to their mutual agreement.

Kamran pleaded that his hard-earned money should be retrieved and that ETPB Deputy Administrator Imran Arif Janjua should be punished according to the law.



ISLAMABAD: A worker tends to a Macaw parrot during feeding time at Lake View Bird's Aviary.

ISSI hosts int'l moot

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Beaconhouse National University (BNU) Lahore, hosted an International Conference on July 24, 2024, titled "Strengthening Pakistan-US Relations."

The event featured distinguished diplomats, practitioners, and academics from both Pakistan and the US, a news release said.

The keynote speaker, Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome discussed the importance of the US-Pakistan relationship, emphasizing the long history of partnership and cooperation between the two nations.

He highlighted the US's recognition of Pakistan's potential, particularly its dynamic young population and economic opportunities.

Ambassador Blome appreciated Pakistan's contribution to counter-terrorism and underlined the US's commitment to supporting Pakistan in various areas, including countering regional threats, economic collaboration, renewable energy, climate management, and education. He underscored that the US-Pakistan partnership goes beyond security and includes significant investments in health, trade, and development sectors.

Ambassador Mariam

Madiha Aftab, Additional Secretary (Americas), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that the US-Pakistan relationship is dynamic and multifaceted, covering areas such as health, trade, defense, and energy security. She emphasized the importance of economic collaboration, security cooperation, educational exchanges, and climate change initiatives.

Ms. Aftab also addressed regional dynamics, stressing the need for the US to play a crucial role in fostering peace and stability, and called for a peaceful resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute in line with UN Security Council resolutions and will of the Kashmiri people.

Ambassador Mansoor Khan, Director of the Beaconhouse Center for Policy Research (BCPR), emphasized the multifaceted nature of Pakistan-US relations, highlighting political, security, defense cooperation, and economic ties. He announced the launch of a new undergraduate course on Pakistan-US relations at BNU.

Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director of the Centre for Strategic Perspectives at ISSI, noted the significant contributions of the US to Pakistan's development in sectors like education, healthcare, and climate change. She stressed the need for mutual respect and

cooperation to address contemporary challenges and opportunities.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General of ISSI, provided an extensive overview of the historical and current dynamics of Pakistan-US relations. He acknowledged the evolving nature of the partnership, with a shift in focus from security to areas like trade, investment, energy, and people-to-people exchanges. He noted the cyclical pattern of bilateral relations, shaped by external factors, regional developments, and a narrower security-centric focus over the past many decades.

Stressing the importance of realistic expectations, he called for greater attention to Pakistan's historical role and cumulative power potential in the emerging global order and the need for the US to focus on Pakistan's preoccupations and interests. Relating to regional concerns, particularly the impact of US-India strategic partnership on Pakistan's security especially within the 'Indo-Pacific' construct, he called for a responsive approach from Washington.

He also emphasized that Pakistan wished to nimbly navigate the complex dynamics of US-China competition, and wished that cooperation rather than confrontation would be the key driver of their relationship.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production Senator Aon Abbas presiding over a meeting at Parliament Lodges.

9 held for carrying illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested nine illegal arms holders and recovered arms and ammunition from their possession during crackdown here on Wednesday.

According to police spokesman, R.A Bazaar police held two illegal arm holders Adil, Waqar and recovered 02 pistol 30 bore from their possession.

Similarly, Chakri police nabbed Zakir and recovered Kalashankov from his possession.

While, Kahuta police apprehended Yasir and recovered 01 rifle 44 bore from his possession.

Following operation, Chontra police arrested Imran and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from him.

Additionally, Rata Amara police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Adil. Bani police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Sahil.

Naseerabad police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Saeed. Similarly Taxila police also recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Saeed.

Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress.

Divisional SPs commended police team and said that strict action will be continued against those carrying illegal weapons.

New EPI training hall inaugurated

RAWALPINDI (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. Zunera Aftab inaugurated the new EPI training hall in the office of District Health Authority, Rawalpindi. The newly constructed hall is one of the 9 other training halls developed in Punjab in collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO).

Speaking on the occasion, ADC Dr. Zunera Aftab stressed for need of quality training to the staff of Punjab Extension Program for Immunization (EPI) at district, tehsil and UC level. Appreciating the cooperation by WHO for providing the training hall, Zunera said that a state-of-the-art training hall would provide opportunities for continuous professional training programs under EPI. Availability of quality space greatly improves the learning process, she said.

Chief Executive Officer, District Health Authority Rawalpindi Dr. Asif Arbab Khan Niazi, District Health Officer Dr. Ehsan Ghani and Divisional Officer WHO Dr. Muhammad Asif Shahzad were also present on the inaugural event occasion.

Dr. Asif Arbab Khan said that EPI Punjab provides vaccination of 12 diseases through its skilled staff. Providing vaccination services requires skilled staff, knowledge and expertise. He said that to ensure quality service delivery, a comprehensive training program was active throughout the year. Quality training is critical to the performance of our workforce.

To conduct these trainings, we needed a modern and improved hall where capacity building sessions could be conducted in a professional manner, he said. He informed that earlier there was no specific training hall available to meet the professional training requirements.

It is noteworthy that World Health Organization has renovated EPI training halls in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Sahiwal, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rahim Yar Khan.

Police committed to resolve public issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Ali Rizvi, the DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza on Wednesday said that the Islamabad Police is committed to resolve public issues on priority.

