

Terrorist killed in operation
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted an intelligence based operation in North Waziristan District on reported presence of terrorists. During conduct of the operation, after intense fire exchange, Khawarji Terrorist Razzaq was killed. He was a close associate of Gul Bahadur and was actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area including target killing of Malik Sher Muhammad.



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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Tajikistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

No more military operations in KP

F.P. Report

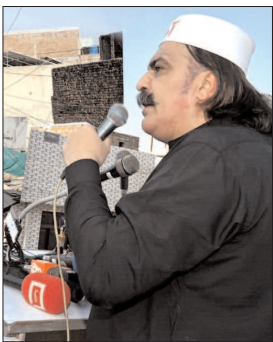
BANNU: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, on Friday paid a visit to district Bannu where he addressed peace gathering (Aman Jalsa) and said that all the demands presented by Bannu Aman Committee have been approved by the Apex Committee of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that the Apex Committee in its meeting held day before, has thoroughly discussed each and every point of the peace committee and accepted all the demands as per aspirations of the people. If there is a dearth of anything in this regard, it will also be entertained, he added.

The Chief Minister on this occasion, thanked the people and their leaders for cooperating with administration in handling the situation arising out of tragic incident in Bannu, adding that they have undoubtedly played a very important and positive role in keeping the

situation from deteriorating. The Chief Minister said that peace is the right of the people; we will not ask for this right, we will take it.

The history of Pashtoons spans centuries, we have always rendered sacrifices for their homeland; we never shied away even from shedding our blood for loyalty to our land, but due to the wrong policies of some people, we had to make huge sacrifices. "Being the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, I will not allow for any more operation in this province", he announced and said that we have endured all kinds of hardships for the sake of this land and peace, even we left our homes and went into exile; We have reservations about the way we are seen in other provinces.

He maintained that we will make decisions ourselves and will not let anyone to impose the decision. He said that the children studying in religious educa-



tional institutes (Madaris) are close to our hearts, we will take every possible step for their wellbeing. The Chief Minister also warned that we will not accept any armed group, directing the police to take actions against the armed groups in the region. I also feel sad if the heirs of the martyrs of the army and police are hurt; they are making sacrifices for our children and we are proud of their sacrifices, he remarked. Provincial Minister Pakhtunyar, MNA Maulana Naseem Ali Shah, MPA Adnan Wazir and other elders also addressed the public gathering.

Tajikistan envoy calls on Prime Minister

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir Friday paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House. The prime minister welcomed the ambassador and wished him a successful tenure in Pakistan.

While fondly recalling his recent visit to Dushanbe earlier this month, the prime minister said he was touched by the warm welcome extended to him and hailed the friendly and productive discussions with President Emomali Rahmon during the visit.

Expressing satisfaction at the MoUs/agreements signed between the two sides during his visit, PM Shehbaz Sharif urged that timely implementation and follow up would help to strengthen bilateral ties even further.

He renewed his invitation to President Rahmon to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience, while adding that Pakistan was looking forward to Tajikistan's participation in the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad in October this year.

The Tajik Ambassador briefed the prime minister on a number of proposals aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields including education, agriculture and defence as well as connectivity through land and air routes. While noting the proposals, the prime minister tasked relevant ministries to get in touch with the Tajik Ambassador for further discussions. Regional connectivity projects including CASA-1000, also came under discussion.

The Tajik Ambassador thanked the prime minister for receiving him, conveyed greetings of his President to him and expressed his country's desire to further enhance its relations with Pakistan.

PTI calls off protest

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has postponed its protest, initially scheduled for Friday, until Monday in Islamabad.

Amir Mughal, President PTI Islamabad chapter, said the court had allowed to hold protest on Monday therefore, the party would act accordingly the said direction. It merits mention the federal government had imposed Section 144 in the capital and sealed the red zone after the PTI called off protest.

Earlier, 30 PTI workers were arrested in Karachi as they gathered at Teen Talwar for the protest. The police first tried to disperse the demonstrators but later made the arrests upon resistance. Separately, 10 other PTI workers were arrested in Hyderabad during a protest. PTI leader Haleem Adil Sheikh criticised the crackdown on protestors by asking if martial law had been imposed in the province of Sindh.

The Frontier Post

Imran, wife's case adjourned
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The hearing for the £190 million case against PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, has been postponed until July 30 without any proceedings. The Accountability Court, led by Judge Muhammad Ali Waryach, was scheduled to hear the case at Adiala Jail. However, neither the defendants nor their lawyers appeared in court at the scheduled time.

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Friday announced the government's readiness to negotiate with the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) on their demand in a bid to end their sit-in causing inconvenience to the general public.

"We are ready to talk for peace, security and development of the country which is the main agenda of our government," the minister said while addressing a news conference along with Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Amir Muqam. The minister said JI Chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman was a seasoned and far-sighted leader whose guidance would be instrumental for the government to address the existing issues within the existing framework.

He said the government was ready to form a three-member committee which would comprise of him, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Amir Muqam and PML-N Senior Leader Tariq Fazal. Tarar called upon the JI leadership to sit and guide the government in resolving the issues instead of doing the "politics of agitation".

The JI was given permission only to stage their sit-in at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi, he said, urging them to use only the dedicated place for the purpose. There was no need to obstructing a public servant in discharge of his/her duty and creating hurdles for the people, he said, regretting one or the other group had made it a routine to swarm the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad that caused traffic issues for the people including patients and professionals.

The minister urged the JI leadership to follow the Standard Operation Procedures agreed with the local administration. Protest at the D-Chowk would not be allowed at any cost since there was a possibility of a mischief due to involvement of any miscreant, he maintained.

The minister urged the JI leadership to have a faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who had been working 20 hours a day to implement the agenda of home grown economic reforms that included privatization of loss making entities, digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue for documentation of non-documented economy, addition of new filers in the tax net

and other initiatives.

He said it was top priority of the government to achieve home grown economic reforms that had started providing fiscal space to offer subsidy to the people in electricity bills. He said the privatization of the FBR was underway to plug loopholes in system to stop billions of rupee leakage and add new filers into the tax net. "We are moving forward rapidly on economic reforms to bring positive changes in people's life," he added.

The minister said PM Shehbaz Sharif led the government during the tenure of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and took concrete measures to stabilize the rupee, reduce inflation and on top of that successfully averted a default for the country. It was speculated that Pakistan may get default and foreign investors would withdraw their investment, but PM Shehbaz Sharif saved the country from economic collapse despite the efforts to sabotage a deal with the International Monetary Fund, he added.

Tarar recalled the achievements of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government in 2018 when the economy was growing at 6 per cent and inflation was clocked at 4 per cent with the unit of electricity cost only Rs 8 per unit. The minister said the PML-N government had steered the country out of the crises in the past and would do so in future with the grace of the Almighty. Inflation had been brought down to 11 per cent, stock exchange witnessing highest activity in the last couple of months with all the economic indicators on upward trajectory, he added.

Tarar regretted a halt on the country's development during the tenure of the PTI government which was led by a "corrupt person" who borrowed money massively and benefited himself and his close aides by selling Toshakhana gifts and striking a shady deal worth 190 million pounds. "We understand the issues faced by the chief minister of KP as on the one hand, he has to assure cooperation in official meetings while on other side, he was answerable to the PTI founder on maintaining a (specific) public posture," he said.

Referring to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), he said those who allegedly resettled Taliban in the country should come up with a plan in accordance with their claims of having a capacity to maintain the law and order and estab-



lishing the writ in the province. He regretted that the terrorism was increased during the tenure of the PTI government.

The minister asked the PTI leadership in KP to give their stance to the public on two big scandals including massive deforestation and signing of agreements with a "fake institution" on the Artificial Intelligence. Demanding action against the timber mafia, he alleged involvement of a minister of the KP government and its officials in the massive deforestation.

As regards the signing of an agreement between the KP government and an institution for training of the students on the AI, he said they were playing with the future of students who would never get jobs due to fake certification. He said the staff associated with the "fake institution" lacked required experience and awarded their staff with their own degrees on the subject.

No staff of the institution had a proper certification on AI either, he said, adding there was no record found regarding a degree claimed by its head from the MIT. He regretted that no process was followed for signing the agreement wondering how the KP government could befool thousands of students in the name of a "so-called quantum diploma".

"This is a serious issue and must be investigated officially," the minister said, asking the KP CM why he failed to comment on these issues in today public gathering. To a query, he said a person involved in creating a deep fake video of a female leader of the PML-N had been traced and the investigating agencies were probing further in this regard. A threat from the KP government were more political statements, he responded to another query. He took a dig at the PTI's so-called hunger strike that began after lunch and ended before dinner.

Several arrested as JI defies Section 144

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) claimed that its 1,150 activists were arrested in different cities while trying to march on Islamabad to protest against inflation, on Friday.

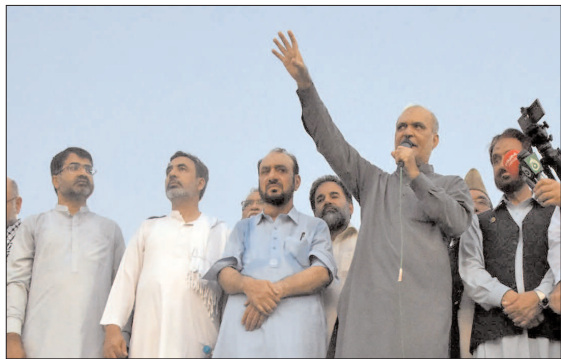
JI is protesting against a massive hike in electricity prices. The federal capital has been completely sealed off with containers, effectively isolating it from surrounding areas, including Rawalpindi.

Meanwhile, strict security arrangements have been made in Islamabad, with blockades on various arteries to keep the protesters from gathering, leading to widespread traffic disruptions across the city. Section 144 remains imposed across Punjab and the federal capital, prohibiting assemblies, processions and protests ahead of rallies announced by opposition parties.

Personnel of law enforcement agencies have been deployed in the federal capital to ensure compliance and citizens are urged to avoid participating in any illegal activity. Several individuals affiliated with JI were arrested by the Islamabad police while trying to gather in the federal capital for a protest at D-Chowk, in defiance of Section 144. Several others were arrested in Lahore as well when JI protesters gathered to march towards Islamabad.

In the wake of arrests and barricades, JI's Rawalpindi Emir Arif Sherazi later announced that they would stage the sit-in outside Liaquat Bagh instead of D-Chowk, which will continue till their demands are accepted. The party's representative said that JI Emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, who is leading a march procession from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will reach Liaquat Bagh, where the sit-in is being staged.

Rawalpindi Central Police Officer Khalid



Mahmood Hamdani said that JI had been permitted to stage a rally in Liaquat Bagh after agreeing on certain SOPs with the protestors. "The situation is peaceful here and no one will be allowed to deteriorate the situation," he said. JI Emir Naeem, while addressing the protestors gathered at I-8, Islamabad, said that they were here for the rights of the people.

"This is a battle for the rights of the people," he said, adding that they had come to hold a sit-in for the people. "We have come to provide relief to 250 million people. We have only one demand from the government — provide relief to the people," he said. Naeem also demanded the release of the arrested JI members arrested today.

"Protest is our right, the arrested workers should be released," he said. The JI leader also warned that the sit-in has just begun, saying that they "will stay here". Earlier, the roads leading to the city from Rawalpindi were closed with containers as the JI protestors tried to reach the capital territory on leadership's call.

On the Faizabad interchange, the police party was deployed to tackle the JI protestors coming in from different parts of the country for the sit-in. Meanwhile, the road leading to Parliament House from D-Chowk was completely blocked with barricades, but there the traffic moved without any trouble. The protestors trying to

gather at this point were dispersed or taken into custody by the law enforcers. The police said that they would not allow JI to protest in Islamabad without permission.

They said that Red Zone is a sensitive location and no one can be allowed to stage sit-ins there. The JI initially remained adamant about staging the protests at D-Chowk today as its Emir Rehman had told the supporters to stage sit-in wherever they find obstructions. The leadership of JI expressed its resolve to hold a sit-in at D Chowk while defying all the restrictions being imposed by the Islamabad administration and police today.

In a statement issued earlier in the day, JI Secretary Information Qaiser Sharif said that the police are raiding the homes of the party's workers and during a raid at JI Secretary General Amirul Azeem's home, the law enforcers arrested his driver. "Jamaat-e-Islami leader Hafiz Muhammad Ajmal has been arrested. In Kharian, leader Mian Usman Rafi has been taken into custody. Eight other leaders have also been arrested from Khairpur Tamewali," he added. While detailing the arrests of other leaders as well, Qaiser lamented that the Punjab government has resorted to its "traditional tactics" and claimed that the raids are being conducted in a bid to stop the sit-in from being staged.

Vandal attacks on French railways cause chaos

PARIS (Reuters): Vandals targeted France's high-speed train network with a series of coordinated actions that brought major disruption to some of the country's busiest rail lines ahead of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony on Friday.

This disruption occurred despite a massive security operation involving tens of thousands of troop and police to guard against any threat to the global sporting extravaganza. The railway operator said arsonists had targeted installations along the lines connecting Paris with cities such as Lille in the north, Bordeaux in west and Strasbourg in the east.

It urged all travellers to postpone their journeys. Repairs were underway but traffic would be severely disrupted until at least the end of the weekend. Trains were being sent back to their points of departure. "Last night, the SNCF was victim of several acts of vandalism on the Atlantic, Northern and Eastern high-speed lines. Fires were deliberately set to damage our installations," the SNCF said in a statement.

The coordinated strikes on the rail network will feed into a sense of apprehension ahead of the Olympics opening ceremony in the heart of Paris later on Friday. France is rolling out an unprecedented peace-time security operation to secure the event, with more than 45,000 police, 10,000 soldiers and 2,000 private security agents deployed. Snipers will be on rooftops and drones keeping watch from the air. Paris 2024 said it was working closely with the SNCF to assess the situation. There was no immediate claim of responsibility and no indication of whether the action was politically related. Transport Minister Patrice Vergriete described the acts as criminal.

2 retired judges appointed to SC as ad hoc jurists

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has approved the appointments of Justice (ret'd) Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice (ret'd) Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel as ad hoc judges to the Supreme Court for one year.

An official statement issued by the President House on Friday said the approval was given under Article 182 of the Constitution. The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) had last week recommended the appointment of two retired judges to the apex court to reduce the pendency of the cases.

The JCP meeting was held at the SC on June 19 with Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa being the chairman of the Commission in the chair. The meeting was

attended by eight other members of the commission, including four senior SC judges — Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Yahya Afridi — and a retired judge Justice Maqbool Ahmed Malik, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan, Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar as well as Akhtar Hussain, a representative of Pakistan Bar Council.

It may be noted that the approval of appointment comes despite Justice (ret'd) Miankhel's refusal to become an ad hoc judge of the apex court. He had declined the offer citing "personal reasons", becoming the third judge to turn down the proposal.

Before him Justice (ret'd) Mushir Alam and Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar had also refused appointment as

ad hoc judges. In the JCP meeting, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muneeb Akhtar and Justice Yahya Afridi had opposed the appointment of Justice (ret'd) Miankhel as he had already declined the offer.

However, his appointment was approved by a 6:3 majority. The former ruling party — Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) — had opposed the appointment of retired justices as ad hoc judges, saying the appointment would compromise the independence of the judiciary. It had asked the JCP to turn down the proposal of appointments. The PTI has been raising concerns over the appointment of ad hoc judges, claiming that the move is aimed at targeting the party, while the government has supported the decision, saying it falls under the ambit of law.

ADB approves \$400m for Pakistan

MANILA: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday approved a \$400 million concessional loan to support the reconstruction of houses and community infrastructure in Sindh damaged by the devastating floods in 2022, a press release from the bank said. Triggered by torrential monsoon rains, the 2022 floods submerged one-third of Pakistan. The deluge affected over 33m people and killed 1,700 or more. Nearly 8m people were displaced, with many still living in tents and makeshift homes. According to the press release, the concessional loan will allow the Sindh Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project to rehabilitate flood-damaged

houses and community infrastructure, and support livelihood recovery, with a focus on strengthening community resilience against climate change-induced natural hazards.

The press release said the project would support conditional cash grants for the reconstruction of 250,000 houses with multi-hazard resilient and environment-responsive designs. "It will also support community-driven construction of infrastructure such as drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities, covered drainage, and renewable energy solutions for 100,000 households in around 1,000 flood-damaged villages in Sindh." The project will also

support conditional cash grants for livestock, agriculture, small enterprises and e-commerce, it said. The bank said the project was a "key part of ADB's multifaceted response" to the country's flood crisis and formed part of the bank's commitment to provide \$1.5 billion in total assistance from 2023 to 2025 to accelerate Pakistan's flood recovery.

"This project will help rebuild homes and communities, and restore livelihood and basic services in Sindh, the province most affected by the devastating 2022 floods," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov. — Agencies



Asif Ali Zardari- The Man of Tranformative Vision

Hussain Mansoor

Asif Ali Zardari, a prominent leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), has navigated the complex world of Pakistani politics with remarkable skill. His deep experience and understanding of the nation's needs have allowed him to steer the PPP effectively and leave a significant mark on the political landscape. Under his leadership, the PPP has continued to build its legacy of service and dedication to the people of Pakistan.

Zardari made history as the first president of Pakistan to complete a full term while strictly adhering to democratic principles. His departure from office was marked by a memorable shared meal with his rival Prime Minister and a Guard of Honor, reflecting his honorable exit. His presidency was notable for major achievements like the creation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the landmark Eighteenth Amendment, and significant global initiatives.

His contributions include laying the groundwork for CPEC, which aims to boost regional connectivity and economic growth. The Eighteenth Amendment was a major reform during his tenure, shifting key powers to the Prime Minister and strengthening the executive branch. He also launched the Benazir Income Support Program, which has been crucial in providing financial aid to millions of Pakistanis in need.

Another significant achievement was the Pak-Iran gas pipeline agreement, showcasing his commitment to addressing Pakistan's energy needs and fostering stronger ties with Iran.

Zardari played a crucial role in improving Pakistan's global standing. By founding the Friends of Pakistan Forum, which included 170 countries, he helped lift Pakistan out of international isola-

tion. His efforts to grant provincial autonomy to Gilgit-Baltistan, recognize Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and remove the President's power to dissolve the Assembly have strengthened Pakistan's democratic framework.

Zardari's legacy is marked by strategic vision and relentless pursuit of progress. His presidency represents effective governance and transformative leadership, leaving a lasting impact on Pakistan's political landscape. His approach to leadership has been focused on achieving long-term goals rather than seeking immediate gains.

Despite some media portrayals of him as merely "clever," Zardari's leadership is rooted in democratic values and parliamentary principles. His influence goes beyond political maneuvering, reflecting a genuine commitment to enhancing democratic institutions and processes.

Zardari's leadership emphasizes using power responsibly to drive national progress. He focuses on the needs of the people and the overall well-being of the country, demonstrating a rare level of selflessness in politics. His approach prioritizes national advancement over personal ambition.

Central to Zardari's leadership is a vision that transcends party politics. His efforts aim to build a strong democratic framework and empower citizens, ensuring that democracy serves everyone and contributes to collective progress. His leadership fosters an environment where the focus is on developing a robust democratic system that benefits all citizens.

One notable aspect of Zardari's leadership style is his approachability and compassion. His simple yet profound question, "What can I do for you?" reflects a philosophy centered on addressing citizens' needs and maintaining a responsive, accountable government. This approach highlights his commit-

ment to serving the public and addressing their concerns.

In the annals of political history, Zardari is recognized not just as a skilled politician but as a statesman with a transformative vision. His legacy extends beyond specific policies or agreements, representing a shift in leadership approach—a dedication to serving and uplifting the nation through thoughtful and effective decision-making.