He said this while listening to the complaints and issues of the public as well as police officials during the Khuli Kachehri held at his office. Senior police officers were also present

on this occasion.

During the Khuli Kachehri, he listened to the complaints of the citizens and marked their applications to the concerned officers for timely action on merit. He also directed them to send reports to his offices in the given time frame.

He further said that strict action will be taken against officials involved in bribery or corruption and a zero tolerance policy will be adopted in this regard.

He emphasized that

Islamabad Police would not leave any stone unturned to secure the lives and property of the citizens. "Such interaction would be continued in future to provide maximum relief to the citizens," he added.

He said that, interaction during "Khuli Kachehri" would help to promote friendly policing and will also ensure self-accountability, immediate resolution of citizens' problems. The protection of life, property and self-respect of citizens comes first, he maintained.

CDA chief vows regular board's meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Wednesday decided to hold regular meetings of its board to track the progress of its initiatives aimed at uplifting and beautifying the federal capital.

He decided to this effect while chairing an important meeting to discuss the key issues regarding the sector development of Islamabad, the Islamabad Development Plan, and the financial position of authority.

The meeting was attended by members of CDA Board, Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad and other formations concerned, said a news release.

During the meeting, the member finance provided a detailed briefing on the CDA's fiscal status and revenue generation efforts. It was decided that revenue generation status would be presented every week, detailing both targets and achievements to ensure transparency and accountability.

Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized the need for regular oversight by instructing that weekly board meetings be held to track progress and make necessary decisions promptly.

Several major initiatives were discussed in detail during the meeting. These included the computerization of land and property records, the operationalization of a smart app for essential services, and the beautification of the

Diplomatic Enclave and parks.

The Serena Chowk underpass project, a one-window operation for customer facilitation, and ongoing mega road infrastructure projects were also discussed, signaling the CDA's comprehensive and multi-pronged approach to the overall development of Islamabad city.

These initiatives aim to streamline CDA's operations, boost revenue generation, and expedite development projects across Islamabad.

To enhance oversight of the progress, Chairman Randhawa directed that drone cameras be provided to Members Estates, Building Control, Engineering, Environment and DMA to monitor ongoing projects more effectively.

Chairman visits Jinnah Convention Center

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa Wednesday visited the Jinnah Convention Center to review the ongoing renovation work.

Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanied him during the visit.

The renovation aims to upgrade the convention center to international standards, providing an excellent venue for various global events and conferences in Islamabad.

Chairman Randhawa emphasized the importance of developing the Jinnah Convention Center as a hub for international diplomacy and events.

The renovation is

expected to improve Islamabad's infrastructure, enhancing its capacity to host high-profile international gatherings.

The CDA Chairman directed the authorities to ensure the renovation meets international standards, aligning with the government's vision to promote Islamabad as a center for global events and diplomacy.

CDA chairman for swift completion of 'One Window facility'

Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa visited the new One Window facility under construction here on Wednesday.

During his visit, he reviewed the ongoing construction work and expressed his satisfaction with the state-of-the-art design and facilities being implemented.

The Chairman emphasized the need for swift completion of the construction work, stating that the center will significantly enhance the efficiency of services provided to citizens once completed.

The new One Window facility is designed to offer a convenient and streamlined experience for the public, and its timely completion is crucial for meeting this objective.

The CDA is working diligently to ensure that the project is finished as soon as possible to deliver high-quality services to the citizens.

He said the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached Railway land all over the Railway network are being initiated by the concerned divisions and notices are issued to encroachers under the Possession Ordinance 1965 for vacation of Railway land/ structure within 14 days.

The official said that Pakistan Railway Police, District Administration and law enforcement agencies are informed of necessary assistance in anti-encroachment operations. He Pakistan Railways owned 167,690 acres of land across the country, of which 90,326-acre was in Punjab, 39,428-acre in Sindh, 28,228-acre in Balochistan, and 9,708-acre in KP.

Giving details of the land, the official said that

around 769 acres were commercial in all the provinces, 3,309 residential, 5,512 acres agricultural and 4382 were under encroachment of various persons or departments.

The official said the department had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country.

"Around 5,809 acres were occupied in Punjab, 1,181 acres are under encroachment in KP, 5,948 acres in Sindh and 1,034 acres land occupied in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said the category of land under illegal occupations included commercial, residential, agricultural and various persons or departments.

Giving details of the land, the official said that

Ministry unveils plan

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock has unveiled a comprehensive five-year plan aimed at promoting alternative livelihoods and enhancing the value chain of agricultural and livestock products. According to a statement released by the ministry's press office, the plan, meticulously developed by the ministry's experts, was presented to Mawlawi Ataulah Omari, the Acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock.

The Frontier Post

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Minister commends TIKA

KABUL (BNA): Qari Mohammad Younis Rashid, Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs commended Turkey's TIKA organization for its contributions to youth capacity-building during the inauguration of the Green Environment Project at the Youth Affairs Dormitory. The Green Environment Project at the Youth Affairs Dormitory, initiated with the support and coordination of Turkey's TIKA organization, has been officially launched.

Afghan women should have hope for future, says French president

KABUL (Ariana News): French President Emmanuel Macron has said that Afghan women and girls are paying the price every day for the United States' decision to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Macron, however, told RFE/RL that the Afghan people are resilient and women and girls should have hope for the future.

"We did our best to have refugees and protect people after this decision and the consequences on Afghanistan, and I know how much ladies and girls are affected on daily basis by what is decided, and I know how much resilient your people are. And I just want to convey this message to the girls and women that hope is in front of them," Macron said.

Western countries have repeatedly criticized the Islamic Emirate for imposing



restrictions on the education and work of women and girls in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Emirate, however, has said that this is an internal matter of Afghanistan and countries should not interfere in it. The IEA has also repeatedly stated that women's and girl's rights are upheld in Afghanistan in accordance with Sharia law.

Porter to med student: Wajidullah's journey

KHOST (TOLONews): A young man working as a porter in the city of Khost has recently succeeded in gaining admission to the Sheikh Zayed University's medical school in the province.

Eighteen-year-old Wajidullah said that poverty and unemployment could not deter him from his decision to pursue an education.

This young man, who has been a top student from first to twelfth grade, dreams of becoming a capable doctor in the future.

Wajidullah told TOLONews: "Those who have the means should not betray their family and country. They should study well and take advantage of opportunities. Those who are in difficult circumstances should not use their problems as an excuse and should either work or go to school. They can do both if they want to."

Wajidullah's father, who is himself deprived of the ability to read and write, is very happy with his son's success and urges other fathers to provide educational opportunities for their children.

Dina Gul, Wajidullah's father, said: "When I learned that my son had succeed-



ed, I was very happy. Then I prayed, God, make all Afghan youth successful. It is as if my own children have succeeded. Afghanistan is very wounded and we must serve it and lift it up on its feet."

Naeqib Rasool Kaliwal, a teacher, said: "In almost two or three weeks, Wajidullah proved himself to us in such a way that all the teachers and administration paid attention to him. Wajidullah was with us for almost half a day, and after we left, he would work as a porter with a wheelbarrow."

In this year's Kankor exam, about one hundred thousand students participated, of which sixty-three thousand were admitted to public and private universities.

Int'l decision-making forums: Afghans want women's inclusion: Survey

KABUL (TOLONews): The latest quarterly survey conducted between 17 and 29 April by UN Afghanistan indicated that the consulted Afghan women and men feel that the international community should put in place formal mechanisms to ensure women's inclusion in international decision-making forums which discuss the future of Afghanistan.

The survey, which covered 888 people across 33 provinces (not Uruzgan) of Afghanistan is conducted by UNAMA, UN Women and IOM.

In the survey, participants have also been asked about their engagement with the local authorities on issues important to them indicating that 80 percent of the female participants have not engaged at least

once in the first quarter, while men's meetings with the authorities was three times more than women.

According to the survey's findings, men's access to both legal and illegal dispute resolution mechanisms was also higher than those of women.

"Women indicated that they are excluded from influencing their lives at all points of decision-making – unable to influence the rules imposed upon them, nor hold others to account for violations or enforce those few rights granted by the DFA," the report reads.

The women consulted in the survey have asked the local authorities to prioritize inclusive community engagement in local decision-making processes and service delivery design.

They have also asked the international community to facilitate ways for women to talk directly with government officials.

Ministry blocks 150 books

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Information and Culture said that in the past two years it has prevented the publication of 150 books that were contrary to religious teachings.

The Publications and Bayhaqi Books section of this ministry added that the publication of these books was prevented in Kabul and various provinces.

Abdul Aleem Zanwak Muftizadeh, head of Publications and Bayhaqi Books at the Ministry of Information and Culture, said: "Books that are published must comply with the policy of a system and should not be against our fundamental and cultural values. Such books, totaling 150, were either not suitable for publication or were influenced by foreign factors, especially those related to the American occupation."

Salahuddin, a book-seller, said: "Books that are against the religion of Islam or come from countries like Iran and Pakistan, we are forced to sell them because there is a demand in Kabul."

Nasir Ahmad Amiri, a resident of Kabul, said: "On one hand, it is good that no one has the right to promote another religion, and on the other hand, it is good to allow it so that young people can obtain the information they need about other religions."

Baz Mohammad Shir Zai, a resident of Kabul, said: "In this matter, the views of our young people should be considered because they want to study in various fields, even if it is non-Islamic."

Previously, the Ministry of Information and Culture announced the collection of books contrary to religious teachings in the capital.

Minister hold meeting with reps of UNICEF

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Wali Haqqani, the Deputy Minister for Health Services Delivery at the Ministry of Public Health, held a meeting with representatives from UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to discuss improving coordination and service delivery in the health sector.

According to a press release from the Ministry of Public Health, the meeting focused on improving the delivery of services by UNICEF and enhancing coordination between these organizations and the health sector.

Discussion further included the prevention of non-communicable diseases, oxygen plant operations, biomedical engineering, nutrition, timely supply of medicines and medical necessities, project timelines, service delivery in Khulm District of Samangan Province, and the annual performance reports and work plans of UNICEF and WHO with the Ministry of Public Health.

The Deputy Minister Mawlawi Haqqani expressed gratitude for the support from UNICEF and WHO in the health sector and called for comprehensive cooperation to improve coordination, communication, and the submission of annual work reports to the Ministry of Public Health.

27 Afghan pilgrims die during Hajj

KABUL (Khaama Press): Officials from the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs have reported that 27 Afghan pilgrims have lost their lives during this year's Hajj pilgrimage.