During the global recession, Zardari demonstrated impressive economic insight. He managed to shield Pakistan from the worst effects of inflation and guided the nation through challenging financial times, earning widespread respect.

To ensure stability, Zardari's government took decisive control over the armed forces, reflecting a commitment to national security and a unified response to challenges. His actions during the economic downturn highlighted his ability to navigate complex issues and safeguard Pakistan's economic stability.

In political negotiations, Zardari has emphasized meaningful dialogue over mere political maneuvering. His willingness to engage with PTI reflects his dedication to finding common ground and working for the nation's benefit. Despite shifts in political alliances following the No Confidence Motion, Zardari's approach underscores the importance of constructive engagement in building consensus and maintaining political stability.

The PPP's legacy in Pakistan is defined by a commitment to progress and inclusive policies. Previous PPP governments have focused on social welfare, education, and healthcare, reflecting a long history of serving the people. Under President Asif Ali Zardari's leadership, the party's journey of reconciliation and progress continues, with a vision for a brighter and more equitable future for Pakistan.

3100 houses for flood affected in Sukkur completed



F.P. Report

SUKKUR: Construction of 3100 houses for flood affectees in District Sukkur has been completed by the Sindh government, as part of a larger project of 83417 houses under Sindh People's Housing Scheme for Flood Affected People. Provincial Minister for Energy, Planning & Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Spokesperson for Sindh Government & Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arsalan Islam Shaikh, and Chairman District Council Syed Kumail Haider Shah handed over keys and ownership documents to the beneficiaries.

According to details, a ceremony was held in village Peer Muhammad Jagirani near Rohri on Friday regarding the distribution of houses among flood affectees, where Provincial Minister for Energy, Planning, and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Government of Sindh Spokesperson and Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arsalan Islam Shaikh, and Chairman District Council Sukkur Syed Kumail Haider Shah distributed house keys and ownership certificates to 100 flood affectees. Deputy Commissioner Sukkur M.B. Rajar was also present on the occasion.

Speaking to the media, Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah informed the media that, under the guidance of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Sindh government has launched a massive housing project, aiming to construct 2.1 million houses for flood affectees across the province. This project will bring relief to around 10 million people in Sindh and is expected to be completed within two years.

He noted that while floods had affected hundreds of thousands of people in other provinces, only the Sindh government, led by the Pakistan People's Party, was actively

engaged in rebuilding homes. He mentioned that bank accounts for 800,000 families had been activated, and the process of transferring funds in installments had begun. Some families had received one or two installments, while others had received their third or fourth installment.

He stressed that, along with the Chief Minister of Sindh, their goal was to ensure transparency in the project, enabling flood-affected families to have a secure roof over their heads. Further, he mentioned that Hands is overseeing construction of homes for flood-affected individuals in Sukkur, with financial support from the Sindh government, World Bank, and other organizations. He emphasized that the construction process prioritizes essential amenities like water supply, drainage, sanitation, and healthcare facilities to ensure a healthy living environment.

Speaking to the media, Barrister Arsalan Islam Shaikh, Spokesperson for the Sindh Government and Mayor of Sukkur, said that the Pakistan People's Party's Sindh government, under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, was fulfilling its promise to provide homes to flood affectees. He said that the construction of 2.1 million homes was a clear testament to the fact that the People's Party believed in serving the people.

The People's Housing Project will not only provide shelter to the affected people but also create employment opportunities. "Building a robust infrastructure to mitigate the impact of future natural disasters and floods is our foremost priority," the Spokesperson added. Provincial Minister for Energy, Planning, and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, and Barrister Arsalan Islam Shaikh, Spokesperson for the Sindh Government and Mayor of Sukkur District Council

Sukkur Syed Kumail Haider Shah conducted an inspection of the housing project being constructed for flood affectees.

During the briefing, it was revealed that the construction targets for Sukkur district include 83,417 houses, with 12,819 houses planned for Taluka New Sukkur and Sukkur City, 26,515 houses being built for flood victims in Taluka Rohri, 27,119 houses targeted for Pano Akil taluka, and 16,954 houses under construction in Saleh Pat taluka.

Thereafter, Provincial Minister Syed Nasser Hussain Shah, Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arsalan Islam Shaikh, and Chairman District Council Sukkur Syed Kamail Hyder Shah also visited Targhati village and inspected the newly constructed homes for flood affectees. They also distributed house keys and ownership documents to the deserving beneficiaries.

On this occasion, it was informed during the briefing that initially, the target was set to build houses for 304 families in Targhati, out of which the first installment has been transferred to 275 families. Work has been done up to the DPC stage for the construction of 234 houses. 212 families have received their second installment, and 133 families have received their third installment. Moreover, the construction of roofs has been completed in 90 houses. On this occasion, Provincial Minister for Energy, Planning, and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, while talking to the media, said that the construction work of houses for flood affectees has been expedited across the province, and ownership rights are being given to the affectees.

IBA PASS CANDIDATE/ JOBS: In response to a question, he said that whoever comes on merit, the People's Party has given them employment, despite facing obstacles and having to answer in courts, but we have been giving jobs on merit, no injustice will be done to the candidates who passed the IBA test, their process is ongoing, they don't need to protest as Sindh government is working on it for them.

Syed Hussain Shah revealed that some individuals are provoking him to resort to protests.

ELECTERCITY TARRIF: Addressing the issue of electricity tariffs, the Provincial Minister expressed concern that the current rates are beyond the means of ordinary citizens, and excessive billing is a major concern. To address this, a specialized cell has been set up within the Energy Department to facilitate the reconciliation of electricity bills for average consumers and address their complaints.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

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

Details:			
Branch	DI Khan	Branch code	3033
Auction Date	30 th July-2024	Time	11:00 AM

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Gohar Nawaz	12102-71977908-9	H T Hala, Tehsil Kulachi, District Dera Ismail Khan	23.5	1 Tuls
Qismat Khan	12102-2386633-9	H T Hala, Tehsil Kulachi, District Dera Ismail Khan	107	1 Tuls, 1 Katmala, 1 Mala, 4 Chori, 1 Jhumar
Abdul Ghaffar	32103-6041548-9	Post Office Khas Tarman, Tehsil Tunsu, District Dera Ghazi Khan	54	1 Tuls, 1 Tika, 1 Jhumar, Kantay, 1 Tuls

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

SALAR GARDEN LOCATED NEAR KDA TEHSIL & DISTRICT KOHAT

The Public is hereby informed through this notice that M/S (Mr. Baber Azeem Afridi) has applied to Tehsil Municipal Administration Kohat for Sanction of the housing scheme namely (Salar Garden located near KDA, Moza Chikerkot Tehsil & District Kohat) having total area of 157 Kanals and Tehsil Municipal Administration Kohat has sanctioned this housing scheme after approval granted by the District Scrutiny Committee in its meeting held under chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kohat.

Detail of various categories of plots provided in the housing scheme is as follows.

	Size of plots		No. of Plots		Size of plots		No. of Plots
	27' -3" x50' & 23'-6"x58'	63			1.05 Kanal	01	
Residential	35'x78' & 39'x69'	115		Commercial	2.73 Kanal	01	
	70'x78'	07			0.88 Kanal	01	
	Odd Size	13			1.5 Kanal	01	

The public is hereby informed through this notice that the following plots in the housing scheme have been mortgaged with the Tehsil Municipal Administration Kohat as a security towards provision of development works (provision of roads, water supply sewerage and drainage system, street light and electricity network, gas facilities and horticulture work). It is responsibility of the developer / owner of the housing scheme to provide and complete the development work. The developer / owner cannot sell or transfer these plots until these are redeemed after due completion of the development works. List of mortgaged plots is as follows.


Plot Number	Block	Dimension	Area		
			Kanal	Marla	Sq.ft
163	--	70'x78'	1	20	5460
164	--	70'x78'	1	20	5460
165	--	70'x78'	1	20	5460
55	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
56	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
57	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
58	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
59	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
60	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
61	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
62	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
63	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
64	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
65	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
66	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
67	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
68	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
69	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
70	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730
71	--	35'x78'	0.5	10	2730

Plot Number	Block	Dimension	Area		
			Kanal	Marla	Sq.ft
95	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
96	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
97	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
98	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
99	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
100	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
111	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
112	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
113	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
114	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
115	--	23'-6"x58'	0.25	5	1363
Commercial	--	Odd size	2.73	54.6	14858
Commercial	--	Odd size	0.88	17.6	4789
Commercial	--	Odd size	1.5	30	8163
190	--	Odd size	0.47	9.25	2516
Total Area			19.832	396.64	107935

Public is informed through this notice not to enter into any transaction, sale or purchase of the mortgaged plots till they are redeemed.

Tehsil Officer (I), TMA Kohat
Tehsil Municipal Officer, TMA Kohat

INF(P) 179/24



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 customer who has neglected and failed to repay the finance extended to them by Mobilink Bank along with the markup thereon.

Details:			
Branch	Mardan	Branch code	0019
Auction Date	30 th July-2024	Time	12:30 PM

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Jamshid Khan	16102-6103996-1	Mohallah Shah But Khel, P.O. Kot Jongara, Mardan	11	1 jura kanty

Notice is hereby given to the customer 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



PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

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

Details:			
Branch	Mansehra	Branch code	0029
Auction Date	30 th July-2024	Time	11:00 AM

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Muhammad Zeeshan	13503-6987584-9	Mohallah Mughal Abad, Pairan, Mansehra	21.8	03 Bangles
Muhammad Kamran	13503-9811338-9	Maira Sheikh Abad, Baidra, Mansehra	11.9	1 Necklace, 2 Earrings
Qadeer Ahmed	42501-0666999-5	Ogra, Mansehra	14.2	2 Necklaces, 4 Earrings, 1 Ring
Nasir Khan	13501-4862242-1	Post Office Mahandari Kamal Bin, Tehsil Mansehra	4.21	2 Earrings
Saad Khan	13503-4202898-1	Current Address: Chamora, Mansehra	8	Necklace (broken), 2 Earrings
Misbah Khursheed	13503-3435245-2	Mohala Chamhorhah, Post Office Mansehra	25.65	02 Bangles

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

PUTA delegation discuss universities issues with minister



F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: A delegation of Peshawar University Teachers Association (PUTA) met with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa minister for higher education, archives and libraries Meena Khan Afridi regarding different issues of the university. The delegation comprised of Dr Muhammad Uzair, president of the

association, Anwar ul Haq, joint secretary, Dr Shekhla Nazneen, female vice president and executive members including Dr Muhammed Farooq, Dr Bashar at Hussain and Dr Kausar Shaheen. The delegation discussed the financial and other issues being faced by University of Peshawar. The representative delegation informed the provincial minister in detail about all the financial and administrative issues of the university. Financial difficulties, the need for timely and transparent advertisement of positions, criteria for the promotion of PhD lecturers to the next grade, concerns of retired employees, the establishment of the provincial Higher Education Commission (HEC), budget, and other agendas were came into discussion. Mr Meena Khan Afridi

assured full support and cooperation for solving the university issues, saying that a task force has been formed on the special directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, to come out the universities from current financial and other crises. "The task force will ascertain the root causes of financial crises of the universities and will find solutions to improve the universities financial positions. The recommendations of the task force will be presented soon" the minister said. He further said that every institution depend on leadership and if a leader is sincere and have managerial qualities, that institution will progresses and develops.



PESHAWAR: All Pakistan Flour Dealers Association President Haji Waheed Khan in a group photo with other cabinet members during a protest against taxes.

WAPDA hydro worker union congratulates Yasir
F.P. Report



PESHAWAR: Chairman Hashtnagar Sub-Division, Tasbeeh Ullah congratulated Yasir Kamran Khan on his election as the Zonal Chairman of the All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Workers Union Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for the third time.

According to details, Tasbeeh Ullah said electing Yasir Kamran Khan for third time is a testament to the trust and confidence WAPDA hydro worker union on him.

The sub-divisional chairman is hopeful that Yasir Kamran Khan will continue to work for the rights of WAPDA employees and fulfill the trust placed in him. He also praised Yasir Kamran Khan's leadership and his efforts to protect the interests of WAPDA workers.

Governor expresses sorrow
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of 10 lives in recent clashes.

The Governor extended his sympathies to the affected families and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured. Governor Kundi instructed the police and district administration to play an effective role in stopping the clashes.

He emphasized the need for immediate measures by the police and district administration to ensure law and order.

"Violent incidents pose a threat to peace," said Governor Kundi. He stressed that land disputes should be resolved through mutual consultation and peaceful means.

"No one should be allowed to take the law into their own hands," he added.

Drug-free Peshawar drive from August

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the leadership of Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud, the third phase of drug-free Peshawar campaign will be started from the first week of August, for which a formal strategy has been decided and necessary instructions have been issued to the district administration Peshawar and the social welfare department.

Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Captain Retired Sarmad Salim, District Officer Social Welfare Noor Muhammad, Excise Department, Anti-Narcotics Department and administrators of private rehabilitation centers participated in

the meeting to make Peshawar completely free from drug addicts.

The operation will be carried out from the first week of August. Under the operation strategy, more than 2,000 drug addicts on the streets of Peshawar will be taken into custody and transferred to rehabilitation centers. will be done so that the city can be completely clean from drug addicts for which capacity has been created in private rehabilitation centers according to the number will be handed over to their families, along with this, an operation will be conducted against the professional assailants and according to the information obtained from various sources, the professional assailants will be taken into

custody and handed over to the Social Welfare Department, where they will be trained in various skills. By teaching them, they will be made useful citizens of the society. The young delinquent children will be transferred to the welfare institution Zamang Kor, where free accommodation, education and training have been arranged for them.

The campaign for rehabilitation of the drug addicts has received great national and international recognition and the initiative has been widely appreciated, and provided a great opportunity to the poor people addicted to the scourge of drug addiction to lead a new and prosperous life.

VC Agri University asks CM to release funds

PESHAWAR (APP): The Vice Chancellor of Agriculture University Peshawar Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht Friday sent a letter to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur for payment of salaries and the University is suffering from severe financial crisis.

In his letter, the Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht said that the university has had no money to pay the employees for the last

two months. In this connection, Vice Chancellor of Agriculture University Dr. Jahan Bakht has written a letter to Chief Minister KP Ali Amin to release funds for payment of salaries.

The remaining Rs 200 million funds should be given for the payment of June salaries of university employees, the letter said.

On June 4, a meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister regarding the financial constraints

of the universities and the meeting was attended by the Chief Education Minister and Finance Advisor, the letter said.

Financial crisis of universities, May and June salaries and pensions of employees were discussed in the meeting wherein the Chief Minister had approved the release of funds for the payment of salaries and pensions of Agricultural University employees, VC wrote in his letter informing the Chief Minister KP.



PESHAWAR: Members of the Salaried Class Alliance protesting against the government for imposing taxes. — INP Photo

Main accused in Badaber tragedy handed over to police on remand

PESHAWAR (APP): The main accused arrested in Badber tragedy appeared in ATC Court Judge Usman Bashir and the court handed over the accused to the police on a five-day physical remand here on Friday.

The accused was produced before ATC Judge Usman Bashir and given the remand of the main accused of the Badaber tragedy. The accused identified as Yar-ul-Rehman, who is allegedly involved in killing 8 people on June 25, the investigating officer told media men here outside the court.

The suspect has confessed to killing 8 people before the Police, the investigating officer disclosed. He said that 6 suspects have already been arrested in the Badaber tragedy case and three accused are in jail on 14-day physical remand. He said that three accused have been handed over to the police on 5-day physical remand by the court.

He said that three accused have been handed over to the police on 5-day physical remand by the court.

Saylani Trust opens new branch in Peshawar for free meal distribution

PESHAWAR (APP): Saylani Welfare Trust, a charity organization helping needy people in different parts of the country, has opened its new branch on Friday for distribution of free meal among needy people in provincial metropolis, Peshawar.

The inauguration of new office of Saylani was jointly performed by Afan Aziz, a prominent industrialist of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and head of Aziz Jan Welfare Trust, and Shafiq Miadad, Trustee Member Saylani Trust Faisalabad city.

Both Afan Aziz and Shafiq Miadad distributed lunch among hundreds of need people gathered outside the new office

of Saylani at Saddar area of Peshawar. Speaking on the occasion, Afan Aziz said Saylani Welfare Trust is doing a remarkable service by providing free meal to thousands of people in the country at two times on daily basis.

Apart from free meal, the charity organization is also providing free Information Technology (IT) training to thousands of students in different cities of the country.

The approach of imparting educational, especially IT, learning to country's youth is a ray of hope for overcoming the crisis being faced by our country, Afan expressed the hope.

He urged people those

who can afford to come forward and contribute in this noble cause of providing free education to country's youth, enabling them to stand on their own feet and contribute in brining stability in the country.

Shafiq Miadad in his speech informed about the services of Saylani Trust in providing vocational training in Faisalabad to both male and female with the objective of making people economically empowered. This milestone marks a significant step in Saylani's ongoing commitment to serve and uplift the underprivileged communities in the country, Shafiq added.

It merits a mention here that the Karachi based trust

has joined hands with Aziz Jan Trust of Senator Mohsin Aziz in Peshawar and imparted modern information technology skills to around three thousand students on free of cost basis.

In coming month, new batch of around 1200 to 1400 students will be selected for provision of skill based IT training.

Afan Aziz also disclosed that both Saylani and Aziz Jan Welfare Trust will soon open IT training institutes in three major cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Mardan, Charsadda and Abbottabad to provide opportunity to students of these region to gain benefit from this free IT courses.

Political Harmony: A bedrock for strengthening democracy

PESHAWAR (APP): Democracy, commonly heralded as the best form of government, thrives on expression of the people's will through their elected representatives. But, this journey sometimes becomes tumultuous amidst populism, extra constitutional measures and upheavals.

In many countries this system suffered a severe blow due to political engineering, venomous uprising and unconstitutional acts even by those always propagating democracy and the populist leaders as we recently witnessed in our country.

When the political players enter a deadlock due to their arrogance and haughtiness and close the doors for negotiation, strictly sticking to their stance, the concept of political harmony and understanding each other's viewpoint fades away.

These uncalled for interruptions leave deep scars on the political landscape besides fostering an environment where religious extremism, terrorism and societal and political intolerance creeps in, marring any country's economic and democratic progress very badly.

"The fractured governance structure, built on numerous fault lines, often becomes a catalyst for these extra constitutional steps," said Professor Dr A.H.Hilali, former Chairman Political Science Department, University of Peshawar. "Corruption, mismanagement, nepotism and jobbery often weaken a democratic system and rule of law. Moreover, locking horns by different political forces paves way for extra constitutional steps by non-democratic forces."

Most recently, the political temperature in the country and

stiffness of rival forces not to sit on table for resolving contentious issues has heightened self-centered politicking.

"Although we have a glaring example of creating Pakistan through a democratic struggle wherein Quaid-i-Azam repeatedly negotiated with other leaders, the formula for division of British India, yet some of our leaders are still too far from such wisdom and approach and difficult to be dealt with," Hilali said.

He feared that a permanent political divide with no channels of communication would further retard democratic systems and if the trend of blame games, accusations and hooliganism continues it would lay inconceivable negative effect on democracy and state institutions.

As in democracy today's rivals are friends of tomorrow, therefore, revisiting their stance by political leaders

always brings out some solution to stalemates and deadlocks. But, most of time we see these leaders negating one and other in the name of party policy or political affiliation.

"The PTI founder has taken a harsh stance for not talking to any political party or government for resolution of political issues and his party is mainly restricted to social media statements," remarked Ikhtair Wali Khan, the PMLN KP Spokesman. "Anybody thinking that the whole nation was standing behind him, is a misperception and nobody can impose his will on others on this basis."

He said a malicious onslaught to push back the political forces as being done by PTI through malicious propaganda, rather spoils opportunities for negotiations and harmony. "When the parties have vendetta against sister political forces

and allegedly get involved in May 9 type vandalism, attacking PTV and parliament buildings and continuously involved in mud-slinging and hurling baseless allegations, they leave minimal space for other parties to negotiate with them."

On the other hand Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf level allegations of rigging the elections at the same time forgetting the situation in 2018. If rival forces charge each other with the same kind of allegations, what can be the way out for reconciliation and harmony.

But, the saner elements of society like Dr Hilali see political harmony as the only panacea to nation's sufferings. "It is very important for our country as it was passing through a difficult time on geopolitical fronts and there is a need for broader national unity to steer the country out of turmoil."

He strongly advocated fostering a culture of dialogue and tolerance among political forces, ensuring that differing viewpoints coexist within the democratic framework and political parties for mutual as well as benefits for our people. Therefore, it is high time for all political and other constitutional organs of the state to seek a broader harmony to promote good governance and strengthen democratic institutions to pave way for the coming generation to prosper and live in peace.

Moreover, in a situation when the country is encountering terrorism and extremism and financial crunch, political harmony is not just a desirable ideal but a fundamental necessity for the welfare of people, rule of law and supremacy of parliament.

The understandings reached previously like Charter of Democracy by

PML-N and PPPP need to be reviewed making them more inclusive and acceptable to all forces. In put by other state organs can also be included in framing any new charter wherein all forces join hands for fighting out challenges the country is facing presently.

Everybody must understand that people are the ultimate sufferer due to their willful thinking and policies. Therefore, they should forget personal vindictiveness and arrogance for the welfare of poor masses, being crushed by uncontrolled price hike, political uncertainty and in-fighting.

Moreover, any situation where our own political forces fail to stand united for supreme national interests opens doors for external forces to interference and move forward their nefarious agenda of de-stabilizing our country.



PESHAWAR: A shopkeeper displaying handmade traditional decoration items at his shop.



In brief

Four killed in road mishap

HYDERABAD (INP): At least four people were killed in a collision between a passenger bus and trailer on the Karachi-Hyderabad M9 motorway. According to rescue sources, the incident occurred near the Loni Kot area, where the bus and trailer crashed into each other, resulting in the deaths of 4 people besides injuring several others. Upon being informed, authorities reached the spot and transported the injured to the Noori Abadi Trauma Center for treatment. Police reports indicated that the accident was caused by the bus driver falling asleep at the wheel. Following the collision, the trailer overturned on the road, causing disruption to traffic flow. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah while taking notice of the Nooriabad road accident and loss of lives had directed to provide medical treatment to injured persons in the accident. Earlier this month, at least six labourers had been killed in an accident between a mini truck and a trailer on M9 Motorway. The incident, which also injured four persons, happened near Lunikot in Jamshoro district. The deceased persons, identified as 28-year-old Nanji Thakur, 30-year-old Imdad Hussain Khoso, 28-year-old Amerji Kacchi, 35-year-old Ramesh Kacchi, Jetan Thakur and Ramesh Thakur, belonged to Khuwaja stop area of Tando Allahyar district.

Anisa, Nashra defend thesis F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Miss Anisa, MPhil Scholar in Department of Pharmacy, University of Malakand has successfully defended her MPhil thesis under the supervision of Dr. Mehreen Ghias, Lecturer in Department of Pharmacy and Co-supervision of Dr Muhammad Shoaib, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacy, UoM. The External Examiner was Dr. Haroon Badshah, Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacy, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan. The Chairman, Department of Pharmacy, UoM Prof Dr Munasib Khan and Faculty Members congratulated the MPhil Scholar & Research Supervisors in this regard. Likewise, MPhil scholar Nashra Azad also successfully defended her thesis. Ms. Nashera Azad, MPhil Scholar in Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand has successfully defended her MPhil thesis under the supervision of Dr. Faiz Ali, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand. The external examiner was Professor Dr. Nasrullah Shah of Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Chairman Department of Chemistry UoM Professor Dr. Sultan Alam Kakakhel and faculty members congratulated the MPhil Scholar and Research Supervisor in this regard.

Student brutally beaten

FAISALABAD (INP): In yet another unfortunate incident of corporal punishment, a video of a madrasa teacher brutally beating his student has gone viral, causing uproar on social media. The incident took place in Faisalabad's Thikriwala area, with the police filing a first information report (FIR) on the complaint of the boy's father, Rashid, it emerged on Friday. The case was lodged under Sections 328A (exposure and abandonment of child under twelve years by parent or person having care of it) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).



QUETTA: A view of an open manhole may cause any in incident at Bacha Khan Chowk, needs attention of authorities' concerned.

Bannu Passon demands accepted by committee

F.P. Report

BANNU: All demands of Bannu Pasoon were accepted in the Apex Committee to ensure public peace. Once again, announcements have been made in markets and mosques to gather citizens in the number of lakhs of people, officers and officials of TMA Bannu inspected the meeting place and reviewed the arrangements.

Along with this, orders have been issued regarding the national meeting and the holidays of all the employees and officers have been canceled for today. Rashid, Chief of Bannu Qaumi Mahaz Pir Syed Qaiser Abbas Shah, Malik Ashoor Khan Durrani from Aqwm Surani, Malik Khalid Riaz Khan, former Provincial Minister Syed Hamid Shah, former Tehsil Nazim Engineer Malik Ehsan Khan, Taimur Baz Khan Advocate, Aizazullah Haqqani including Leaders of various organizations and nations of Bannu participated and addressed, a protest demonstration for peace was also held in Bannu Township Chowk by Ahmed Zai, Minister of Nations, in which, Halimzada Wazir, Sufyan Afghani, Faheem Azad Wazir Advocate, Naz Ali Khan Wazir, Malik Sohrab Khan Wazir, Hashmatullah Khan Wazir, Saud Ehsan Fida Wazir and others announced a complete strike in Dumail Tehsil while declaring their full support for the Aman Dharna.

A wheel jam strike has been announced. It has been announced that people should bring white flags on the agenda of restoring peace. Millions of people are expected to participate in today's peace rally. It is looking at all the issues while the committee members consisting of former Senator Baz Muhammad Khan, Professor Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Provincial Minister Malik Pakhtun Yar Khan, MPA Adnan Khan and Nasir Khan were sued in the

Apex Committee meeting. who presented the demands related to peace on behalf of the people of Bannu and all the demands were accepted in the meeting of the Apex Committee. Malik Liaqat Ali Khan, the former candidate of the provincial assembly from North Waziristan, also came in the form of a convoy with white flags.

He said that during the operation Zarb-e-Azb, the people of Bannu have given hospitality to the Waziristan brothers and sisters in the difficult time, we can never forget and we will support Bannu when the difficult time comes. Pir Syed Qaiser Abbas Shah told the media that Bannu people will once again leave their homes in millions under the agenda of restoring peace and will participate in the Bannu Aman Qaumi rally with the peace flag and today's protest Aman Qaumi. The meeting will play an important role in restoring the peace of the entire province.

United Workers Union announces strike

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Tehsil Municipal Administration issued a strike schedule for non-payment of funds and salaries of Takhtbhai Employees. According to the details, an emergency meeting of United Municipal Workers Union was held in TMA Takhtbhai under the chairmanship of President Sawar Khan Mohmand in which all the employees participated.

President Sawar Khan Mohmand approved the resolution against the financial condition of Tehsil Municipal Administration Takhtbhai, non-availability of funds, reduction of property tax from 2% to 1%, provision of service structure as soon as possible,

violence against municipal employees in Timargara and recommended to the provincial government to punish the government, eliminate the source of income of the local bodies, oppose the establishment of building control authority, because these are the assets of TM which is bent on liquidation. He said that local government employees are the backbone of the government's service delivery.

However, the government does not release funds by reducing the sources of income due to which TMEs have become victims of financial crisis. He said that if the employees do not get all the arrears, salary and pension by August 04, then through a unanimous resolution, a strike schedule is

to be issued from (05) August.

In the first phase, the work will be done by tying black bands while after (10) August, all municipal services will be stopped and strike will be held in front of the gate. The meeting was attended by Khan

President/Provincial Chairman, Former President Wazir Zada Amjad, Former General Secretary Muhammad Ikram, Usman Ali Nashad, Laeeq Syed Chairman Musa Gul Senior Vice President, Jahanzeb Vice President, Zakirullah Office Secretary Zafar Khan Finance Secretary, Sardar Dawood Press Secretary, Salman, and Shaukat Hayat also spoke.

Politicians united against lawlessness in Waziristan

F.P. Report

WANA: United Political Peace Pasoon organized a rally and later a gathering against lawlessness, extortion, and target killings in the area. Thousands of people participated. During the rally and gathering, there was a complete shutter down in Wana bazaar, and the main internal road was closed for all traffic by the police. Despite this, a large number of people attended the rally and gathering on foot.

The event was attended by representatives of all

political parties, including Luqman Khan, Asad Bahir, Farmanullah, Khial Muhammad, Abdul Rehman Ganga, Amanullah, Kashif Khan, former federal minister Ghalib Khan, Maulana Abdullah Nadeem, former MNA Ali Wazir, MNA Zubair Khan, and Ayaz Wazir addressed the rally. They stated that maintaining peace is the responsibility of the state, and state institutions must fulfill their duties.

The prevalence of target killings, extortion, and lawlessness indicates that either the state institutions

are completely failing to perform their services or are supporting those creating such conditions. The participants emphasized that state institutions should correct their course and fulfill their constitutional responsibilities within the framework of Pakistan's constitution and laws.

The speakers declared that they are peaceful people who do not believe in violence, but the public show of strength today demonstrated that they want peace in the area and demand it from state institutions.

Smuggling goods seized in Torkham F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Large quantities of smuggled cigarettes, Indian Medicines, and Paan(Betels) were recovered from a warehouse in a raid conducted in Bacha Mena village of Torkham on Thursday night.

As per Deputy Commissioner, Khyber on Thursday night a special team led by Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Adnan Mumtaz Khattak with assistance of Frontier Corp (North) raided the godown and recovered illegally stored 12000 packets of smuggled cigarettes.

Approximately 272 packets of illicit Indian Medicines, Paan and other banned items were also seized in the raid, he added. The prohibited commodities were intended to shift to Peshawar and down towns, the official added. The warehouse was sealed and the banned items were taken into legal custody for further legal formalities, he said. Joint efforts have been formulated and enhanced to discourage smuggling of sugar, fertilizer and other unlawful trade at the Pak-Afghan sharing border, Torkham.

Woman raped in front of husband F.P. Report

HAFIZ-ABAD: Women raped in front of her husband on Sukheki-Marh Blochan Road. A case has been registered against unknown rapists. District Police Officer Hafizabad suspended concerned SHO of Sukheki police station due to his failure in enforcement of laws.

According to FIR, Shahid Ali resident of Chiniot was on its way to home from village Dingi Jappa along with his wife and two-year-old daughter on motorcycle. When he reached near Bambo field on the way on Sukheki-Marh Blochan Road, three unknown armed dacoits stop them on gun point.

Two accused made hostage Shahid Ali and his innocent daughter on gunpoint while third accused took his wife to Bambo field and raped her forcibly. Accused threatened Shahid Ali and his wife for dangerous consequences in case of informing police or any other.

After committing offence, the accused remained stand there and allowed to Shahid Ali to carry his wife. Sukheki Police registered a case against unidentified accused on the report of Shahid Ali and started investigation. It was stated that Sukheki and Sangla Hill police remained engage to determine limit of police station and lost many hours instead of following the accused.

Meanwhile, DPO Hafizabad has suspended SHO Sukheki Luqman Chatha after this dacoity incident. On the other hand, police said that place of crime occurrence is situated in police station Sangla Hill district Nankana Sahib.

SBBMU signs MOU with SRSO F.P. Report

LARKANA: Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SBBMU) Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah and Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Dittal Kalhoro signed joint memorandum of understanding emphasizing on joint research initiatives between the two institutes, apart from rural development, women empowerment, promoting regional entrepreneurship.

The memorandum of understanding ceremony held at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Medical University, Larkana. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nusrat Shah said that we are grateful to the delegation of the SRSO organization, which these types of agreements are very important to promote regional development, while on the other hand, the chief executive of the SRSO organization.

Pakistan Customs destroyed smuggled goods, tobacco items

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Pakistan Customs destroyed thousands of tons of illegal smuggled items including drugs, cigarettes, tobacco, china salt worth millions of rupees captured by Kohat and D I Khan Zone, near Kohat Tunnel, on Friday.

In this regard, a special event was held near Kohat Tunnel which besides the Chief Collector Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Jamil Nasir, Collector Customs DI Khan Kohat Zone Zia ul Shams and Commander Station Headquarters Kohat Brigadier Moinuddin was also attended by the DPO Kohat Umar Khan, Additional Collector Customs, DI Khan Halima Qasim, Assistant Collector Customs Kohat Farwa Batul and Customs and Police officers from across the province.

On this occasion, Chief Collector Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Jamil Nasir said that the Customs Department is doing a lot of work to prevent smuggling on Pak-Afghan borders and for this purpose the Customs Department is fully alert. Commander Station Headquarters Kohat Brigadier Moinuddin said that the Pakistan Army is providing full support to other law enforcement

agencies and departments against the elements involved in any kind of illegal activities including smuggling so that this scourge can be eradicated from the country.

Asphalt work started: With the efforts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Aftab Alam Afridi advocate and MNA Shehryar Afridi, Asphalt work on the Main Sheikhan/ KDA Link Road has been resumed after a long time and the asphalt work was almost completed.

The elders of Sheikhan expressed their happiness on the start of asphalt work on road and thanked the Law Minister Aftab Alam Afridi and Shahryar Afridi MNA. They expressed the hope that the developmental works will get momentum and acceleration during the tenure of the current elected representatives. They hoped that People's expectations will be met in the present era.

The provincial Minister said, if Allah Almighty wishes, most of the developmental works will be done on equal basis in his entire constituency with mutual consultations of the people. He furthered that he will try his level best to remove all the past deprivation of the people on priority basis.

30 suspects arrested in targeted search operation: The Kohat Police in the targeted search and strike operation in different areas of Kohat city have arrested 30 suspects including a wanted criminal here on Friday, a spokesman of the Kohat Police said.

The spokesman revealed that Kohat Police in a targeted search and strike operation succeeded in arresting 30 suspects including a wanted criminal. During the operation, 4 pistols, 3 chargers, dozens of cartridges and 950 grams of hashish were recovered from the possession of the arrested persons.

More than 50 targeted houses were searched in the search operation led by DSP City Hafeez Yousafzai and SHO City Irfan Afridi. In the search and strike operation, details of people living in rented houses were also checked.

The search operation was conducted in densely populated areas within the city and the persons detained in the search and strike operation were transferred to the city police station for investigation. Cases have been registered in the city police station against the arrested accused.

Trade and Solar Expo to boost businesses: MCCI

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: The President Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (MCCI) Zahir Shah said that Expo time is a major need in Mardan, MCCI is the second largest chamber in the province. "Trade and Solar Expo" will play an important role in Mardan traders and manufacturers to introduce their products to other districts and traders from other districts of the country to introduce their products.

These views were expressed by the President of MCCI Zahir Shah while giving a briefing to the Provincial Minister for Food Muhammad Zahir Shah Toru along with other members of the Provincial Assembly Ehtisham Ali Advocate, Iftikhar Ali, Abdul Salam Afridi, Tufail Anjum, Zarshad Khan. He welcomed all the guests on their arrival at the Chamber.

President MCCI while giving a detailed briefing to

Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru and other provincial assembly members regarding Trade and Solar Expo said that the main purpose of this event is to promote Mardan's locally produced products, solar and apart from related products, various stalls, meetings, workshops on e-commerce and information technology will be organized and many segments will be organized.

President of MCCI Zahir Shah said that Mardan Chamber has been active for a long time to solve the problems of traders and give them a legitimate place and Mardan Trade and Solar Expo is also the result of these efforts. He said that since this event is being organized to promote the product of Mardan, we demand the government to give us full support in making this event successful.

Provincial Food Minister Muhammad Zahir Shah Toru and others appreciated the efforts of Mardan Chamber which

has organized a huge event which will help in introducing the products of this region at the national level. He said that Thanks to these efforts and efforts, Mardan Chamber is becoming one of the most successful chambers in the country, all the credit goes to President MCCI Zahir Shah.

The provincial food minister said that the provincial government institutions will play their full role in making the event of the chamber a success. In addition, the provincial food minister announced one lakh rupees for organizing the event. In addition, the installation of solar system in the chamber. From the Chamber's proposal for small industries of Mardan, assurance was also given for the establishment of an industrial estate and the provision of funds for the completion of the incomplete floor of the chamber, for which President Zahir Shah of Mardan Chamber thanked the guests.

Tobacco companies exploiting growers

F.P. Report

BUNER: A high level meeting held to resolve the dispute between tobacco growers and tobacco companies as the companies didn't complying with the concerned laws in the procurement process, on Friday.

In the meeting, ADC Relief Syed Akram Shah, Pakistan Tobacco Board Officers Waqar Gilani and Owais Khan Tobacco Companies, PTC, Khyber, Watan, International, Managers, president Anjumani Kashtkaran Zahir Shah Khan, Chamla President Biladullah Khan, President of Anjuman Kashtakaran Tobacco Hameed ur Rehman, general Secretary, Anwar Sher Khan and Anjuman Kashtakaran and Anjuman Kashtakaran tobacco farmers participated in large numbers.

In the meeting, the Tobacco Board officers and the ADC discussed the compensation of the farmers for the loss of tobacco crops due to hail storm, the loan relief of the affected tobacco farmers for drugs and fertilizers, the review of the canceled agreements of the tobacco farmers and the restoration of the government fixed price per kilogram tobacco.

The tobacco board of tobacco companies decided to set the price at Rs 919.63 per kg of tobacco as fixed by the government. But Anjuman Kashtakaran President Zahir Shah Khan

Chamla range President Biladullah Khan and other colleagues did not agree with the official price per kg, while Anjuman Kashtakaran Tobacco President Hameed ur Rehman agreed upon the decisions.

In the meeting, the Anjuman e Kashtkaran objected to the existing price of tobacco per kg of 919.63 instead demanded to set this price at 948 rupees per kg. But Tobacco Board's Waqar Gilani also justified the companies' stand and argued that the rates were implemented with the approval of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister. In the meeting, the president of Anjuman Kashtakaran, Zahir Shah Khan, was not ready to agree to the official price per kg of tobacco and announced to close the depo and not to sell tobacco to companies. He also announced protest demonstration with consultation of the farmers.

However, Anjuman Kashtakaran Tobacco President Hameed ur Rehman, general secretary Anwar Sher Khan did not support the announcement of the President of Anjuman Kashtakaran Tobacco. They argued .If farmers do not sell the tobacco, they have no warehouses to store and they want to meet the expenses and debts by selling the tobacco and they will sell the tobacco and will not allow the depo to be closed.

After the meeting, the President of Anjuman Kashtakaran, Zahir Shah Khan and Biladullah Khan, while talking to the media, expressed their determination to stick to their position and announced to close the depo not to sell tobacco and to start the protest. On the other hand, Hameed ur Rahman, president of Anjuman Kashtakaran Tobacco, called it in favor of the farmers to stick to their position and sell tobacco and keep the depo open and supported to implement it and get immediate income from the only cash craft of tobacco.

Uncle, nephew shot dead

MIRPURKHAS (INP): An uncle and his nephew were shot dead by armed dacoits during a robbery attempt in the limits of Kot Ghulam Muhammad police station early Friday.

According to the police, a group of six unknown armed men in a Vigo vehicle entered the house of a brick kiln owner. When the owner, Haji Wakeel Khan (64) and his nephew, Niamat Khan (34) both tried to resist the robbery, the alleged bandits opened fire, killing them.

The police launched a search operation and were able to arrest three of the dacoits along with the Vigo vehicle and the weapons used in the crime.