Sheikh Noor Mohammad Saqib, the Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs of the Taliban, shared this information during a press conference. During the briefing, Saqib announced the conclusion of this year's Hajj season and the return of over 30,000 pilgrims from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan.

According to Saqib, the 27 deceased pilgrims in Mecca and Medina passed away due to various causes, including two from traffic accidents, one from high blood pressure, one from heart complications, one from diabetes, one from extreme heat, and the remaining 21 from natural causes.

Earlier, reports indicated that Saudi Arabia allocated 30,000 Hajj quotas to Afghanistan this year, which were transparently distributed among applicants across the country. It also noted that the transfer of pilgrims had been carried out from Kabul, Herat, Balkh, and Kandahar.

Kabul, Tehran discussed bilateral ties

KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and Iran's deputy energy minister have discussed bilateral ties, Helmand River water sharing and cooperation on water projects.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said Muttaqi met with an Iranian delegation, headed by Deputy Minister of Energy Sardar Mohammad Javanbakht.

The visiting delegation confirmed that much of Helmand River water was allowed to flow into Iran in 2023-2024. The delegates hoped for more water flows into that country until the end of the current year.

Muttaqi hailed relations between the two countries as friendly, promising that plenty of water would be allowed to flow into Iran in case of abundant availability in Helmand River.



Muttaqi noted the Kajaki dam, built about 70 years ago, had lost about half of its water storage capacity due to sedimentation over the past 45 year due to negligence by successive governments. He urged the Iranian side to consider the fact.

He added as a matter of policy, the Islamic Emirate

of Afghanistan (IEA) was trying to prevent water wastage. Helmand River water also flowed into Nimroz and Iran's Sistan province, he explained.

Muttaqi expresses support for Palestinian unity talks in Beijing

KABUL (BNA): In a recent phone call with the head of the political Bureau of Hamas, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan expressed support for the recent unity and discussions among Palestinian factions in Beijing.

Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, Deputy Spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced on his X page that Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Minister of

Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, spoke with Ismail Haniyeh, Head of the Political Bureau of Hamas, via telephone.

During the call, they discussed recent political and jihadist developments in Gaza and regional issues.

Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi praised the struggle and sacrifices of Hamas and emphasized the importance of unity and steadfastness in their jihadist

efforts, underscoring the commitment to Islamic principles and values.

Mawlawi Muttaqi expressed support for the recent dialogue and unity among Palestinian factions in Beijing and reiterated that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the Afghan people support the legitimate resistance and cause of the Palestinian people.

Ismail Haniyeh also appreciated the stance of

the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the Afghan nation on Palestine, particularly Gaza. He shared information about recent negotiations with the occupying regime.

It is worth noting that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan groups, including Hamas and Fath, agreed yesterday in Beijing, the capital of China, to form a temporary national unity government following the end of the conflict in Gaza.

UNAMA Chief stresses importance of talks with IEA

KABUL (TOLONews): In a meeting with the head of UNAMA, the Deputy Political Chief of the Prime Minister's Office of Afghanistan discussed the achievements of the third Doha meeting and the Islamic Emirate's relations with the international community.

In a statement, the Arg quoted Roza Otunbayeva as saying that high-level talks between the Islamic Emirate and the international community could lead to the establishment of constructive relationships. According to her, having relations with the Islamic Emirate is a desire of Western communities.

The statement mentioned that Otunbayeva said that UNAMA is striving to facilitate access to microloans in all provinces of Afghanistan.

The head of UNAMA also added in this meeting that based on the decisions of the last Doha meeting, work is underway on establishing two committees related to supporting



Afghanistan's private and banking sectors and combating drugs.

The UN Secretary-General's representative in Afghanistan noted that some countries have shown interest in managing the committees being established, supporting Afghanistan's private and banking sec-

tors, and combating drugs. Meanwhile, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in this meeting, appreciated UNAMA mission and its assistance to Afghans and said that the United Nations' acceptance of the Islamic Emirate's conditions at the third Doha meeting was a significant step and that the decisions

made in that meeting regarding Afghanistan's issues are valuable.

The Deputy Political Chief of the Prime Minister's Office stated that the Islamic Emirate prioritizes constructive and positive relations because, according to him, Kabul seeks engagement with the world.

Afghanistan participates in China Fair



KABUL (BNA): The 28th China Kunming Import and Export Fair and the 8th China-South Asia Expo have officially opened in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, featuring participation from an official delegation of the Islamic Emirate and representatives from Afghanistan's private sector.

According to a press release from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Afghanistan showcased its products across various sectors, including carpets, handicrafts, precious and semi-precious stones, saffron,

and dried fruits, in 41 booths at the exhibition.

The fair features over 81 participants from Afghanistan, alongside exhibitors from more than 82 countries, displaying their products and innovations for six days.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, the delegation from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, led by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, met with Chinese investors and industrialists, sharing investment opportunities in Afghanistan and encouraging them to invest in the country.

Diarrhea is dangerous, take patient to hospital immediately: Physicians

KABUL (Pajhwok): Diarrhea cases increase in hot season so families must observe hygiene and take such patients to health centres, health workers said on Wednesday.

Doctors at the Infectious Diseases Hospital and 'Indira Gandhi Children Hospital' say the number of patients with diarrhea has increased this year too as both hospitals received averagely 500 such patients.