UN chief calls for action to stem ‘extreme heat epidemic’

NEW YORK (AFP): The head of the United Nations has called on countries to take action to address the effects of "crippling heat", as the world experiences record-high temperatures that have put vulnerable communities at risk. Speaking to reporters, Antonio Guterres said billions of people around the globe are experiencing "an extreme heat epidemic" fuelled by climate change.

"Extreme heat is increasingly tearing through economies, widening inequalities, undermining the Sustainable Development Goals, and killing people," the UN secretary-general said. "We know what is driving it: fossil fuel-charged, human-induced climate change. And we know it's going to get worse; extreme heat is the new abnormal." Guterres's warning comes a day after the European Union's climate monitor said the world had experienced its hottest day on record this week.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said that the global average surface air temperature on July 22 rose to 17.15 degrees Celsius (62.9 degrees Fahrenheit) - or 0.06 degrees Celsius higher than the record set just a day earlier. Every month since June 2023 has now ranked as the planet's warmest since records began in 1940, compared with the corresponding month in previous years, according to C3S. "This is exactly what climate science told us would happen if the world continued burning coal, oil and gas," Joyce Kimutai, a climate scientist from Imperial College London, told the AFP news agency about this week's



findings. "And it will continue getting hotter until we stop burning fossil fuels and reach net zero emissions."

The record had last been set for four consecutive days in early July 2023. Before that, the hottest day was in August 2016. Millions of people around the world have experienced record-high temperatures in recent weeks, including across the Middle East, Africa and Asia, where the crisis has exacerbated social inequalities. More than 70 percent of the global workforce - some 2.4 billion people - are now at high risk of extreme heat, according to a report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) published. In Africa, nearly 93 percent of the workforce is exposed to excessive heat, and 84 percent of the Arab states' workforces, the report

found. Excessive heat has been blamed for causing almost 23 million workplace injuries worldwide, and some 19,000 deaths annually. Experts also have warned that as the effects of climate change intensify, weather patterns are becoming more extreme with droughts, super-charged hurricanes, floods and wildfires affecting much of the globe. During news conference, Guterres said countries must reduce their reliance on fossil fuels, which worsens the climate crisis.

"Leaders across the board must wake up and step up - and that means governments, especially G20 countries," the UN chief said. "The leadership of those with the greatest capabilities and capacities is essential. Countries must phase out fossil fuels fast and fairly."

Court in Brazil halts rainforest highway paving

BRASILIA (AP): In an unusual action, a Brazilian federal court halted progress on a project to pave a dirt highway that connects the major city of Manaus to populous regions, ruling it likely will contribute to climate change. The courtSouth Africa's DA party takes ANC to court

CAPE TOWN (AP): South Africa's Democratic Alliance took the African National Congress, the party it co-governs the country with, to court over a preelection speech in May given by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

It's an early sign of friction between the new coalition partners. The court papers were submitted to the Electoral Court by the DA in May before it entered into a coalition with the ANC, but it decided to still go ahead with the case. The DA asked the court to deduct 1% of the vote received by the ANC in the May 29 national election and fine Ramaphosa, the ANC leader, \$10,900 and his party \$5,450, over what it argues was a presidential address that was used for election campaigning and amounted to an abuse of office.

The ANC responded by calling the DA's legal action "frivolous and unwarranted" and said the president was following the constitution when he made the speech. Ramaphosa gave the speech three days before the election in his capacity as head of state, but used parts of it to highlight what he said were ANC successes during its 30-year rule as South Africa's governing party. The DA said that election rules don't allow him to engage in party politics and campaign for the ANC when he speaks as the president. The ANC lost its long-held majority in the historic election when it received just 40% of the vote. That forced it to create a coalition government for the first time to run Africa's most industrialized country. The DA - the second biggest party with 21% of the vote - is one of seven parties represented in Ramaphosa's Cabinet despite previously being the ANC's fiercest critic.

The coalition, referred to as a "government of national unity," created a new political landscape for South Africa after the ANC had governed since the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule in 1994. The election was the first time in South Africa's young democracy that more people voted for other parties, stripping the organization once led by Nelson Mandela of its dominance. The left-leaning ANC and the centrist DA are the key parties in the coalition but them working together was seen as unlikely given their stark ideological differences and history of opposition to each other. They have largely managed to project a sense of unity over the last month since the coalition was agreed.

Climate activists block runways

FRANFURT: Germany's largest airport in Frankfurt was forced to suspend arrivals and departures after a protest by climate activists who blocked runways by glueing themselves to the tarmac. Frankfurt airport, one of the country's busiest airports and a major international hub, advised passengers to check the status of their flights due to the "ongoing demonstration".

While operations resumed and all four runways were operational a few hours later, an airport spokesperson said that about 140 flights had been cancelled of 1,400 planned. The climate activist group Letzte Generation (The Last Generation), which orchestrated the action, said in a statement that six of its members used piners to cut openings in the airport wire fence before making their way "by foot, with bicycles and skateboards to different points around the runways".

Protesters also held banners on the tarmac that read, "Oil kills". German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, whose ministry wants to punish unauthorised airfield access with up to two years in prison, called the demonstration "dangerous, dumb and criminal". "These acts must be punished more severely. — Aljazeera

Bangladesh minister defends govt response to protests

DHAKA: Bangladesh's minister of state for information and broadcasting has defended the government's handling of mass protests, as United Nations experts called for an independent investigation into the government's deadly crackdown on demonstrators.

In an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera, Mohammad Arafat said the country's security forces had done everything "to bring back the peace" amid the student protests. He accused "third-party" actors, including "extremists and terrorists", of fuelling the unrest.

"We're not referring to the students [as] the terrorists and anarchists. It is the third party, those who intruded into this movement and started doing all this," Arafat said on Talk to Al Jazeera. "We tried our best to de-escalate the tension," he said, adding that "some people are trying to add fuel to the fire, are trying to create a situation where they can take advantage ... and topple the government".

Thousands of Bangladeshi students took to the streets earlier this month to demand reforms to the South Asian country's quota system, which allocates 30 percent of government jobs to the descendants of veterans who fought for Bangladesh in the 1971 war. More than 150 student protesters have been killed and thousands have been arrested in the crackdown on the demonstrations, according to local media, fuelling tensions across the nation of more than 170 million people.

The protests turned violent on July 15 after members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) - Arafat - the minister -

the student wing of the country's ruling party - allegedly attacked the protesters. Police then cracked down on the demonstrations and imposed a curfew. Students were asked to vacate universities, which were shut down; businesses were shuttered, and internet access was disrupted nationwide. The Bangladeshi government has come under international scrutiny for its handling of the protests. United Nations Human Rights Chief Volker Turk called for "an impartial, independent and transparent investigation into all alleged human rights violations" that occurred during the crackdown. "We understand that many people were subjected to violent attacks by groups reportedly affiliated with the Government, and no effort was made to protect them," Turk said.

In a separate statement, a group of UN experts also called for an independent probe into what they described as the government's "violent crackdown on protesters". "The government is blaming other people, others are blaming the government; we need a full impartial investigation," one of the experts, Irene Khan, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinion, told Al Jazeera. "But since there is no trust in the government, it has to be done with the international community," Khan said. "We are calling on the government to invite the UN to conduct such an investigation to find out what went wrong, to take responsibility, and to hold the perpetrators to account." In his interview with Talk to Al Jazeera, Arafat - the minister -

denounced the protesters for storming the headquarters of state broadcaster

Bangladesh Television (BTV) in the capital, Dhaka. He said policemen guarding the building were outnumbered, and "because they were not permitted to open fire ... those miscreants went inside the BTV, literally invaded, and set fire and started vandalising and destroying all the assets". Arafat said the government has yet to determine an official death toll from the unrest.

"When it comes to the casualties, injuries, and deaths, we're not willing to discriminate between the police and general people, or the protesters, or the people from the supporters of the government," he said. The minister told Al Jazeera that an independent judicial committee would ensure a thorough investigation into what happened, "so that everyone responsible for any of these casualties can be brought to book."

Arafat also dismissed any calls for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign, adding she had only been "protecting the people". Protesters extended the suspension of their protests until Friday, but they were slated to meet to discuss whether they would extend the pause further. Among their key demands is a stipulation that Hasina must publicly apologise for the killings of students. They have also called on Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, and Law Minister Anisul Haque to resign from the cabinet and the party. — Aljazeera

Palestinian prisoners freed by Israel

GAZA: Eight Palestinian prisoners released by the Israeli military have said they were tortured and threatened in custody. Two women and six men were released from Ofer Prison in the occupied West Bank.

Among the prisoners, some of the men appeared to show signs of physical abuse and were grimacing in pain.

Reporting from Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary said the freed prisoners were "completely exhausted". "One of the females was unable to walk and was carried inside the emergency department on a stretcher." The prisoners were not arrested at the same time, she said, adding that one of the men, an aid truck driver, was detained at the Karem Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) crossing.

One woman was arrested after visiting the occupied West Bank with her child.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said it provided first aid to the prisoners who were released in front of the Kissufim military checkpoint and transferred them to the Al-Aqsa Hospital in central Gaza. "They all said they were tortured, they all said they were threatened. They all said they were deprived of medicine and clothes," Khoudary reported. "They were asked about Hamas members and Israeli captives in the Gaza Strip." Israel released dozens of Palestinians it detained earlier in July, including the director of al-Shifa Hospital, Muhammad Abu Salmiya, who said Palestinians were facing daily abuse in the prison. "Several inmates died in

interrogation centres and were deprived of food and medicine," Salmiya told a news conference after his release. "Cells are broken into and prisoners are beaten." Abu Salmiya was arrested amid claims by the Israeli military that Hamas was using al-Shifa Hospital as a base. He was freed after more than seven months in custody. The Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation reported in July that prisons were "full" as an increasing number of Palestinians were being arrested after the Hamas-led October 7 attack in southern Israel. The Palestine Prisoners Society and the Detainees and Ex-Detainees Commission also said that 9,800 Palestinians have been detained in the occupied West Bank since Israel's war on Gaza started. — Aljazeera

‘Proud to be a revolutionary’

VALENCIA, Venezuela: In the Venezuelan town of Los Guayos, Elsa Rojas sits proudly under a blue tent erected in a corner of the main square. A large poster hangs down from one corner of the awning. Another is draped over the white plastic table in front of her. Both bear the same moustachioed face: that of President Nicolas Maduro, styled in the colours of the Venezuelan flag.

Rojas meticulously reviews a list attached to her clipboard. All morning, she has asked passersby to pledge to vote for Maduro as he seeks a third term in Sunday's presidential elections. "I feel proud to be a revolutionary," she said, echoing the rhetoric of the Bolivarian Revolution, the socialist movement that Maduro has championed. "Maduro has given us so much."

But the 46-year-old mother of three, who works in local government, admits that rallying support for Maduro's United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) has been more challenging than in the past. She is herself part of a dwindling base of support. As Sunday's election approaches, Maduro has seen his grip on power weaken, as the oppo-

sition surges in the polls. Even once-loyal supporters have turned their backs on Maduro, openly embracing rival candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, a retired diplomat. One recent survey from the data firm Delphos and Andres Bello Catholic University found that more than 59 percent of voters polled supported Gonzalez, compared with 26.7 percent for Maduro. But Maduro and his allies are hoping that economic incentives - and the spectre of foreign influence in Venezuela's politics - will help draw voters to their side, though critics warn the incumbent is not above using repression to ensure his victory.

A former bus driver in the capital city of Caracas, Maduro was a longtime supporter of the late Hugo Chavez, Venezuela's hugely popular socialist president. The political movement Chavez forged even bears his name: Chavismo. Its acolytes are called "chavistas". In Chavez's government, Maduro worked his way up from being foreign minister to vice president. As Chavez succumbed to cancer in 2013, the ailing president tapped Maduro as the successor to his political movement. But since taking power, Maduro has presided

over an economic free fall as prices for oil - Venezuela's main export - plummeted. The economy shrank almost 80 percent between 2014 and 2021, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Spiralling inflation, meanwhile, helped spur a humanitarian crisis that led to shortages of food and medicine. An estimated 7.7 million people have since left the country - nearly a quarter of the population. On top of the economic woes, Maduro has also struggled to master the popularity of his predecessor. In the 2013 special election, he barely eked out a victory over an opposition candidate that Chavez had trounced just one year earlier.

Maduro's re-election in 2018, by contrast, was marked by record-low voter turnout and allegations of election fraud in his favour. Phil Gunson - a senior analyst with the Crisis Group, a nonprofit dedicated to conflict resolution - noted that Maduro has leaned heavily on his association with Chavez in his current campaign. "The government had been downplaying the socialism aspect during Maduro's campaigns: the colour red, the references to Chavez and the revolution," he said. — Aljazeera

Typhoon hits Chinese seaboard as authorities warn of flash floods

BEIJING: Typhoon Gaemi has reached southeastern China after churning across the Taiwan Strait. The typhoon has prompted warnings of swelling rivers, flash floods and waterlogging in cities and provinces that were hit by extreme rains several weeks ago. The third and most powerful typhoon to hit China's eastern seaboard this year made landfall in Fujian province after whipping Taiwan with gusts of up to 227 kilometres per hour (141 miles per hour), some of the strongest winds recorded in the Western Pacific Ocean. Before its arrival, 240,800 people in Fujian were evacuated.

Despite slightly weakening since its landfall in Fujian's Putian, a city of more than 3 million people, Gaemi and its giant storm bands are forecast to unleash intense rainfall in

at least 10 Chinese provinces in the coming days. The arrival of Gaemi has drawn comparisons with Typhoon Doksuri last year, which triggered historic flooding as far north as Beijing and caused nationwide losses of nearly \$30bn. Authorities said water levels in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River as well as the vast freshwater lakes of Poyang and Dongting in central China could rise, returning to dangerous levels seen in early July after intense summer rains.

Beijing cautioned that due to its high vapour content, Gaemi could lead to strong rainfall in the Chinese capital, about 2,000km (1,242 miles) north of Putian, even as the storm weakens into a tropical depression. Authorities warned that Gaemi's rains could cause flash floods

and waterlogging, particularly in parts of northern China, where the soil remains saturated after being lashed by a passing system of storms earlier this week. Gaemi had intensified seasonal rains earlier in the week in the Philippines, where the death toll climbed to 22 with at least three people missing, according to police. The Philippine coastguard reported that an oil tanker, MT Terra Nova, loaded with about 1.4 million litres (370,000 gallons) of industrial fuel oil, sank off Bataan province early and rescuers saved 15 of 16 crew members. In Taiwan, Gaemi killed three people, triggered flooding and sank a freighter after making landfall.

Some parts of southern Taiwan are expected to have recorded rainfall of 2,200mm (87 inches). The

storm cut power to about half a million households although most are now back online, utility Taipower said. Apart from the three fatalities, the typhoon in Taiwan injured 380 people, the government said. Taiwan's fire department said a Tanzania-flagged freighter with nine Myanmar nationals on board had sunk off the coast of the southern port city of Kaohsiung. Three of them have since been found alive on the shoreline, Taiwan's coastguard said. Taiwan television stations showed pictures of flooded streets in cities and counties across the island. Offices, schools and the financial markets closed for a second day. Trains were stopped until 3pm (07:00 GMT), and all domestic flights and 195 international flights were cancelled. — Aljazeera

Raging wildfire hits western Canada town of Jasper

TORONTO: A fast-moving wildfire has hit the town of Jasper in the Canadian Rockies, causing "significant" losses as firefighters work to hold back the flames. In a statement, Jasper National Park said firefighting crews were trying "to save as many structures as possible and to protect critical infrastructure".

Located about 370km (230 miles) west of Edmonton in the province of Alberta, the park and the town of Jasper, home to 4,700 residents, draw more than two million tourists annually. Thousands of people were evacuated from the area earlier this week as two blazes edged closer.

"As the pictures and videos circulating online show, significant loss has occurred within the townsite," Jasper National Park said in a post on X. In another update, the park said while the area received a "small amount of rain overnight" that helped slightly reduce fire activity, "it is not enough to have made a meaningful impact

to the overall wildfire situation, which remains out of control". "Due to the ongoing fire conditions and our focus on the response effort, it is impossible to share information about specific locations and the extent of damage at this time," it said. Alberta Premier Danielle Smith told reporters that authorities were seeing "potentially 30 percent to 50 percent structural damage" in Jasper, which would incur a "significant rebuild". The blaze is one of hundreds ravaging Alberta and the neighbouring province of British Columbia, fuelled by a weeks-long heatwave and surge in lightning strikes.

Officials said the flames in Jasper reached a height of 122 metres (400 feet) and moved at 15 metres (50 feet) a minute. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that his government had approved Alberta's request for federal assistance. "We're deploying [Canadian Armed Forces] resources, evacuations support, and more

emergency wildfire resources to the province immediately - and we're coordinating firefighting and airlift assistance. Alberta, we're with you," Trudeau wrote on X. Trudeau added later in the day that more than 400 firefighters from Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and South Africa were on their way to help fight the blazes in the province. Experts say the climate crisis has extended the Canadian wildfire season, which typically runs from late April until September or October, and increased lightning - a major cause of the blazes. Mike Flannigan, research chair for predictive services, emergency management and fire science at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia, told Al Jazeera last year that a warmer atmosphere also dries out fire fuels, such as the vegetation on forest floors. Canada saw its most intense fire season on record in 2023, with more than 6,600 wildfires burning 15 million hectares (37

million acres) across the country, an area roughly seven times the annual average.

Jasper's Mayor Richard Ireland told the Canadian public broadcaster CBC News that multiple structures were burning in the community and "it appears that the damage will be extensive". "This is simply, absolutely, our community's worst nightmare," Ireland said. "Residents watching from afar, [it's] far beyond nervousness. I think like all residents, I feel devastated, shattered, and absolutely helpless in the face of nature, which is just so powerful." One of the buildings destroyed by the fire was the Maligne Lodge hotel in the south of the town. "It's just so sad to know that so many families and people have lost not just their belongings but their livelihood and a beautiful park," owner Karyne Decore told CBC. There are 175 wildfires currently burning in Alberta, according to a provincial tracker, and more than 50 of them are out of control. — Aljazeera

Ethiopia landslides death toll rises to 257, could almost double: UN

NEW YORK: Deaths caused by landslides in Ethiopia have risen to 257, but the final death toll is expected to be 500, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The UN agency released the figures after the landslides in the mountainous Gofa zone in southern Ethiopia, the first triggered by heavy rains, the second engulfing those who had gathered to rescue people. The revised death toll is an increase of 28 on figures

provided by Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission.

Hundreds of people combed through red mud at the scene of the disaster in the Kencho Shacha locality, searching for survivors of the deadliest landslide recorded in Africa's second most populous country. "More than 15,000 affected people need to be evacuated," OCHA said. The figures included at least 1,320 children as well as 5,293 pregnant women and new mothers. The state Ethiopian

Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) reported that most of those killed were buried after they went to help the inhabitants of a house hit by an initial landslide.

"Those who rushed for live-saving work have perished in the disaster, including the locality's administrator, teachers, health professionals and agricultural professionals," EBC quoted local administrator Dagemawi Ayele as saying. The soil in southern Ethiopia has been saturated by seasonal rains, making the area more prone to landslides. Rains from April to early May caused flooding and mass displacement, according to OCHA.

It said in May that "floods impacted over 19,000 people in several zones, displacing over 1,000 and causing damage to livelihoods and infrastructure". The flooding and landslides occurred even as other parts of the country are facing severe drought, which has prompted traditional herding communities to explore alternative food production methods. — Aljazeera

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World War-III is closer than anyone dare admit

AS Joe Biden's presidency enters its lame-duck phase, America's adversaries are on an escalation course. On Wednesday, the US and Canada intercepted Russian Tu-95 and Chinese H-6 bombers in international airspace near Alaska. Concerningly, it was the first time Russian and Chinese jets were intercepted during a joint Arctic exercise. The possibility of Russia and China carrying out a provocation of this kind was always there. In May 2019, then US secretary of state Mike Pompeo blasted Russia's "illegitimate claims" in the Arctic and warned China against using its self-professed status as a near-Arctic power to muscle into the region. The Pentagon's 2024 Arctic security report, which was published just two days before this escalation, warned of enhanced Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic and Russia's potential to jam GPS satellites in the region.

But doubts about Biden's fitness to serve and perceptions of a leadership vacuum in the White House may be encouraging Russia and China to push the boundaries of US deterrence. And not just near Alaska, but in multiple theatres. Unchecked, it is in these kinds of circumstances that global conflicts can begin, by accident or design.

For Russia's conventional and hybrid threats to US allies in Europe are intensifying by the day. Hours before the Alaska stand-off, the Romanian Defence Ministry announced the discovery of Russian kamikaze drone fragments near the town of Plauru. This drone attack was a spill-over from Russia's assault on Ukraine's Izmil port on Odesa's Danube coast. In tandem with that announcement, French police arrested a 40-year-old Russian chef for conspiring with the FSB to destabilise the Paris Olympics.

Elsewhere, despite a shaky truce between China and the Philippines, Beijing's maritime boundary revisionism in the South China Sea remains a potent threat. China recently suspended arms control talks with the US over Washington's military support for Taiwan and continues to rapidly modernise its nuclear arsenal. Taiwan's record-setting Han Kuang war games this year, which test its preparations for a Chinese invasion, could reignite cross-strait brinkmanship.

All this shows the US has fundamentally failed to deter these parallel track forms of aggression and been equally ineffective in restricting Sino-Russian cooperation. During his April 2024 trip to Beijing, Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned of US punishments for China's continued support for Russian aggression in Ukraine. He highlighted China's supply of micro-electronics and machine tools that strengthen Russia's defence-industrial base and warned that sanctions on over 100 Chinese entities were just the tip of the iceberg.

But the US threats produced only superficial successes. While from January to June 2024, Russia-China bilateral trade increased by 1.8 per cent instead of the 26.3 per cent growth that occurred during the first half of 2023, and China's selective stalling of Russian transactions led to a reduction in Chinese exports to Russia, since then, Xi Jinping's economic advisor's trip to Moscow underlined that Russia-China economic cooperation has not been contained, with their strategic cooperation and manufacturing collaboration plans continuing at pace.

More worryingly, the Bering Sea drills, which forced this Alaska interception, are just the latest in a long string of provocative military exercises involving Russia and China. In mid-March, Russia, China, and Iran conducted maritime drills in the Gulf of Oman. During these exercises, Iran's Shahid Soleimani corvette brandished anti-ship cruise missiles that the US has historically found hard to intercept. China's recent Eagle Assault "anti-terrorism" training exercise, which was conducted with Russia's closest ally Belarus, simulated the capture of a Polish airport. A new military axis is coming together before our eyes and the US looks like a helpless bystander.

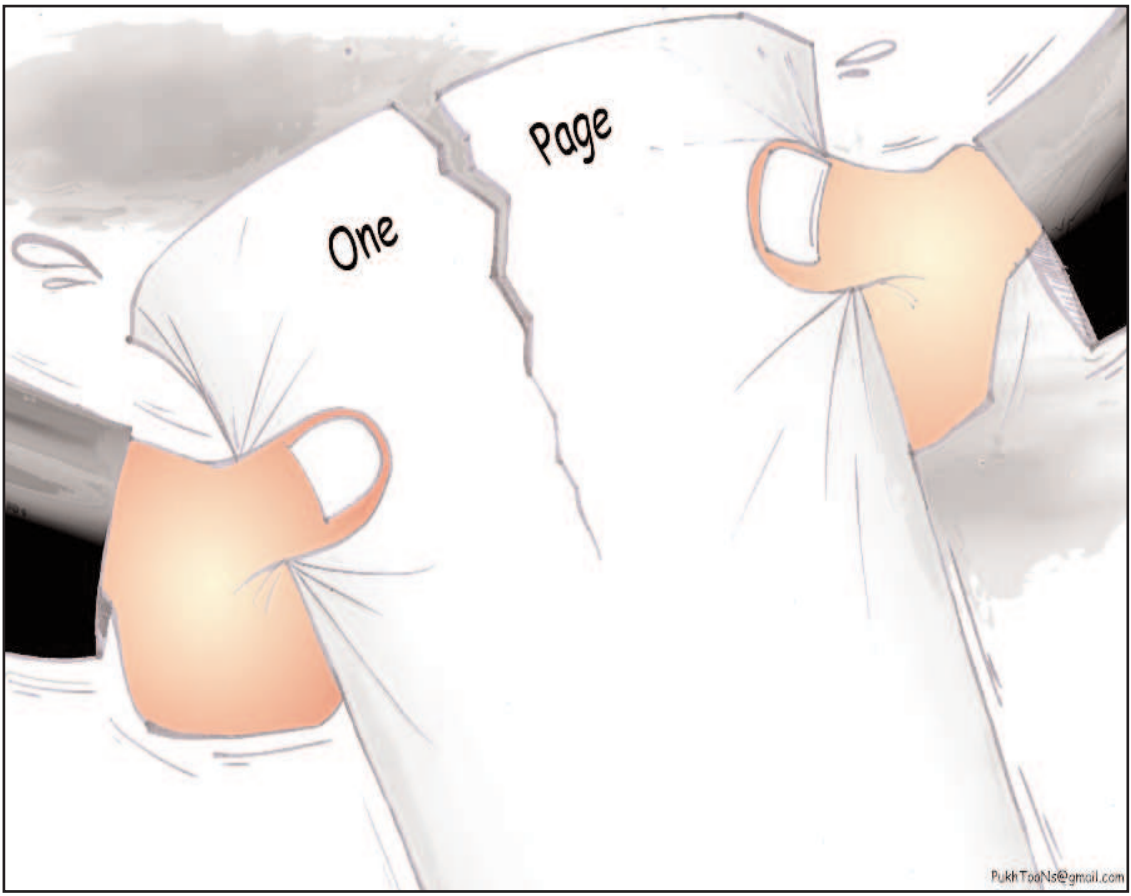
This passivity is more dangerous as Russia and China are on a war footing. Moscow's victory in the Donetsk battleground of Urozhaine and near-triumph in the Chasiv Yar logistical hub reveal that its offensive plans in Ukraine are not slowing down. Britain's new Chief of the General Staff Sir Roly Walker warned that, even if it loses in Ukraine, Russia "will come back to get their revenge". Meanwhile, China is stockpiling vast quantities of agricultural resources, such as corn, wheat, and soy, as well as oil, copper, and steel. This points to preparations for a trade war with the US or, perhaps, a hot war in the Pacific.

History provides clues as to where Russian and Chinese disrespect for US redlines might lead us. Germany's 1914 invasion of Belgium stemmed from its false confidence that Britain would not risk a world war over Belgian neutrality. Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbour was premised on the assumption that the US would not commit its forces to a multi-year war in the Pacific theatre.

Biden's perceived weakness and Trump's unpredictability, if he wins, could encourage America's adversaries to make similarly grave miscalculations. The risk of an accidental conflict in the lead-up to November's elections or in their aftermath requires careful mitigation. For otherwise the world could spiral into far more desperate scenarios, including the very worst imaginable: a new world war.

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How to understand Russia's shadow war against West

Ionu-Vlad

RECENT reports highlighting an escalation in Russia's "shadow war" against the West, including the foiled hit on Rheinmetall CEO Armin Papperger, have reignited discussions on Below Threshold of War Operations (BTWO). Russian-linked sabotage and espionage activities in Europe have surged, reflecting a broader strategy targeting critical infrastructure and key individuals.

Russian-linked attacks in the West have included arsons at warehouses and defense industry sites in Britain and Germany, cyberattacks against private and public companies, and sabotage against a plethora of other objectives. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in recruitment and reconnaissance efforts by Russian intelligence services.

Russia has also targeted defectors, journalists, and European officials for years. Recent examples include the attack on the Estonian Interior Ministry and the assassination of a Russian helicopter pilot who defected to the West in Spain, both of which occurred in February 2024. Now, the US is strengthening security at its military bases in Germany due to heightened risk levels.

Russia's aim is clear: disrupt Western military aid to Ukraine, prevent Europe from permanently transitioning away from Russian energy, and intimidate Western governments from taking bold action against Moscow. While Russian intelligence services are "doing their job," their campaign has been on an escalatory trajectory that the West cannot afford to ignore. In the era of Great Power Competition with near-peer adversaries like China and Russia, competing while remaining under the threshold of war - a critical boundary that, when crossed, leads to the start of formal warfare - is in the Kremlin's interests.

BTWO exists in the gray zone, a conflict spectrum between open warfare and peaceful competition. It encompasses actions such as cyberattacks, political

warfare, economic pressure, fake news campaigns, sabotage, and assassinations, all intended to weaken, intimidate, or coerce an opponent while avoiding a full-scale war. While hybrid warfare involves mixing conventional military tactics with unconventional ones, BTWO focuses on staying below the war threshold.

While Hybrid warfare describes an aggressor's methods, BTWO describes an adversary's attempts to avoid open conflict. While related, these concepts are not necessarily symbiotic. Probably the most important aspect of BTWO is that it maintains plausible deniability for the aggressor. In this case, Russia strives to obscure its involvement and evade accountability. While Russian intelligence agencies have a long track record of sloppiness, they can still be devastatingly effective. Additionally, much like the military, these organizations have learned some lessons the hard way and are improving in areas such as dynamic targeting, coordination, and asset recruitment among its European diaspora. As one NATO European official told The Financial Times, "Russian mischief is coordinated and at scale."

Whether they leave traces behind to indicate Russian involvement or not, the Kremlin only has one card to play when accused: the deniable one. Unsurprisingly, Russian officials deny any connection to the string of arsons, explosions, and other acts of sabotage reported in the West, rejecting all Western accusations as baseless and empty. Leading this effort is Russian Presidential Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

However, such denials are expected. Covert operations necessitate political disavowal to ensure the operations do not cross the threshold of war. An open admission could force NATO countries to retaliate, potentially locking the two parties into a cycle of escalation that can spiral out of control. Nonetheless, Russian offi-

cials, including President Vladimir Putin, have not refrained from issuing not-so-veiled threats. In late May 2024, Putin ominously said, "NATO countries, particularly European ones, must remember that these are states with a small territory and a very dense population." This came weeks after the Financial Times reported Western intelligence warnings about Russia's capability and willingness to ramp up sabotage operations within NATO countries.

Putin's remarks are pushing the limits of gray zone warfare by almost openly threatening multiple states with what can easily be interpreted as kinetic warfare targeting urban centers to cause mass casualties. This rhetoric is noteworthy as it typically emanates from lesser officials or propagandists like Dmitry Medvedev, and TV personalities such as Vladimir Solovyov, whose threats against Western states have a "flavor of the week" fashion. The covert and increasingly assertive nature of Russian BTWO in the gray zone makes it essential that the West adopts a robust defensive posture and adapts to any challenge Russia throws at it.

Improved intelligence and counter-intelligence measures are vital to identifying and stopping BTWO attacks. Enhanced intelligence capabilities will provide the necessary insight into who is behind these attacks and how they operate. Given that Russian intelligence is profiting from the free movement offered by Schengen, increased coordination and intelligence sharing among European allies will become key to foiling attacks. Within NATO or the European Union, a task force dedicated to protecting national critical infrastructure should be considered. National governments and private enterprises must secure critical national infrastructure (CNI) and other sensitive sites, such as energy facilities, seabed cables, and defense industry plants. This involves not only increasing physical securi-

ty but also investing in monitoring and intelligence measures to detect and analyze potential threats.

Furthermore, NATO and the EU should make sure the public are aware of Russia's efforts. Publicly revealing BTWO activities and those responsible can undermine their effectiveness and garner international support. This requires a strategic communications campaign capable of countering contingency narratives deployed by adversaries to obfuscate the truth.

However, exposing the truth is challenging and often impossible, as it can endanger or compromise classified intelligence assets or capabilities used to collect evidence of Russian involvement. Here is where Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) plays a crucial role. Whenever possible, openly available information and unclassified methods should be utilized to provide evidence and raise public awareness. OSINT is also an effective tool for fact-checking and verifying information, ensuring that accurate and timely data is disseminated to the public, thus strengthening the credibility of counter-narratives.

Western armed forces and intelligence agencies must also develop tools and doctrines specifically designed to counter covert attacks. Proactive measures, rather than reactive responses, are essential to address crises, hostile provocations, and malign activities effectively. Russia's BTWO strategy represents a significant and evolving threat that Western nations cannot afford to ignore. By understanding BTWO and developing effective countermeasures, the West can navigate this complex and evolving landscape and enact retribution. Proactive measures such as the ones listed above are essential to mitigate the risks of inaction, as failing to respond will only create a false perception of attack tolerance, inviting even bolder assaults on Western interests. It is time to recognize and address Russia's escalating shadow war with decisive action.

The Moscow Times

Raising their game

Yu Hongyuan & He Jing

ing, production, and recycling, which has given it a leading position within the global supply chain.

The United States and the EU have implemented several measures to enhance their industrial capabilities and maintain competitiveness. These include bolstering policy incentives to support the electric vehicle sector, revising national regulations related to automotive manufacturing, providing fiscal subsidies, and investing in infrastructure development. Efforts have also been made to diversify supply chains, reduce the dependency on specific regions for essential minerals, and gradually reduce reliance on China in the global supply chain of electric vehicles and power batteries.

Additionally, initiatives have been aimed at regulating market access and forming alliances that may impact trade relations. These measures involve the implementation of trade barriers, addressing issues such as anti-dump-

ing, anti-subsidy, anti-monopoly practices, intellectual property rights protection, and supply chain assessments to ensure a level playing field. Technological advancements in hydrogen vehicles and next-generation battery technologies have been central to research and development efforts. Restrictions on the export of specific components and data governance strategies have also been employed to safeguard the competitiveness of electric vehicle brands on a global scale. With the increasing share of Chinese new energy vehicles in the EU market, some traditional car manufacturers in EU countries are feeling tremendous competitive pressure. The EU and its member states aim to maintain their technological competitive advantage over China in the short term by implementing intellectual property barriers, and Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers will face the risk of

being sued by "patent trolls." The EU has recently launched a countervailing investigation into China's new energy vehicles. The temporary measure of imposing countervailing duties has been implemented.

The EU's increased tariffs on Chinese new energy vehicles are a significant challenge to the China-EU automobile trade. Chinese companies must actively respond and mitigate the impact of tariff increases through technological advancements and market diversification strategies to maintain competitiveness in the global market and effectively respond to the EU's anti-subsidy measures. By improving their product quality and technological level and enhancing their market competitiveness, Chinese new energy vehicle enterprises can occupy a more advantageous position in the international market and continue contributing to the global development of the global

Could Biden's exit turn out to be Ukraine's gain?

Charles Moore

PRESIDENT Zelensky thanks Joe Biden for his "unwavering support" as the US President bows out of the forthcoming race. He is right to be generous. After all, without American missiles and arms, Ukraine could not have survived the Russian onslaught. "Unwavering" is not the right word, though. It was President Biden's remarks about how he might permit a "minor incursion" by Russia that helped embolden Vladimir Putin early in 2022.

Throughout the ensuing conflict, the Biden administration has used a strange combination of the spur and the reins. Obsessed with the idea that no US missile can be accused of taking aim at Russian soil, it issues Ukraine with excellent kit but then restricts its use.

This is not really because of international law, which probably permits action against a blatant aggression such as Russia's, but because of the "reflexive control" which Putin manages to exercise over opponents. The autocrat who happily dismisses all legal and moral restraint in his own actions nevertheless keeps warning of dreadful consequences if America permits attacks on his own country. His dark threats, not quite specific, about using tactical nuclear weapons seem to terrify the White House, particularly Mr Biden's National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan.

When our newly-appointed Prime Minister met Mr Zelensky at the Washington summit two weeks ago, Sir Keir Starmer told him that he could use Anglo-French Storm Shadow missiles for strikes inside Russia. Mr Zelensky hailed this as a great breakthrough.

The following week, however, it was countermanded. No, mumbled an embarrassed Whitehall, that was not what Sir Keir had meant. The Ukrainians were welcome to have Storm Shadows but could not aim them into Russia except right by the border. Mr Sullivan is alleged to have rung No 10 in a panic and made Sir Keir back off.

Within Ukraine, it is not only the Republican congressmen who delayed a new aid vote for more than six months, but also Mr Biden himself, who incurs a good deal of criticism. Britain and Poland stand higher as staunch allies than does America. The contrast between Russian ruthlessness and American hesitation is painful.

This provides context for the phone conversation between Donald Trump and Mr Zelensky which took place last Friday night. Despite all the bad things Mr Trump has said against Ukraine, the latest exchanges have encouraged Kyiv.

The two great political showmen, first made famous by their television shows, seem to have got on well. Until now, Mr Trump has felt the need to assail any Biden-associated policy. Now Mr Biden has left the electoral scene, one hopes he may see political advantage in taking a lead to help Ukraine. How could

President Biden's Praetorian guard have concealed for so long the decline of his cognitive powers? Perhaps it is less surprising than one might think - and not only because it is natural, given the constant attacks on any US president, to over-protect the boss from criticism.

We British tend to read across from our system to the American one, but the parallels are inexact. In our parliamentary politics, no prime minister can for long be protected from scrutiny. If he or she cannot speak in clear sentences at Prime Minister's Questions every Wednesday in the House of Commons, we know about it. But a US president, being head of state as well as head of government, rarely gets into such situations. The president almost never has to debate anything with anyone - a point that Mr Biden's advisers might have considered before pitching him into that unprecedentedly early television debate with Mr Trump last month.

A president can continue for a long time fulfilling the "dignified" aspects of his office, as Mr Biden did and does, pleasingly. Good bearing, a well-cut suit and a twinkle in his Irish eyes have got him a long way. If his powers wane, as happened a little in President Reagan's second term, others can reduce his involvement in the "efficient" bits. For that reason, Mr Biden is still capable of continuing his role, as he proposes, until his replacement is inaugurated in January. What he is incapable of is dynamic political leadership. Under the American set-up, it is chiefly the imminence of an election which exposes this.

There is talk of a crisis in British universities so grave that perhaps three will have to close. Many have serious problems due to over-expansion and over-reliance on foreign students (the latter being a prime reason for craven university attitudes to the Chinese regime). But would slightly fewer universities be a disaster? Ever since John Major's mistaken decision to turn polytechnics into universities, there has been a rise in pseudo-academic studies. It would have been better to concentrate on improving vocational training.

The strange arrangements for tuition fees allow universities to pretend that they are all much the same. This is a deception of which students have become increasingly aware. There are more than 160 universities in Britain. If competition were allowed to do its work, several would fail, and more would develop their strengths and jettison their weak areas. Something similar happens in the independent school sector, for example, where the closure of a poor school is not usually seen as a sector-wide threat. We have built a university "system" in this country, more uniform, more subject to government control, more financially fragile and often more political. Future generations would be better educated if there were less system and more independence.

should establish production bases and research and development centers in overseas markets to achieve localized production and sales, reduce transportation and tariff costs, and enhance market response speed. Through the above strategies, Chinese new energy vehicle companies will be able to maintain competitiveness in the global market and effectively respond to the anti-subsidy measures of the EU and the US.

In this regard, China needs to start with green supply chain improvement to deal with the dual challenges of policy and technology. China should advocate a fair and just multilateral trade environment for electric vehicles through multilateral trade and investment. China, Europe, and the US can strengthen industry chain cooperation through third-party cooperation with Southeast Asian markets, actively setting up electric vehicle industry chains in developing countries and regions to serve emerging electric vehicle markets such as Indonesia and Vietnam.