In comments to Pajhwok Afghan News, infectious diseases specialist Dr. Faridullah Omari said: "All type of diarrhea are acute and contagious, both children and elders can be infected with such diseases, these are not simple illnesses, they are dangerous, if not paid serious attention, they can lead to patient's demise."

Omari said: "Luckily the fatality rate from this illness is zero in our hospital."

The diarrhea cases increase with the beginning of hot season in Afghanistan because the hot weather plays a basic role in spread-

ing and growth of microbes.

Pointing to the increased number of patients suffering from diarrhea, Dr. Omari said: "We receive 80 patients every day, 50 of them get hospitalized due to the severity of their illnesses."

Besides the lab and examinations facilities in this hospital, all patients get free medicines and free health services too.

Omari stressed observation of hygiene and washing hands with soap before serving food and after using toilet.

He advised the people to avoid eating staled and days-old food, canned food and street foods and be very careful during washing vegetables and fruits or they must leave vegetables in the solution of chlorine to kill microbes.

He called on families not to give any kind of medicines to ailing family members without consulting doctors or taking the patient to hospital.

He also advised not to drink energetic drinks

before consulting physicians, but for patients with diarrhea, they could drink a solution of six spoons of sugar and half spoon of salt (ORS) before they reach a health centre.

Children most infected with diarrhea

Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Sediq, an internal diseases specialist and chief of Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital in Kabul, told Pajhwok: "Currently, most of the children are infected with diarrhea due to carelessness of their mothers in food and clothing and not taking care of their children's hygiene."

He said about 1,400 patients visited the hospital on a daily basis and 400 of them were infected with diarrhea.

He added they provided treatment to diarrhea patients in three categories, oral rehydration solutions (ORS) were given to the first two categories patients and they were discharged from the hospital, but the third category patients, who are in critical condition,



were hospitalized and treated in the hospital.

He asked mothers to pay serious attention to their child's health and should transfer the patient to hospital as soon as possible and refrain from giving medicine to the patient arbitrarily.

Patients satisfied with services provided in both hospitals

Zar Sanga, an inhabitant of Kabul city, whose one-year old grandson has diarrhea, said: "My grandson's condition was not good. He had severe diarrhea and vomiting, we don't know what he ate that he got

infected with diarrhea."

She was satisfied with services of doctors at this hospital and said her grandson was given free medicines.

Qari Ziauddin, a resident of Kabul city, who is hospitalized in the Infectious Diseases Hospital of Kabul, linked his disease with eating apricot and fish in dinner at his friend's house. He said after infected with diarrhea, he visited a private clinic, but did not recover and then he visited the infection diseases hospital.

He was also satisfied with the services provided in the hospital.



KATHMANDU: Rescuers and army personnel stand at the site after a Saurya Airlines' plane crashed during takeoff at Tribhuvan International Airport in Nepal.

Plane crashes in Nepal with 18 dead, pilot sole survivor

KATHMANDU (AFP): A passenger plane crashed on takeoff in Kathmandu on Wednesday, with the pilot rescued from the flaming wreckage but all 18 others aboard killed, police in the Nepali capital told AFP.

Nepal has a woeful track record on aviation safety and the Himalayan republic has seen a spate of deadly light plane and helicopter crashes over the decades. The Saurya Airlines flight was carrying two crew and 17 of the company's staff members, Nepali police spokesman Dan Bahadur Karki told AFP. "The pilot has been rescued and is being treated," he added.

"Eighteen bodies have been recovered, including one foreigner. We are in the process of taking them for post-mortem." The flight was being conducted for either technical or maintenance purposes, Gyanendra Bhul of Nepal's Civil Aviation Authority told AFP without giving further details. Bahadur and Bhul were unable to confirm the nationality of the sole foreigner aboard.

Images of the aftermath shared by Nepal's military showed the plane's fuselage split apart and burnt to a husk. Around a dozen soldiers in camouflage were standing on top of the wreckage with the surrounding earth coated in fire retardant. The plane crashed at around 11:15am (0530 GMT), the military said in a statement, adding that the army's quick response team had been lending assistance with rescue efforts.

News portal Khabarhub reported that the airplane had caught fire after skidding on the runway. The plane was scheduled to fly on Nepal's busiest air route between Kathmandu and Pokhara, an important tourism hub in the Himalayan republic. Saurya Airlines exclusively flies Bombardier CRJ 200 jets, according to its website.

Nepal's air industry has boomed in recent years, carrying goods and people between hard-to-reach areas as well as foreign trekkers and climbers. But it has been plagued by poor safe-

ty due to insufficient training and maintenance — issues compounded by the mountainous republic's treacherous geography. The European Union has banned all Nepali carriers from its airspace over safety concerns.

The Himalayan country has some of the world's trickiest runways to land on, flanked by snow-capped peaks with approaches that pose a challenge even for accomplished pilots. The weather can also change quickly in the mountains, creating treacherous flying conditions.

Nepal's last major commercial flight accident was in January 2023, when a Yeti Airlines service crashed while landing at Pokhara, killing all 72 aboard. That accident was Nepal's deadliest since 1992, when all 167 people aboard a Pakistan International Airlines plane died when it crashed on approach to Kathmandu airport. Earlier that year a Thai Airways aircraft had crashed near the same airport, killing 113 people.