The China Daily

China’s ‘monster’ ship is a sign of a much bigger problem

Richard Timme

PROTECT. Defend. Save. Three words that define the US Coast Guard's missions and are central to its ethos statement. For the antithesis of this ethos, look directly at the China Coast Guard. For nearly 234 years, the US Coast Guard has been true to that ethos in carrying out its many missions around the country and the globe. Around the world, many countries with a coast guard use a facsimile of the distinguishing US Coast Guard "racing stripe" and white paint scheme, which differentiates these vessels from the Navy, to mark their ships or cutters. It's an homage, intended or not, to the nobility of purpose embodied in our coast guard.

That is why I find the conduct of the China Coast Guard so jarring and disconcerting - such as attacking and destroying a Philippine resupply mission. It is completely at odds with the ethos of coast guards not just here, but everywhere small naval forces seek to bring governance and stability to the waters for which they are responsible.

China recently continued this aggressive conduct by anchoring one of its behemoth 541-foot coast guard vessels, dubbed by some observers "The Monster," within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) maritime territory. I'm struck by how closely the ship resembles the 378-foot cutter Mellon that I served aboard as an ensign more than 30 years ago, but the incongruity of the actions of this vessel with my experience is striking.

"Monster" and coast guard don't belong in the same sentence. However, by the actions of this ship violating the Philippines' EEZ in an act of intimidation, and the overall

conduct of China in the South China Sea and the territorial seas of its many neighbors, it is clear this ship has earned the moniker. And we need to be prepared for additional aggressive actions from China.

"Gray zone" warfare is a term that refers to unfriendly actions that fall short of outright armed conflict between nations. It's somewhat ambiguous and may not be immediately clear to observers what might be involved in the "zone." US Indo-Pacific Commander Adm. Samuel Paparo has aptly described these activities as "illegal, coercive, aggressive and deceptive" - a simple, straightforward characterization of China's maritime activity in the region. Instead of guarding, protecting, defending and saving, as a coast guard should do, the China Coast Guard is attacking, intimidating, violating and threatening its neighbors in the region.

China continues to violate international norms, customs of the sea and national boundaries in a vast operating area across the South China Sea. It persists not because no one cares, or due to a lack of protest, but because it is in fact a vast operating area and China brings the most capacity to the region. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, China now boasts the world's largest maritime fighting force, with 234 warships in operation. It has 142 coast guard ships complemented by a maritime militia consisting of uniformed crews operating vessels that support China's efforts to intimidate and harass its neighbors. Additionally, CSIS found in 2021 that some 300 Chinese maritime militia vessels had been operating in disputed

South China Sea regions at any given time since 2018.

China has laid claim to contested islands and built artificial ones in disputed waters, while installing military and civilian outposts. It has used these outposts to project persistent presence in disputed areas of the South China Sea. It has attempted to establish sovereignty via its simple presence, seemingly using "possession is nine-tenths of the law" as their guiding principle, and has ignored a 2016 ruling from an international tribunal made under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Despite that ruling, China claims it has "indisputable sovereignty" over almost all of the South China Sea, and has rejected that its vessels, like its coast guard's "monster," are operating in the Philippines' EEZ.

My hat is off to the Philippines and the other nations who have held fast and continue to stand up to these illegal, coercive, aggressive and deceptive activities. The US Navy, US Coast Guard and our partners across the US Indo-Pacific Command area of operations will continue to counter these activities and support our allies. We know China is playing the long game with its policies, with a planning horizon extending to 2049, which is the 100-year anniversary of the People's Republic, and beyond.

As a matter of policy, and as long as they are successful, China will continue to attempt to exert sovereign control over areas, disputed or not, that serve its interests.

China, like other nations, understands that natural resources above the Arctic Circle are becoming more accessible as the region warms, and that there are increased opportunities for shipping to use

new routes as Arctic ice continues to recede. Given that China now puts to sea more commercial ship tonnage than any other nation, it likely sees much to gain.

The United States and other Arctic nations with recognized waters in the Arctic understand that defending sovereign claims to fish stocks, minerals and other resources will require more than lines drawn on a navigation chart. As China has repeatedly shown with its neighbors, ignoring those lines and taking possession of what it wants has led to outcomes in its interest. This tactic has allowed China to build on disputed island chains, fish in others' EEZs and head off development of oil fields by its neighbors.

I once heard the argument in a budget discussion for new funding that "you can't just leave a Post-it note on the North Pole." The point is that with an adversary who's willing to take possession first - and ask permission never - we must be present to enforce possession of what is legally ours. Without the nine new icebreakers the US Coast Guard is advocating for, though, that is the position the United States will find itself in.

As we invest in icebreakers in the Arctic, we must continue to invest in capacity and capability in the Indo-Pacific - for our Navy, our Coast Guard and our partners such as Japan and the Philippines. Each has a complementary role in providing a counter to the growing Chinese presence across the region. Our partners must see that we are committed to the rule of law and to them. US presence emboldens our allies as they confront aggression in their waters. Sovereign claims require sovereign presence. Both in the South China Sea and the Arctic.

C/N

It might be hard to take the future of Conservative party seriously right now

Martin Kettle

THE contest to succeed Rishi Sunak as Conservative leader may seem like an argument between corpses in a tomb. The candidates are yesterday's rejects. Not even the hysterical headline-writers of the Tory press can bring themselves to hype the race as they would in the triumphalist years. The infantile tabloid screams of "Boris this" or "Suella that" seem to have gone quiet, though probably only briefly.

After the babel of those years, a period of relative Tory silence will be welcome to many. But the future of the Conservative party is a genuinely important matter - not just to Tories themselves, but also to the workings of parliamentary democracy and to the dynamics of British politics. The election to succeed Sunak, the preliminaries of which began this week, should not be scorned as an irrelevant event.

Conservative MPs describe the post-election mood among their drastically reduced numbers as sober and serious - as well it might be. On 4 July, remember, the party did not merely lose power. It suffered the worst electoral drubbing in its long and frequently victorious history. After 14 years in government, peaking with the 80-MP majority of 2019, the Tory party was reduced overnight to 121 MPs and 24% of the vote, trailing in every single region of supposedly Tory England, and with no MPs at all in Wales. Sober and serious are, therefore, fully justified words in these circumstances. Indeed, it would be bizarre for Conservatives to adopt any other view. Theirs is

now a party adrift in an unfamiliar land. Whether the MPs' sobriety is shared by the party's defeated candidates, its local councillors and activists, or its grassroots membership, is less certain. At Westminster, however, the gravity of the party's defeat is instantly palpable.

You could see this during Keir Starmer's prime ministerial debut at PMQs. From the opposition benches, Sunak was self-deprecating and chastened, and the Tory MPs behind and around him respectful and on good behaviour. Significantly, Sunak asked all his questions about support for Ukraine, a stance which not only allowed him to appear bipartisan with Labour, but also to draw a clear dividing line against the sometime Putin apologists Reform UK and Donald Trump.

As so often, Sunak is a reflection of a Tory mood, never its driver. His inability to tame the pre-election Tory party that he inherited from Boris Johnson and Liz Truss was repeatedly exposed as prime minister. Since the election, this has segued into an inability to give a clear direction to the party now that it has been catapulted into opposition. It is his biggest limitation as a politician. When he announced his resignation outside No 10 on 5 July, the former prime minister privately favoured a quick campaign to choose his successor. That has not happened. Under the rules announced this week, Sunak will remain leader until his replacement is announced on 2 November. His 121-day stint as opposition leader will be the longest by a defeated

prime minister since James Callaghan stayed on for 17 months after Labour was defeated in 1979.

The Conservatives have rolled the pitch for what may be a different kind of leadership battle to those that were won by Johnson and Truss. New and more complex rules have quietly been introduced. Candidates must be nominated by next Monday. They will then set out their stalls before MPs whittle the field down to four, if that is necessary, in September. Those four will make their cases at the party conference in Birmingham at the start of October. Back at Westminster, Tory MPs will then reduce the field to the final two, before the members make the final choice, with the ballot closing on 31 October. These are certainly not root-and-branch changes to the membership-dominated election system brought in by William Hague. That issue has again been ducked. The members still get to make the final call, a power which they used to give the party Johnson and Truss, though also David Cameron about 15 years earlier. But some of the hurdles have been rearranged, and MPs will have more opportunities to shape the run-off. The party conference will be crucial, though the expense of attending means that many members will not be paying the kind of attention that the media will.

There are three things, in particular, that the Tory party must somehow face. One, highlighted by the psephologist Lewis Baston, is that the Conservatives lack a coherent centre-right project of political

economy that attracts enough voters. They have abandoned new generations of aspirational voters with generally liberal values while flitting with Reform UK and its effort to build what Baston calls "an anti-rainbow coalition". The new leader must choose a different path. This is fundamental. Another factor, trenchantly argued by the centre-right blogger John Oxley, is that the next leader must see party rebuilding as "the only way back". Tory grassroots members may shape the party in some ways, but numbers have collapsed and organisation has been neglected. As Oxley puts it: "It is almost a sideshow to argue whether the party has been too left or right, wet or dry, conservative or liberal ... The party failed because it has been too crap at campaigning, communicating and governing ... The real work lies in rebuilding its capacity to all of those and aligning with a group of voters who want to support it."

The final point is that it matters. Severely weakened though they are since 4 July, the Conservatives are still easily the second party in the land. One day, Britain will again need to have an alternative government, or a government in waiting. You may understandably not support the Conservatives, and you may also want Keir Starmer's new government to prosper and govern well for a generation. In the end, though, it is far better that what comes afterwards should be in the mainstream centre-right tradition, if that can be reconstructed, than from the populist right - or worse. Like it or not, you too have a dog in this fight.

Kamala Harris will be a disaster for Democrats

Sherelle Jacobs

glasnost only catalysed the USSR's fall. There may be an ominous lesson in all this for the American Left, which boasts more shades of blue than a pantone colour chart. Factions range from the super progressives, the very progressives and the progressive old guard, the moderates and the conservatives. If doubts build about Harris - as they may well do, given her dreadful record in office - there is a distinct danger that they will spend the weeks running up to the convention in August clawing each other's eyes out.

It is a civil war that is half a century in the making. And at its heart is a party that long ago stopped attempting to find coherent answers to any of the big questions underlying American decline. How does a superpower finance a welfare state that consumes a quarter of the federal budget given that it is no longer the world's factory and its productivity growth rate has been declining since 1973? How can the tragic collapse of the Rust Belt be sustainably reversed? How to confront the sobering reality that just as Lyndon Johnson rode the tsunami of grief unleashed by JFK's assassination to push through Medicare and Medicaid, America's economy, for various reasons, tipped into a downward spiral from which it has never truly recovered?

Of course, what Democrats should've done over recent decades was to try to understand what killed the golden goose -- the Cold War rise of 'managerial governance', an innovation-killing virus that was seeded in the 'big science' military-industrial-complex the Left so love to idolise; the fatal decoupling of basic research from product development, which saw the US lose its manufacturing supremacy to Japan and then China; the neoliberal order's paradoxical ushering in of a new global order of patenting protectionism at the same time it waxed lyrical on free trade.

But the energy is overwhelmingly on the progressive Left which, fixated by identity, thinks its main role is to fight for a larger slice of a shrinking pie on behalf of different voter blocs. It is not just a strategy for ignoring America's challenges. It creates an inherently unstable coalition that few politicians are talented enough to keep intact. The moderates might have endorsed progressive pinup Harris in the hope that she can take the fight to Trump and hold the party together. But she is no Biden. She woefully lacks broad appeal. And the problem with playing the identity game is

that, even once you have smashed the glass ceiling, you remain imprisoned in its rules.

Someone who crafts a political career "as a woman", or "person of colour" - basing their brand on what sets them apart or what makes them a special envoy for particular groups - will struggle to be universally relatable. Nor can such politicians wipe from the internet every cringing video of them introducing their pronouns or praising BLM. Harris does not seem well-placed to hold the party together. She sits awkwardly on the progressive end of the spectrum rather than in the middle. "Movement" identity politics is in her blood. The daughter of Berkeley academics, among her earliest memories was being taken to marches in her buggy.

Her career features a pattern of her recoiling at the magnitude of difficult, important issues - not least the border. It is telling that Harris has made abortion rights one of her defining stances, a barely concealed bid to neutralise female opponents. So, too, that Barack Obama - the spiritual leader of the progressive old guard - has so far failed to endorse her. But she may be the best they've got. Taking in the alternatives, you realise that the Democratic New Left is a graveyard of talent deformed by the disease of progressivism. Efforts by Gretchen Whitmer, the governor of Michigan, to present herself as "the right kind of white woman" in an anti-racist age have seen her witter about gallows humour while obsessing over progressive causes, all as her state continues to struggle economically.

Then there is Gavin Newsom - the California governor who has destroyed his credibility by indulging in silly virtue signalling in a desperate bid to appease liberals who revile him as a wealthy white snob. This is a man who took on several jobs to support his family before he ran his own firm. But in the new Left-wing America, white male success is downright offensive. As the Democrats face up to an uncertain future, the Republican Party seems a paragon of unity. Not least since last week's assassination attempt, The Donald's irascible persona has acquired a patina of invincibility that a new Democratic candidate with no previous experience of debating him may well struggle to scrub away at. But that's only the half of it. The Democrats took a wrong turn some time ago. And they are about to finally hit a brick wall.

After Trump shooting

Robert A. Pape

A T Monday's congressional hearing on the Secret Service and the assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump, Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi asked: "What can Congress actually do to stop this from happening again?"

The congressman, a Democrat from Illinois, then showed the chamber a graphic on political violence that was published a month ago by the Chicago Project on Security and Threats, which I lead. The graphic shows that 74% of Americans want members of Congress to come together to denounce all political violence. This stance crosses party lines, with 86% of Democrats, 51% of independents and 70% of Republicans saying so.

While individual members of Congress have made statements denouncing the Trump assassination attempt, Krishnamoorthi challenged the entire House of Representatives to go much further, proposing a resolution in the near future "condemning any political violence in America" and calling for support from every member of the chamber. Such resolutions go to the House for a vote and are not signed into law, but they convey a message - especially when they pass unanimously. After Monday's grueling hearing, the head of the Secret Service resigned on Tuesday, writing to her staff: "I take full responsibility for the security lapse." That departure will not prevent future bloodshed. However, Congress has a chance to do so. At this critical time, members of Congress - both Republicans and Democrats - must stand together to oppose political

violence. The Trump shooting is only the latest of a growing string of incidents. Indeed, we are seeing the most violent era in American politics in decades, and now is certainly the time for all political leaders at all levels of government - national, state and local - to adopt similar resolutions and make similar unified statements.

Political violence in the United States is entering a new stage as America faces mounting domestic terrorism: violent anti-government and other political actions by militias, small groups and volatile individuals within the United States. To be sure, famous acts of domestic terrorism occurred from the 1990s through 2010, including the violent standoff at Ruby Ridge in 1992, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the violent protests against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999, and the multiple arsons and bombings conducted by individuals affiliated with the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front from 1995 to 2010.

What's happening now is different. Political violence in America is escalating, both in number and in kinds of violent incidents. Since even before the pandemic, America has witnessed an era of political violence unparalleled at least since the 1960s.

Incidents of domestic terrorism increased by 357% between 2013 and 2021, according to statistics collected by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security. Collective political violence is rising too. Since summer 2020, the United States has seen major political riots against police and

downtown businesses during some of the George Floyd protests; a brazen assault on the US Capitol to stop the peaceful transfer of power on Jan. 6, 2021; spikes of campus unrest to protest the conflict in Gaza in fall 2023 and spring 2024; and numerous lone wolf attacks and plots - including against the husband of then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi, against Justice Brett Kavanaugh and against Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Just as studies show that incendiary political rhetoric encourages support for political violence, so too would public condemnation reduce it. Those taking violent political action are often volatile individuals, with their own reasons to act out, but also encouraged by the perceptions that they are serving some greater good. Some hope to be glorified as warriors for a cause. Leaders of those causes should make clear that no one who engages in political violence will be glorified. The most effective message to reduce support for violence is a simple one: Political violence, wherever it comes from, is illegal, immoral and anti-American. Leaders should also contribute to a culture of prevention by encouraging political anger to be redirected away from negative expression as violence and toward positive expression as voting.

Since the assassination attempt, Biden has already given multiple speeches along just these lines. I hope that his courage will be contagious and that Congress will do its part. It is possible to reverse the rising violence and return to the peaceful traditions that made American democracy the envy of the world.

The Los Angeles Times

Keir Starmer, please - scrap distasteful weekly brawl that is PMQs

Simon Jenkins

BORING. That was the universal response to Wednesday's first prime minister's questions of the new parliament. Where was the screaming, yelling, insulting and air punching? This is supposed to be Strictly Come Poflicking. Get off stage, the two of you. Zero points.

The Telegraph condemned the new PMQs as a "love-in". The prime minister was like a teenager "breaking the news he had lost his virginity", according to one headline. For an Independent columnist it was intolerably tame, just "good-natured joshing". The Times's sketch writer concluded that the new horses "will need time to learn to bray", noting that it was so dull some MPs walked out before the curtain.

PMQs is now virtually the only time each week when MPs actually fill the chamber, which is why the session is reported not just by lobby journalists but also by sketch writers as drama critics. For the most part, the sketch is the page you know you can turn to for a belly laugh.

The popularity of watching two apparent grownups being rude to each other is shown by the fact that PMQs is now being broadcast globally by the BBC. It is a particular favourite on America's C-Span network. One addict, President George HW Bush, could not believe John Major would descend into "that pit ... nose-to-nose with the opposition, all yelling at each other".

The result, of course, is that

PMQs is famously hated by its supposed star performers. Tony Blair called PMQs in his memoirs "the most nerve-racking, discombobulating, nail-biting, bowel-moving, terror-inspiring, courage-draining experience" of his entire premiership. To him they were the "emotional, intellectual and political depository of all that is irrational". He dared some reform, cutting PMQs from two to one session a week. He said he would still prefer to have his teeth drilled for 30 minutes without anaesthetic. Rishi Sunak was so obsessed by the event that he had a team working on it all week. Wednesday mornings were devoted to learning lines, trials and rehearsals, with one aide acting as Starmer. This cannot have been a sensible use of his time. Most party leaders I have asked agree with Blair, though not the two whose style most suited that sort of limelight: Margaret Thatcher and Boris Johnson. PMQs portrays parliament as a battleground rather than a source of wisdom or debate. Agreement is portrayed as defeat and compromise as a sign of weakness. For the past year Britain might have benefited from at least the occasional joint act of leadership from two civilised men, Keir Starmer and Sunak, who have much in common. As it was, they were required to play-act a series of childish and distasteful brawls, possibly entertaining but with no conceivable public benefit. The House of Commons is a club notoriously

resistant to reform. MPs will not wish to end PMQs. They might appear in the show as a Greek chorus, but at least their constituents see what they are up to all day. As for parliamentary reform, Starmer has promised merely to tinker with the House of Lords, with no mention of the Commons. His predecessor, Blair, understood that serious reform - be it the Bank of England, elected mayors or PMQs - was best made at once.

The House of Commons has come through the past five years ramshackle and traumatised. Its essentially 19th-century procedures desperately need updating. Even the Roman Catholic church has seen more change. I could hardly believe last week's groundhog day, when Starmer asked George Robertson to chair a review of defence policy. That is exactly what Blair asked the same man to do in 1997. I was on his committee then and we were forbidden to say anything radical for fear of making Labour seem weak. I bet Robertson has been told the same today. The business of the Commons, like that of national assemblies in most democracies, is best conducted by committees vested with serious powers. The present chamber is dying on its feet, being thinly occupied for just part of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Ministerial question times are the only well-attended moments, generating gladiatorial heat rather than light. The result is that debate makes little difference to anything

The Guardian



In brief

Nadal returns to training

PARIS (AFP): Rafael Nadal returned to training at Roland Garros on Friday after an injury scare had put his participation at the Paris Olympics in doubt. The 14-time French Open champion practised with Carlos Alcaraz, with whom he is scheduled to compete alongside for Spain in the men's doubles first round on Saturday. The 38-year-old wore a bandage on his right leg after suffering a thigh injury on Wednesday and skipping training the following day. His coach Carlos Moya had said Nadal was fighting to be fit in time. "Don't force it at the moment and give him time to see if he recovers well," Moya had told Spanish radio on Thursday. "We'll see what condition he's in tomorrow and Saturday." Nadal and Alcaraz -- the reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion -- will take on Argentina's Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni in their opening doubles match. Nadal is then scheduled to face Hungarian Marton Fucsovics in the singles on Sunday, with a possible second-round meeting against old rival Novak Djokovic up for grabs.

Mir extends MotoGP deal

PARIS (AFP): Spanish motorbike racer Joan Mir has extended his deal with Honda to continue racing the elite-level MotoGP circuit until 2026, the Japanese team said Friday. A 2020 world champion with Suzuki, Mir has been with Honda since 2023 but has failed so far to shine for the team. "I know what I need and I know what Honda can achieve, so I hope we can get there together. We will continue to work hard for the future and for the rest of the season," said the 26-year-old from Mallorca, currently 18th in the world championship standings. Honda director Koji Watanabe admitted it had been a difficult season for Honda. "Even under these circumstances, Mir has put his faith in the team and we are very grateful for his attitude, he never gives up and always fights," said Watanabe. Mir will again ride alongside Luca Marini in 2025 within the official Honda team, with the Italian already signed up on a two-year deal.

Australia player finger amputated

COLOMBES (AP): Olympians come in all shapes and sizes. Rarely do they come deliberately amputated. Australia field hockey player Matthew Dawson took his determination to compete in the Paris Olympics to another level by amputating part of a finger to ensure he's able to take part. The 30-year-old Dawson severely injured the ring finger on his right hand two weeks ago in practice. Surgery would have required months of recovery time, jeopardizing his likelihood of being ready for the Olympics. Captain Aran Zalewski said teammates were shocked. Dawson's wife warned against making any "rash choice." Despite that, Dawson told 7News in Australia he made "an informed decision." Considering himself "very fortunate that it's just a little bit of my finger," Dawson views this sacrifice as part of the commitment required to pursue his "Olympic dream" — much like the years of practice and tough personal decisions that define an athlete's life. He considers the prospect of winning a gold medal, especially



DAMBULLA: Muneeba Ali attacked Chamari Athapaththu in the powerplay, Sri Lanka vs Pakistan Women's Asia Cup.

SL edge Pak in a thriller to set up Women's Asia Cup final with India

DAMBULLA (Agencies): Skipper Chamari Athapaththu scored a brilliant half-century to propel Sri Lanka to beat Pakistan by a four-wicket and qualify for the ACC Women's Asia Cup 2024 final. Set to chase 141, Sri Lanka knocked the winning runs on the penultimate delivery of the innings when Anushka Sanjeevani held her nerves calm to hit Nida Dar for a single towards the long-on. The home side had a dismal start to the pursuit as they were reduced to 19/2 in four overs. However, their captain Athapaththu retaliated against spirited Pakistan bowlers and oversaw Sri Lanka's run chase. She put together crucial partnerships with Kavisha Dilhari (17) and Sanjeevani before final-

ly perishing in the 17th over. Athapaththu smashed 10 boundaries including a six on her way to top score for Sri Lanka with a 48-ball 63. Her dismissal caused a stir in Sri Lanka's chase as Pakistan bowlers forced a late comeback but wicket-keeper batter Sanjeevani showcased grit and powered the hosts into their sixth Women's Asia Cup final. Sanjeevani remained unbeaten with a 22-ball 24. Sadia Iqbal was the pick among the bowlers for Pakistan with her four-fer while Nida Dar and Omaira Sohail shared two wickets between them. Put into bat first, Pakistan registered 140/4 on the board, courtesy of a solid platform provided by openers Muneeba and Gull Feroza. The opening pair

batted sensibly on a tricky Rangiri. Damulla International Stadium surface and added 61 runs for the first wicket. Muneeba and Feroza appeared in control until Udesika Prabodhani forced Sri Lanka's comeback by dismissing both the openers. Wicketkeeper batter Muneeba Ali remained the top-scorer for Pakistan with a 34-ball 37, laced up with five fours while Feroza made a cautious 25 off 24 balls, hitting three fours in the process. Sidra Ameen and skipper Nida Dar then put together an important 30-run partnership for the third wicket. The duo, however, was dismissed by Kavisha Dilhari in the 15th over as Pakistan slipped to 99/4 against Sri Lanka.

New India captain Yadav says ready to lead against Sri Lanka

KANDY (AFP): India's Suryakumar Yadav said Friday he was not going to repeat the mistakes of his domestic captaincy ahead of his first trial as Twenty20 skipper against Sri Lanka. Suryakumar, 33, this month picked up the baton from much-loved predecessor Rohit Sharma, who announced his retirement from the 20-over format after India's World Cup victory in June. He pipped all-rounder Hardik Pandya to the post after concerns over the latter's frequent injury absences. But his previous captaincy of state team Mumbai had aroused concerns over his leadership style, after complaints from teammates prompted his 2015 sacking. "Lot of things have changed since then. I am a different person now," the batsman told reporters in Kandy ahead of Saturday's series opener. "I have got married and I have learned a lot from other captains. I will take the team forward in my own style," he added. "Our brand of cricket remains the same. What the captaincy has done is it has given me new responsibility and I am looking forward to the challenge."

Star batsman Virat Kohli also retired after the T20 World Cup and India's 15-man squad will give Suryakumar the opportunity to experiment with the top order, anchored on openers Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal. Sri Lanka also have a new short-format captain after a humiliating first-round World Cup knockout prompted Wanindu Hasaranga's resignation just six months after his appointment. His replacement Charith Asalanka captained Jaffna Kings on Sunday to a title win in the island's 20-over Lanka Premier League tournament. "It's a huge challenge for us to play the world champions. We are ready for the challenge as we prepared well for this series," Asalanka said. "Bit disappointed that we are not at full strength," he added, saying that injury and illness had hurt the team's pace strength. Fast bowler Nuwan Thushara was ruled out of the series with a fractured thumb while Dushmantha Chameera is unwell.

Sri Lanka have brought in right-arm seamer Asitha Fernando and left-arm quick Dilshan Madushanka as replacements. The three-match series concludes Tuesday in Kandy before a three-match ODI series begins in Colombo on Friday.

Squads India: Suryakumar Yadav (capt), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh, Riyan Parag, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Mohammad Siraj. Sri Lanka: Pathum Nissanka, Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Avishka Fernando, Charith Asalanka (capt), Kamindu Mendis, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Kusal Perera, Kusal Mendis (wk), Dinesh Chandimal (wk), Maheesh Theekshana, Matheesha Pathirana, Binura Fernando, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka.

Shaheens impress with ball in second four-day match

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Shaheens trail by 219 runs with eight wickets in hand as they finished the day with 39-2 in 16 overs, before bowling out Bangladesh 'A' for 258 runs, on the opening day of second four-day match on Friday at DXC Arena in Darwin, Australia. Ripon Mondol removed Shaheens' opening batters, Sahibzada Farhan (4, 13b) and Haseebullah (18, 46b, 3x4s). Mohammad Ali (1 not out, 5b), sent in as night-watchman, will be on the crease with Omair Bin Yousuf (7 not out, 33b, 1x4) at the start of play on the second day.

Earlier, Kashif Ali drew first blood for Pakistan Shaheens, after skipper Sahibzada opted to bowl first, as he dismissed Shadman Islam in the eighth over. Parvez Hossain Emon (30, 75b, 4x4s) stitched a 60-run second wicket part-

nership with skipper Mahmudul Hasan Joy before Khurram Shahzad struck to remove him. Soon, Khurram and Faisal Akram gave Bangladesh 'A' a double blow as the former pinned Amite Hasan leg-before wicket for seven in 28th over while the latter got rid of Shahadat Hossain, in the following over, for a solitary run. With Bangladesh 'A' losing momentum at 104-4, skipper Mahmudul (69, 90b, 8x4s, 1x6), joined forces with Aich Mollah to put on a 54-run fifth-wicket partnership before falling prey to Kashif.

Another double strike left Bangladesh 'A' reeling at 188-7, when Aich Mollah (55, 80b, 7x4s) was caught behind soon to be followed by Hasan Murad, seven-ball duck, who was run out by Haseebullah. Vital contributions from

Mahidul Hasan Ankon (31, 43b, 6x4s), batting at seven, Rejaur Rehman Raja (28, 34b, 5x4s), batting at nine, and Ripon Mondol (17, 40b, 2x4s), batting at 10, helped their team cross the 250-run mark before falling for 258 in 67.3 overs.

Pacers Khurram and Kashif dismissed three and two batters, respectively while Faisal Akram and Kamran Ghulam bagged two wickets each.

Scores in brief: Pakistan Shaheens trail by 219 runs

Bangladesh A 258 all out, 67.3 overs (Mahmudul Hasan Joy 69, Aich Mollah 55, Mahidul Islam Ankon 31, Parvez Hossain Emon 30; Khurram Shahzad 3-69, Kamran Ghulam 2-6, Kashif Ali 2-21, Faisal Akram 2-87)

Pakistan Shaheens 39-2, 16 overs (Haseebullah 18, Omair Bin Yousuf 7 not out; Ripon Mondol 2-22).

Pak team triumphs in Int'l Taekwondo C'ship



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has made a remarkable mark at the 11th SeongNam Open International Taekwondo Championship held in Korea from July 20 to 21, 2024.

The Pakistani taekwondo team brought home one Gold and two Bronze medals, showcasing their exceptional skills on the international stage, said a press release.

Zena Sheraz achieved a standout performance by

winning the Gold medal in the Female Individual Recognised Poomsae category. Her victory was complemented by Naila, who secured a Bronze medal in the same category, underscoring the strength of Pakistan's female taekwondo practitioners.

In the Male Freestyle Individual Poomsae category, Ameer Hamza earned a Bronze medal, adding to the nation's proud haul.

The Pakistan Sports

Board (PSB) has extended its heartfelt congratulations to the athletes and expressed immense pride in their achievements. The PSB commended their dedication and skill, which contributed to these impressive results at the prestigious championship.

This success not only highlights the growing prowess of Pakistani taekwondo but also serves as an inspiration for future athletes in the country.

Locked-down Paris nervously awaits Olympics opening ceremony



PARIS (AFP) : "It's going to be a beautiful success," says Claudine Vacelet confidently of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony, before pausing. "Well, with the security issues, I suppose we'll only see whether it's a success at the end."

After years of planning, the Olympic spotlight is set to finally fall on the French capital on Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. (1730 GMT), when a wildly ambitious opening parade on the river Seine begins.

Vacelet, 77, a retired orthodontist from southwest Paris, is like many residents who are confident about the artistic flair and ability of France to put on a memorable show, but are also slightly anxious about the outcome.

"But then there are always security issues nowadays. It's the world we live in," she sighed.

The center of Paris is set to be locked down by 45,000 police and gendarmes, 10,000 soldiers, and around 22,000 private security guards on Friday evening. The sound of helicopters, sirens, and the ever-present sight of police officers in recent days has given

the impression of a capital under siege, hinting at unseen threats in a city that has known numerous attacks over the past decade. "I hope the games will go well, but I am a bit worried because the world is on fire right now," Sonia Jacob, a 42-year-old mother of three, told AFP in the northeastern 20th district. The security measures and the vast scale of the opening ceremony — nearly 7,000 athletes will sail six kilometers (four miles) down the Seine — have tested the patience and tolerance of many locals.

Most of the bridges and the river banks have been out of bounds for a week and more than 40,000 metal barriers erected along the sailing route have left some residents feeling like they are living behind bars in a zoo. Restaurants and shop owners are complaining about the impact on their businesses. The city's famously grumpy taxi drivers are on the verge of despair about the traffic and a lack of customers.

And in wealthy areas, many residents let their feelings about the Games known weeks ago by leav-

ing town for holidays. "It's hard for Parisians at the moment. Crossing the city is a real nightmare," Jaime Castellanos, a 67-year-old painter, told AFP as he finished his shopping in southwest Paris, a short walk from the Seine.

"But in terms of the image of France, I think it'll be positive." There are gathering signs that after all the grumbling and the complaining this year, all the suspense and performance anxiety ahead of the start, that the city might finally be getting ready to party.

Organizers have constantly stressed that pre-Olympics discontent is predictable and customary.

It was the same for the Games in Sydney in 2000 and in London in 2012, they say — both of which are now fondly remembered by locals there.

Emelie Harvey, a 26-year-old who works as a florist in the 15th district of the capital, said she was indifferent about the Games until the torch relay came past her boutique at the start of the month.

"You can feel there's excitement building. People love criticizing the country, complaining, but I think we're going to make it a success," she told AFP.

"For us young people, it's the first time we've had a major sports event like this." Jeanne Farret, a 47-year-old French teacher, said she had become accustomed to living with the threat of attacks and would not let it spoil her enjoyment. "I'm definitely concerned about the risk of terrorism, but no more so than in the past ten years or so," she said.

Verstappen tops times in opening practice

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS (AFP): Max Verstappen, who faces a 10-place grid penalty for Sunday's race, topped the times for Red Bull ahead of McLaren's Oscar Piastri in Friday's opening free practice at this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix.

Five days after his swearsy outbursts on team radio at the Hungaroring, the series leader and three-time world champion did his talking on the track by outpacing Piastri, who claimed his maiden Formula One victory in Hungary, by 0.531 seconds.

Verstappen clocked a best lap in one minute and 43.372 seconds and remained unchallenged at the front of the field throughout the session as he began his bid to end a three-race winless run by claiming his fourth consecutive Belgian triumph.

Williams' Alex Albon was third fastest, ahead of the Mercedes of George Russell and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, Sergio Perez of Red Bull and Lando Norris in the second McLaren.



Carlos Sainz was ninth for Ferrari and Lance Stroll 10th for Aston Martin.

On a warm, if cloudy, summer's day following an earlier rain shower in the Ardennes, Russell was the first man out, but it was Verstappen who set the first top time on hard tyres in 1:44.706. Piastri soon clocking into second place, seven-tenths adrift of the Dutchman. Norris, both Ferrari drivers and Hamilton, like the Australian, were initially on softs while Esteban Ocon, fresh from announcing his switch to Haas next year, was stuck in the Alpine garage as the team worked on a suspected water leak.

As Verstappen began to trim his time, his 10-place grid penalty for taking a fresh engine was confirmed along with one for RB's Yuki Tsunoda who will

start from the back of the grid after taking more power unit components.

By midway through the session, Perez had joined Verstappen on track and switched to softs, taking fifth place, but complained that his car was unresponsive. "I'm really struggling to know what the car is doing on entries," he reported. At this stage, Verstappen topped the times ahead of Piastri and Alex Albon, whose Williams was showing real potential, and the two Mercedes of Russell and Hamilton, with Leclerc sixth ahead of Perez.

With nine minutes remaining, and most drivers on softs after running qualifying simulation laps, Hamilton ran wide at Les Combes before pitting. "I've got to come in," he said. "The bouncing is really bad." Russell had complained only minutes earlier that he had 'no rear end', but the drivers' grumbles failed to hide the fact that they had shown inconsistent pace in the opening session run in conditions more suited to their package.

Osaka looking to turbo-charge

PARIS (AFP): Japan's Naomi Osaka lit the Olympic cauldron in Tokyo three years ago but she has it all to prove in Paris as she continues her slow-burning return to tennis.

The four-time Grand Slam champion begins her Paris Games campaign against Germany's Angelique Kerber on Saturday and she will be hoping for a change of fortunes after a difficult few months. Osaka returned to tennis late last year after taking 15 months out for the birth of her daughter Shai, and her comeback has not yet lived up to her earlier high standards.

The 26-year-old said she "didn't feel fully confident" in herself after losing to American Emma Navarro in less than an hour in the second round of Wimbledon. She did better at the French Open, holding a match point against Iga Swiatek in the

second round before losing in three sets to the Polish world number one.

Osaka is hoping the green shoots of recovery she showed in that match will hold her in good stead when she returns to the clay of Roland Garros for the Olympics. "Since I'm out so early, I really want to take the time and train for the Olympics because I do want to do well," she said after her Wimbledon exit.

"I do know that my last clay court match was really good. So I might end up liking that surface a lot more than grass now." Former world number one Osaka is now ranked 102, but she earned her place at the Paris Games through a special exemption for Grand Slam champions. She is facing a fellow mother and former world number one in Kerber, who has announced she will retire after the Games.

Osaka has mixed memories of the Olympics, lighting the cauldron in Tokyo before losing in straight sets in the third round to Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic.

"Celebration of sport" She told reporters in Tokyo earlier this year that "growing up watching the Olympics on TV, I felt that it was a celebration of sport." "I thought it brought everyone together and just to be able to be an athlete there and interact with other athletes is one of the funnest things that I've ever done," she added.

Born in Japan to a Japanese mother and a father from Haiti, Osaka won her first Grand Slam at the US Open in 2018.

She went on to capture the title at Flushing Meadows again in 2020, and also won the Australian Open in 2019 and 2021.



In brief

IRSA releases 328,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 328,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 347,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1516.68 feet and was 118.68 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 208,500 cusecs and 200,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1198.80 feet, which was 150.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 22,600 cusecs and 12,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 227,300, 198,800, 137,500 and 77,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 52,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 36,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police bust street criminal gang

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have busted a street criminal gang by arresting three of active members of Ramzan gang allegedly involved in street and other crimes and recovered cash Rs 40,000, a motorcycle, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Bani Police held three street criminals namely Ramzan, Faisal and Sohail and recovered Rs 40,000, a motorcycle, weapons and other items. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process. The accused have been shifted to jail for identification parade, he added. Superintendent of Police, Rawal said that police are making efforts to net other members of the gang.

Two died as a mud house collapsed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two people have died as a mud house collapsed late last night on Thursday in the Misrial Road area. A family was sleeping when the mud roof of the house collapsed, resulting in two people buried under debris. According to emergency service, Rescue 1122 teams recovered two bodies which were shifted to the hospital after necessary action. The deceased were identified as Sajid 27, and his 7 years old daughter Malaika. The locals informed that the house was an old-fashioned construction in which mud was used. The single-story building's roof was too weak to hold any extra weight, they said. The neighbouring people further pointed out that the incident could be the result of heavy rain during which the roof collapsed.

Police arrest two bike lifters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters and street criminals and recovered five stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, R.A.Bazar Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Mobeen and Moazam and recovered five stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under way. Superintendent of Police, Potohar, Nasir Nawaz said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

Proactive, inclusive parliament, pivotal for strengthening democracy: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday said that constitutional and parliamentary supremacy was key to lead country on the path of development and prosperity.

He also said that bridging the gap between parliament and masses would render parliament stronger and more effective.

"Educated and well-aware youth is a catalyst for ensuring prosperity and economic stability" he expressed these views while addressing the Orientation Programme of Interns serving in National Assembly Secretariat at Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

Emphasizing the significance of proactive and effective parliament, he deliberated upon initiatives undertaken during his previous tenure as Speaker National Assembly.

He said that there was no strategy document of National Assembly and All Parties Committee was formulated to prepare a Strategic Plan. As a result, 1st Strategic Plan 2014-2018 for the sustained development and growth of the National Assembly was

introduced, he added.

He said it was a holistic programme, which envisioned the development of technical skills like legislative drafting and creation of a well-resourced and efficient parliamentary services corps. In order to ensure quality legislative process a Legislative Drafting Council was established to assist Private Members in drafting effective Bills on various subjects of socio-economic and political significance for the masses, he added.