Kamala leads Trump 44pc to 42pc in US presidential race, poll finds

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Vice President Kamala Harris opened up a marginal two-percentage-point lead over Republican Donald Trump after President Joe Biden ended his re-election campaign and passed the torch to her, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

That compares with a marginal two-point deficit Biden faced against Trump in last week's poll before his Sunday exit from the race. The new poll, conducted on Monday and Tuesday, followed both the Republican National Convention where Trump on Thursday formally accepted the nomination, and Biden's announcement on Sunday he was leaving the race and endorsing Harris.

Harris, whose campaign says she has secured the Democratic nomination, led Trump 44 per cent to 42pc in the national poll, a difference within the 3-percentage-point margin of error. Harris and Trump were tied at 44pc in a July 15-16 poll, and Trump led by one percentage point in a July 1-2 poll, both within the same margin of error.

While nationwide surveys give important signals of American support for political candidates, a handful of competitive states typically tilt the balance in the US Electoral College, which ultimately decides who wins a presidential election. A pollster with Trump's campaign played down any polling showing an increase in Harris' support, arguing

that she was likely to see a temporary rise in popularity because of widespread media coverage of her new candidacy.

"That bump is likely to start showing itself over the next few days and will last for a while," pollster Tony Fabrizio said in a memo circulated to reporters by Trump's campaign. Candidates often expect a bump after formally accepting their party's nomination at stage-managed, televised conventions such as the one that Trump had last week. But the poll showed no sign of that. Bump or not, the most recent Reuters/Ipsos poll underscored the rationale for Biden dropping out of the race and for Harris replacing him on the ticket.

Some 56pc of registered voters agreed with a statement that Harris, 59, was "mentally sharp and able to deal with challenges," compared to 49pc who said the same of Trump, 78. Only 22pc of voters assessed Biden that way. Biden, 81, ended his reelection effort after a debate with Trump in which he often stammered and failed to aggressively challenge attacks by Trump that included falsehoods.

Some 80pc of Democratic voters said they viewed Biden favorably, compared to 91pc who said the same of Harris. Three-quarters of Democratic voters said they agreed with a statement that the party and voters should get behind Harris now, with only a quarter saying multiple candidates should compete for the

party's nomination. When voters in the survey were shown a hypothetical ballot that included independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Harris led Trump 42pc to 38pc, an advantage outside the margin of error. Kennedy, favoured by 8pc of voters in the poll, has yet to qualify for the ballot in many states ahead of the November 5 election.

Harris campaigned in the critical battleground state of Wisconsin on Tuesday. She won support from major party figures and attention has since turned to who she will pick as her running mate. Many respondents in the Reuters/Ipsos poll said they knew nothing about the Democrats seen as potential picks to join Harris' ticket.

About one in four registered voters said they had never heard of US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, a former Democratic presidential candidate who had the highest favorability rating — 37pc — of the potential Harris running mates in the poll. One in three had not heard of California Governor Gavin Newsom, with about the same share saying they looked on him favorably. Half of registered voters in the poll had never heard of Arizona Senator Mark Kelly and two-thirds knew nothing of Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear. The poll, which was conducted online, surveyed 1,241 US adults nationwide, including 1,018 registered voters.

Electricity supply from Iran suspended for Makran

MAKRAN (INP): Electricity supply from 132kV Jackie Gore-Mand and 132kV Polan-Jiwani transmission lines from neighbouring Iran has been suspended, reported on Wednesday.

In this regard, the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) spokesperson said that due to the suspension of power supply from both 132kV transmission lines from Iran, the power supply to all grid stations of the Makran division has been affected. The affected 132kV grid stations include Mand, Tump, Turbat, Hoshab, Ji-wani, Gwadar Door, Gwadar Deep Sea Port, New Gwadar International Airport, Pasni and Ormara grid stations, the spokesperson said.

A spokesperson said QESCO officials are in constant contact with Iranian authorities in connection with electricity restoration. Panjgur and Hoshab grid stations are being supplied with electricity from the National Grid, the spokesperson further said. The spokesperson said with the restoration of power from Iran, the situation will return to normal. QESCO has apologized to the consumers of Makran and appealed for cooperation on the power outage from Iran.

US destroys 3 Houthi missile launchers in Yemen

AL-MUKALLA: The US Central Command said on Wednesday that it destroyed three missile launchers on territory in Yemen held by the Houthi militia. It was the latest in a series of military operations targeting Houthi sites in response to continuing attacks by the militia on international shipping.

"It was determined these weapons presented an imminent threat to US (and) coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region," the US military said in a message posted on social media platform X. It added that by destroying the launchers it was taking pre-emptive action to prevent Houthi attacks on international shipping and protect freedom of passage. US and UK forces have carried out dozens of attacks since January on sites in Sanaa, Hodeidah and other Houthi-held parts of Yemen being used to store missile launchers, unmanned aerial vehicles and drone boats, in an effort to prevent threats to international maritime routes off the coast of Yemen.

Meanwhile, the Houthis said operations at Hodeidah Port, on Yemen's Red Sea coast, have resumed at "full capacity" after fires in fuel tanks, caused by an attack

by Israel at the weekend, were extinguished. Houthi governor Mohammed Quhim reported on Tuesday night that the blazes were under control, and Houthi officials at the port said it was operational and two ships carrying hundreds of cargo containers and thousands of tonnes of steel had docked.

In response to a Houthi drone strike that killed one person and injured at least 10 in Tel Aviv, Israeli warplanes bombed several parts of Hodeidah on Saturday, including the port, a power station and an area on the city's northern outskirts. The Houthis said six people were killed and more than 80 injured by the attacks, which destroyed dozens of fuel tanks and a crane at the port. The militia have demanded that foreign organizations operating in regions under their control provide them with the names and jobs of all employees, as the Houthis intensify their crackdown on Yemenis who work with international organizations or at Western embassies, amid accusations of espionage.

In a letter dated July 17 that circulated on social media this week, the Houthi Supreme Council for the Management and

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation ordered international organizations active in Yemen to provide staffing structures within a week, including the names of workers, their positions and nationalities, and lists of prospective employees for approval. The Yemeni government's information minister, Muammar Al-Eryani, said the demand reflects the growing Houthi pressure on foreign organizations to employ workers loyal to the militia so that they can control the flow of international aid to Yemen.

In a message posted on X, he urged international groups operating in the country to transfer their offices from Houthi-controlled regions to the government-controlled southern port city of Aden, the nation's temporary capital, to protect their staff from Houthi persecution. "The terrorist Houthi militia considered the hesitant international positions a green light to continue its crimes and violations, and to further escalate its repressive measures towards international and humanitarian organizations working in the areas under its control," he added. — Arab News

IHC seeks interior secy, police, NAB, FIA reply

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday issued notices to the secretary interior and senior officials of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the police and sought their replies in the former prime minister Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi case.

Bushra, in her petition, had prayed to the court to order the concerned departments to provide her with details of the cases registered against her as well as not to arrest her in any new case besides allowing her to approach a relevant court for justice.

IHC Chief Justice (CJ) Justice Aamer Farooq heard the former first lady's petition. The court then adjourned the case's hearing until next week. On the other hand, hinting at the formation of a larger bench to hear the petition filed by PTI leader Ali Bukhari against the Election Amendment Act, the IHC CJ on Wednesday summoned the attorney general of Pakistan (AGP) to assist the court in deciding the case.

Justice Farooq also issued notices to the Ministry of Law and the Election Commission of Pakistan and sought their replies within 10 days. Giving arguments on behalf of the petitioner, his counsel Shoaib Shaheen Advocate said that a section had been inserted in the Act so that a retired judge could head the tribunal formed to hear the complaints of losing candidates in the general elections held on February 8, 2024.

"Under the section, consulting a high court's chief justice for the appointment of a retired judge is no longer mandatory," he said, and requested the court for the formation of a larger bench or division bench to hear the case. The chief justice asked him to wait till the respondent submitted his reply following which he would form a larger bench. The court then directed that the case's next hearing be fixed after 10 day.

ECP demands report against Umar Ayub

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has requested a detailed report from the District Returning Officer (DRO) regarding a rigging complaint filed against PTI leader and Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly, Umar Ayub.

The Election Commission held a hearing on the petition, where the petitioner's counsel argued that Umar Ayub had preemptively applied, indicating the potential for bogus votes being cast in the election. This application was submitted to the DRO on February 7, with the counsel asserting that fraudulent votes were indeed cast.

An Election Commission member confirmed the existence of two reports from the Returning Officers (RO), one from the National Assembly and another from the Provincial Assembly. Umar Ayub's lawyer contended that the petitioner introduces new requests at each hearing to prolong the case. The petitioner's counsel urged the Election Commission to nullify the election results of the contested constituency. The Election Commission has adjourned the hearing until August 6, pending the DRO's report on the actions taken in response to Umar Ayub's initial application.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has reserved its decision on the issue of several political parties failing to submit their election expense details. The matter was reviewed by a four-member bench led by Member Nisar Durrani.

Parties such as ANP, Move on Pakistan, People's Muslim League Pakistan, Pakistan Awami Raj, Awami Jamhoori Party Pakistan, Haq Du Tehreek Balochistan, and Pakistan People's League have yet to provide the required financial disclosures for their election campaigns.

Election Commission officials reported that ANP's Mian Iftikhar Hussain Shah was contacted multiple times without success.

KP CM directs completion of small dams



PESHAWAR: An important meeting of Irrigation department was held here at Chief Minister's House on Wednesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair.

Provincial Minister for Irrigation Aqibullah Khan, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Special Secretary to CM Waqar Ali Khan, Secretary Irrigation Tahir Orakzai and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The meeting took a detailed review of Small Dams projects being executed in the province. The participants were also briefed about the proposed potential projects, issues and impediments hindering the progress of certain projects and future course of action in this regard.

It was informed in the meeting that a total of 56 small dams have been com-

pleted in the province having a total storage capacity of 281410 acre feet and cultivable command area of 312263 acres. Similarly, work on 30 Small Dams projects is also in progress. These projects would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs.43.6 billion. As many as 14 Small Dam projects including Khattak Banda Dam Kohat, Makh Banda Dam Karak, Latambar Dam Karak, Jaroba Dam Nowshera, Pezu Dam Lakki Marwat and others are near to completion and would be completed this year. These projects once completed would cultivate an area of 34000 acres cumulatively, the authorities told.

The chief minister has directed the authorities concerned for speedy completion of the priority small dams projects, directing the finance department that funds required for this purpose be released on priority basis. The projects which

are near to completion should be completed and operationalized on the very first priority, adding that no delay or negligence would be allowed in this regard. He also directed them to come up with a viable strategy in order to ensure that other ongoing projects are completed within the stipulated timelines.

He said that small dam projects are of vital importance for agriculture development and food security of the province. He further directed that SNEs should be approved for the projects with 90% physical progress so as to ensure safety of their infrastructure. He also gave go ahead to carry out feasibility studies for new small dams projects at suitable sites of the province. He underlined the need to further strengthen the Small Dams Directorate and directed that additional two Directors and necessary allied staff be deployed for this purpose.

‘Russia is not ready for good faith talks’

KYIV: Ukraine's top diplomat has told China's foreign minister that Kyiv was open to negotiating with Russia but only if Moscow was ready to do so in "good faith". Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba is the highest-ranking Ukrainian official to travel to China since Russia's February 2022 invasion and held talks with Foreign Minister Wang Yi in the southern city of Guangzhou on Wednesday.

"Kuleba restated ... that [Kyiv] is ready to engage the Russian side in the negotiation process at a certain stage, when Russia is ready to negotiate in good faith, but emphasised that no such readiness is currently observed on the Russian side," the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. China presents itself as a neutral party in the war, insisting that the only way to end Russia's invasion is by bringing both Kyiv and Moscow to the negotiating table.

It says it is not sending lethal assistance to either side, unlike the United States and other Western

nations, though it is a key political and economic partner of Russia, with NATO members branding Beijing a "decisive enabler" of the war. China has denied claims that it is backing Russia's war efforts, saying last week that its position was "open and above board".

Last year, China hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin and hailed a "no limits" partnership between the two countries. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a regular news conference in Beijing on Wednesday that both ministers had discussed the need to take a long-term view on building bilateral ties and that China would "continue to expand its food imports from Ukraine". Ning said that China was concerned by the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and that Beijing would continue to provide humanitarian assistance.

She added that the Russian and Ukrainian sides had "to varying degrees signalled their willingness to negotiate" in the

war. "Although the conditions are not yet ripe, we support all efforts conducive to peace and are willing to continue to play a constructive role in bringing about a ceasefire and the resumption of peace talks," Ning added.

The Kremlin told reporters that Kuleba's remark appeared to tally with Russia's own position, but that it needed more details to assess what was being proposed. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in June Moscow would end the war if Kyiv retreated from and handed over the rest of four partially occupied Ukrainian provinces, and dropped its NATO ambitions, an idea shot down in Kyiv as an absurd ultimatum. As Russian troops push forward in eastern Ukraine, Kyiv is trying to hold a second international summit later this year to advance its peace process for the end of the war. Ukraine has previously said it would like the summit hosted by a "Global South" country and that Russia should attend. — Aljazeera

Drive to eliminate global hunger by 2030 has stalled

NEW YORK: A goal to eliminate global hunger by 2030 looks increasingly impossible to achieve as the number of people suffering from chronic hunger has barely changed over the past year, a UN report says.

The annual State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, published on Wednesday, said about 733 million people faced hunger in 2023 — one in 11 people globally and one in five in Africa — as conflict, climate change and economic crises take their toll. David Laborde, director of the division within the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that helps prepare the survey, said that although progress had been made in some regions, the situation had deteriorated on a global level.

"We are in a worse situation today than nine years ago when we launched this goal to eradicate hunger by 2030," he told the news agency Reuters, saying challenges such as climate change and regional wars had grown more severe than envisaged a decade ago. If current trends continue, about 582 million people will be chronically undernourished by the end of the decade, the report said.

Regional trends varied significantly with hunger continuing to rise in Africa, where growing populations, wars and climate upheaval weighed heavily. By contrast, Asia has seen little change, and Latin America has improved. The

report also noted that 71.5 percent of people in low-income countries were not able to afford a healthy diet last year, compared with 6.3 percent in high-income countries.

While famines are easy to spot, poor nutrition is more insidious but can nonetheless scar people for life, stunting both the physical and mental development of babies and children and leaving adults more vulnerable to infections and illnesses. "Malnutrition affects a child's survival, physical growth, and brain development," UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said in a statement.

But she noted how global child stunting rates have dropped by one-third, or 55 million, in the past two decades and said this showed investments in child nutrition can tackle the current challenges. "We must urgently step up financing to end child malnutrition. The world can and must do it. It is not only a moral imperative but also a sound investment in the future," Russell said.

The UN also said the way the antihunger drive was financed had to change because greater flexibility is needed to ensure the countries most in need get help. "We need to change how we do things to be better coordinated, to accept that not everyone should try to do everything but really be much more focused on what we are doing and where," Laborde said. Laborde noted that interna-

tional aid linked to food security and nutrition amounted to \$76bn a year, or 0.07 percent of the world's total annual economic output. "I think we can do better to deliver this promise about living on a planet where no one is hungry," he said. — Aljazeera

Qureshi's remand extended

LAHORE (INP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has extended the judicial remand of former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, by 12 days in seven May 9 cases.

The court has ordered the police to submit the challan by August 5. Due to security concerns, Qureshi was not produced in court, and the prosecution requested a proceeding without his presence. The court allowed the proceeding without Qureshi's presence due to security concerns. Qureshi's attendance was marked through a video WhatsApp call.

Earlier, the PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi was sent to judicial remand following his alleged involvement in May 9 riots. The court after rejecting the plea to extend the physical remand, sent the PTI leader to judicial remand under police custody for 14 days.