The Speaker highlighted the contours of "Parliamentary Studies Program" as a top 25 universities of Pakistan signed a declaration to commence parliamentary studies degrees and as of now 17 of them implemented the declaration by offering it.

In addition, diplomas and short courses had also been introduced. In order to engage the educated youth of Pakistan, around 100 young fresh graduates had been recruited in the Parliament House through Young Parliamentary Associates program to serve in different departments, providing the much-needed research services, he said.

For engaging youth in the parliamentary processes, an exclusive internship program in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Youth Training Scheme that was launched to provide an opportunity to young graduates to support the Members in pursuance of their parliamentary responsibilities.

Further, Voluntary Internship program was also launched on a rolling basis throughout the year and over 2000 interns were placed in the National Assembly from 2013 to 2018. Ayaz Sadiq has said that Parliament of Pakistan is first ever in the world to "Go Green" by shifting completely on Solar Energy.

Pakistan's Parliament was also the first in the country to have been issued a "Net-Metering" license by NEPRA.

"E-Parliament" was also initiated which would ensure that the conventional file work would be replaced with the ideals of "Paperless Parliament". The Speaker said building positive image of Pakistan was a collective responsibility and 88 Parliamentary Friendship Groups with sister parliaments were formulated around the world.

100,000 laptops to be distributed among students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Friday said that around 100,000 laptops would be given to the students on merit during the year 2024.

According to the PMYP office spokesperson, as many as 600,000 laptops have been distributed to the students under the Prime Minister Laptop scheme so far while during the last three years 64 per cent were successful in getting jobs

trained under the Youth Skill Development Programme.

The Chairman PMYP said that the government was working with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission on skill development, especially the provision of education, training and IT skills to youth through youth development programmes.

"This year, we aim to provide direct training to over two lac youth and indirect training to over six lac youth to meet the

demand for skilled labourers abroad which will enable Pakistan to send skilled youth abroad for positive engagement."

The Chairman also mentioned that individuals securing jobs abroad will be provided with interest-free loans to facilitate the necessary paperwork.

Additionally, through the "Laptop for All" scheme, students can obtain any laptop they want on interest-free loans with easy monthly instalments, he added.

BISP disburses ver Rs. 84 bln among beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.84 billion among over 80,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June).

"Till July 25, over Rs. 84 billion has been disbursed among over 80,00,000 beneficiaries which make 81 per cent of the total beneficiaries", said an official source. The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (April-June) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to the beneficiaries is continued across the country to disburse Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families.

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

plaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program. The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly.

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

The messages from the Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171, and messages from any other number should

not be trusted.

The officials of BISP have been directed to ensure the smooth disbursement of Kafaalat payments to the women without any deductions. The staff has been deputed to monitor the process of payment disbursement and take immediate action against the agents responsible for deductions from the beneficiary's payments. The BISP is currently supporting 9.3 million deserving families and acting as a lifeline for those facing economic hardship.

The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) program, also known as the 'Benazir Kafaalat Programme', is the core initiative of BISP and was launched in 2008.

Since its inception, the UCT/Kafaalat initiative has grown to the extent that it is now the largest single cash transfer program in Pakistan's history.

16 outlaws held, weapons with ammunition recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police apprehended 16 outlaws from different areas of the federal capital during the last 24 hours also recovered drugs and weapons from their possession.

A public relations officer on Friday said that responding to the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has intensified its crackdown against the criminal elements to eliminate crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested two accused namely Muhammad Kashif and Mujahid and recovered 590 grams hashish and one iron punch from their possession. The Karachi Company police team arrested an accused namely

Ashraf Masih and recovered one 30-bore pistol from his possession.

Likewise, the Golra police team arrested an accused namely Imran Khan and recovered one 30-bore pistol from his possession. The Industrial Area police team arrested an accused namely Mukhtiar and recovered one pistol from his possession.

Similarly, the Noon police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Zubair and recovered 230 grams heroin from his possession.

The Phulgran police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Asif involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders.

The Bhara Kahu police team arrested an accused namely Awais and recovered one 30 bore pistol

from his possession.

Separate cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

During the crackdown against proclaimed offenders and absconders, the Islamabad Police teams arrested eight absconders and targeted offenders from various areas of the city.

DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza directed the police officials to further intensify the crackdown against the criminal elements. "Safety and security of the citizens is our foremost priority and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard".

The citizens are urged to cooperate with police and report any suspicious activity through the emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or via the "ICT-15" app for immediate assistance.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani witnessing the art exhibition at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA). —APP Photo

3000 cops deployed to ensure security

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani here on Friday deployed over 3000 cops at Murree Road, Metro Stations and other important city points to ensure security.

According to a police spokesman, Section 144 was enforced in Rawalpindi, restricting gatherings, processions, and protests. "Violation of Section 144 is not permitted under any circumstances," he said and informed that special security arrangements were also made at entry and exit points.

The spokesman said that senior police officers were in the field to check duty points. All available resources were being utilized to ensure law and order and foolproof security, he added. Law enforcement personnel were deployed in Rawalpindi in order to ensure compliance, and the citizens are advised to refrain from engaging in any unlawful acts, he said.

14 drug peddlers netted with 19 kg charras

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and arrested 14 accused besides recovering 19 kg charras and other items from their possession.

A police spokesperson said that Gujjar Khan police held Farhad on recovery of 2200 grams charras. Pirwadhai police netted Ziaullah for having 1650 grams charras, Owais with 1520 grams charras and Tayyab for possessing 1478 grams charras. Rattaamral police rounded up Gohar with 1600 grams charras and Arif for having 1360 grams charras.

Rawat, Jatli, Kahuta, R.A.Bazar, Westridge, Kotli, Waris Khan and Chakri police arrested Asif, Nadeem, Abid, Ali, Qadir, Imdad, Shahrom and Nadeem and recovered total 9580 grams charras.

Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other law-breakers, he added.

RWMC carries out anti-dengue awareness drive

RAWALPINDI (APP): The communication teams of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) on Friday carried out its cleanliness and anti-dengue awareness campaign in the various Masajids of the city areas to create awareness about the growth, incidence, treatment and prevention of dengue.

According to the RWMC spokesman, the teams asked the Masjid Imams / Khateeb to play their part in educating the people about the importance of cleanliness in the light of Islamic teachings in the sermons of Friday prayer. The objective of the activity was to reach out to a maximum number of people, to educate the public about the precautionary measures for dengue to get rid of it, the spokesman said.

Muqam chairs review meeting regarding Youm-e-Istehsal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan & SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam Friday chaired a review meeting regarding preparations for Youm-e-Istehsal on August 5 and directed all the departments concerned to work in harmony to observe the day effectively. The representatives of federal ministries, provincial governments, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir Government and various departments briefed the minister regarding preparations for "Youm-e-Istehsal", said a press release.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, Amir Muqam said that India has forcibly occupied Jammu and Kashmir for over 76 years.

After the illegal actions

of August 5, 2019, after which the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) was abolished against all UN resolutions and the will of the people of Kashmir. Pakistan will continue to extend its unwavering support to its Kashmiri brothers and sisters, he added.

The minister said the voice of the Kashmiris will be conveyed to the entire world and the Pakistani nation will continue to pursue the just settlement of Jammu & Kashmir dispute.

Amir Muqam directed all the relevant institutions to work together in harmony to observe Youm-e-Istehsal in an effective manner. He also advised ensuring maximum participation of the public.

The meeting was attended by Coordinator to Prime Minister on Kashmir

Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Shabir Ahmad Usmani, Ghulam Muhammad Safi Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Senior Leader APHC Altaf Hussain Wani, Joint Secretary Azad Jammu Kashmir Council Ali Akbar Khattak and Joint Secretary Hamid Khan.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Education and Information Technology and Telecom, PTV, PBC, PEMRA, CDA, PTA, Commissioner's Office Islamabad, Commissioner's Office Rawalpindi and Islamabad Police.

PML-N pledges to combat campaigns against Women in politics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) along with its female leadership has pledged to say no to malicious smear campaigns against women in politics.

Addressing a media briefing flanked by Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, women Members of the National Assembly, Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar and the others, the PM's aide vehemently condemned the malicious campaign against Punjab Information and Culture Minister, Azma Zahid Bokhari launched after an alleged so-called objectional video of the provincial minister intending to damage her prestige.

Romina Khurshid Alam said the women serving in politics, media, and all other fields of society deserved great respect, whereas her party and the current government vowed to snub such filthy tactics and those who think they could disregard women of

Pakistan would have to face their fate.

She underlined that the culprits of this heinous crime should be taken to task as per the law. "The Constitution of Pakistan protects women and the State of Madina and our religion including all other faiths do not allow such disrespectful attitude towards women," Romina Alam said.

She while alluding to the PTI founder said the people who were perpetrating such dirty tactics needed to know their character. "A woman who leaves her home has determination for her family and loved ones. We are thankful to our leadership and our party that supports its party members and never plays the woman card. The cursed faces (perpetrators) will be watching us and I want to tell them that we as women can compete with thousands of people like you," Romina said.

Senior MNA, Shaista Pervaiz Malik on the occasion also condemned the video incident. She said she was representing 50 per cent of the population, the entire women of the society, adding, "It was an adage in our culture that women,

the mothers and daughters are respectful and their honour prestige belongs to all in our society but a political party has used women for its political mudslinging."

She added that no society allows disrespect of women and their use as a tool for nasty politics. "Azma Bokhari is a brave woman and we all as women are supporting her," she said. Malik alleged that (the PTI founder) does politics under the garb of religion, women, international powers and maligning of state institutions.

There should be a red-line for all to avoid using foul language and crooked political gimmicks against women, she said. "Mian Nawaz Sharif always snubbed the use of bad language against women on the floor of the Parliament and public processions. We as women have achieved our space with great effort in this society and we don't want to lose it," she added.

She urged her party workers to support and respect Minister Azma Bokhari and sympathise with her but did not react to this incident and refrained from responding to it.

Minister announces ambitious matric, Inter-tech courses program

ISLAMABAD (APP): "In a major boost to the education sector in Punjab, Provincial Minister for Education Rana Sikandar Hayat Friday unveiled a groundbreaking initiative, announcing the launch of an ambitious Matric, Inter-Tech project to revolutionize the learning experience for students in 300 public schools across the province which will enable them hands-on experience and skill-building in their chosen fields.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said the Matric, Inter-Tech project aims to address the long-standing issue of students graduating with theoretical knowledge but lacking the practical skills demanded by employers.

To achieve this, the courses will be carefully

crafted to integrate theoretical concepts with hands-on training, ensuring students are job-ready upon graduation, he mentioned.

"Responding to a question, Provincial Minister for Education clarified that the government does not plan to build new school buildings for the Matric, Inter-Tech project, adding, instead, the existing infrastructure will be optimized by merging 600 to 700 school buildings, creating larger, more resourceful campuses. He said that by incorporating these cutting-edge subjects into the curriculum, the government aims to equip students with the skills required to thrive in the modern workforce.

The merged schools will also provide students with access to advanced tools,

software, and equipment, ensuring they are well-prepared for the demands of the 21st century, he added.

"With the implementation of the Matric, Inter-Tech pilot project which later will further extend to other cities, Pakistani children will have the opportunity to receive a world-class education, on par with international standards", he mentioned. This will enable them to compete with their peers globally and be recognized for their skills and knowledge on the international stage, he expressed confidence. The project's focus on cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence, data science and cybersecurity, will provide students with a unique advantage in the global job market, he added.

India resumes issuing visas

KABUL (Amu TV): India has begun issuing visas to Afghan nationals, a move confirmed by Randhir Jaiswal, the spokesperson for the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. During a recent press conference, Jaiswal emphasized India's enduring relationship with Afghanistan, stating, "We have historical ties with the people of Afghanistan." He further highlighted India's ongoing commitment to this partnership, referencing budget allocations that reflect this dedication.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 20 1446 — Saturday, July 27, 2024

Six killed in traffic accident

SAMANGAN (Amu TV): At least six people were killed in a traffic accident in the Kotal-Robat area of Samangan province, according to sources. The victims, who included two women, three men, and a child, were all residents of Balkh province. The accident occurred before noon on Friday when a Corolla car collided with a truck, sources reported. This tragedy is part of a troubling trend: in the past month alone, at least 30 people have been killed in traffic accidents across various provinces in the country.

Acting Minister of Interior announces increase in Police Force to 230,000

KABUL (TOLONews): Khalifa Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Acting Minister of Interior, who was speaking to a ceremony praising the security forces said that the number of police personnel in the ministry has increased to 230,000.

Haqqani also stated that coordination among security institutions is a prominent indicator of security establishment in the country.

"The police structure of the Ministry of Interior is a national structure composed of all brotherly ethnic groups of Afghanistan, and their number now reaches 230,000," the acting minister said.

This senior security official of the Islamic Emirate also emphasized that the



forces of the Islamic Emirate are responsible for ensuring security throughout the country, and no unauthorized person has the right to carry weapons.

According to Haqqani, legal action will be taken

against those who carry weapons without a permit.

"No one, except responsible individuals, has the right to carry weapons without a permit. Outside the Emirate's structure, whether security compa-

nies, traders, the private sector, or any individual who wants to carry weapons, they will be allowed to do so only after obtaining a permit." Added Haqqani.

Mohammad Mateen Mohammadi, a military expert, told TOLONews, "Education and training have a direct impact compared to merely having a large composition and number; the professionalism and expertise of security forces are important."

The Acting Minister of Interior considered the implementation of projects such as TAPI, CASA-1000, Mes Aynak, railway projects, and mining extraction as indicators of overall security in the country.

China blames NATO for sparking wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Ukraine

BEIJING (Khaama Press): NATO has been criticized by the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, with spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang accusing the alliance of causing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Ukraine.

Zhang Xiaogang labeled NATO as a "machine that sows the chaos of war," claiming it has brought destruction and turmoil to various regions, including Ukraine and Afghanistan, as reported by TASS.

The spokesperson criticized NATO's recent activities, accusing the alliance of extending its influence into the Asia-Pacific region and attacking China.

Zhang further accused NATO of encouraging certain countries in the Asia-Pacific region to take actions against China, labeling the alliance's rhetoric as full of "lies, prejudice, incitement, and slander."

The defense ministry expressed strong dissatisfaction and protest over the final communique issued at the NATO summit held in Washington, which was released on July 10.

The final declaration of the Washington summit outlined NATO's plans to engage with representatives from Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan to explore areas of



cooperation and address common security challenges.

NATO's communique also identified China as posing "systemic challenges to Euro-Atlantic security" and called for China to cease its support for Russia's military actions in Ukraine and stop exporting dual-use goods to Russia. The final declaration emphasized NATO's concerns over China's influence and its impact on global security, prompting sharp criticism from Beijing.

The Chinese government's

response reflects growing tensions between NATO and China, highlighting broader geopolitical conflicts. As NATO continues to expand its influence and address security challenges, the international community will need to navigate these complex dynamics carefully.

The escalating rhetoric underscores the need for dialogue and cooperation to address global security concerns while managing the competitive and confrontational elements between major powers.

Pharmaceutical factory inaugurated in Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): A pharmaceutical factory in Kabul was inaugurated yesterday (Thursday, July 26) with an investment of over \$20 million dollars.

The manager of this factory pledged that they would operate based on the standards of the World Health Organization.

Hejazul Haq Mujahid, the manager of a pharmaceutical company, said: "This factory has been built according to the standards of the World Health Organization."

Meanwhile, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, said during the inauguration ceremony that the establish-

ment of factories for drug production plays an important role in reducing drug imports from other countries.

Baradar said: "I ask all investors and businessmen to invest in their own country. By doing this, they will start their legitimate business on the one hand and help improve the country's economic situation on the other."

Din Mohammad Hanif, the acting minister of the Economy, said: "Manufacturers who produce and traders who import goods should not produce low-quality goods and traders should not import low-quality goods."

Noor jalal Jalali, the acting Minister of Public Health, said that no fundamental work has been done in the health sector in the last twenty years.

Jalali asked traders to prevent the import and smuggling of low-quality drugs into the country.

The acting Minister of Public Health said: "Brothers who import low-quality drugs through smuggling should not oppress the nation."

According to the information from the Directorate of Medicine and Food of the Ministry of Public Health, there are currently about 77 pharmaceutical factories active in the country.



US representative introduces bill

WASHINGTON (Amu TV): Representative Nancy Mace introduced a bill on Thursday aimed at labeling the Taliban as a terrorist organization and opposing the recognition of their regime in Afghanistan.

"Congresswoman Nancy Mace stands boldly against the recognition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan by introducing the 'Preventing the Recognition of Terrorist States Act of 2024,'" the statement read.

The legislation, according to Mace, aims to send a clear message that the United States will not legitimize a regime controlled by terrorists.

"Freedom and justice demand we reject tyranny and oppression in all forms. Our bill ensures America never recognizes the Taliban's terror-driven regime," said Representative Mace. "By prohibiting any federal actions implying their legitimacy and designating them as state sponsors of terrorism, we stand firm against this rogue state's barbarism. The Taliban are terrorists, plain and simple."

Key provisions of the bill include: No Taliban Recognition: The U.S. will not recognize the Taliban as Afghanistan's government.

Ban on Federal Actions: Federal agencies are prohibited from implying recognition of Taliban sovereignty or using funds to support such policies.

State Sponsor of Terrorism: The Secretary of State must designate the Taliban regime as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Terrorist Organization Label: The Secretary of State must designate the Taliban as a foreign terrorist organization.

Abdul Haq Wasiq: intelligence networks still operating

KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Haq Wasiq, the General Director of Islamic Emirate Intelligence, said that no groups other than intelligence networks are active in Afghanistan.

Wasiq, speaking at a "Program for Praising Security Forces," added that efforts are ongoing to identify and arrest these networks.

The General Director of Intelligence said: "From the intelligence side, there are still some networks operating, and you and I must, with full strength and in cooperation with each other, stop the enemy as we have done in the past so that their hopes are completely dashed."

"Afghan soil is not used against any country or



neighbors, so we can say that there are no terrorist groups in our country," said Hadi Quraishi, a military analyst.

Abdul Haq Wasiq also stressed that for the first time, a law has been created for the General Directorate of Intelligence,

and violations of this law are considered a crime.

Abdul Haq Wasiq added: "For the first time in Afghanistan's history, a comprehensive law has been created for better regulation of the affairs of the Directorate of Intelligence, and all provi-

sions of this law are based on the Sharia system and the Hanafi jurisprudence."

At the same time, the Acting Minister of Defense has emphasized that they will not accept any commands other than those from the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

Acting Minister of Defense Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid said: "Accepting anyone's commands is unacceptable, and we are in obedience to our leader, and we will not take orders from anyone else."

The acting Minister of Defense also added that the leader of the Islamic Emirate has repeatedly ordered serious attention to be given to the security challenges of the country's citizens.

Education Ministry to hire 40,000 teachers

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Education has signed an agreement with the National Examination Authority to recruit new professional teachers for the ministry's vacant positions.

Sebghatullah Waseel, the Deputy Minister of Education, said that the quality of education in Afghanistan is lower compared to the countries in the region and the world.

Waseel added that more than 40,000 new teachers are expected to be recruited for the Ministry of Education's vacant positions.

The Deputy Minister of Education stated: "Currently, the Kabul City Education Directorate has 2,000 vacant positions and the Kandahar Education Directorate has about 5,000 vacant positions, and there are figures from various provinces that we will review in due course."

Abdul Baqi Haqqani,



the head of the National Examination Authority, said: "Today's valuable meeting focuses on how the Ministry of Education can achieve this significant goal, and we will cooperate with them in achieving this goal."

Waseel added that some teachers have been hired in schools against their specializations, which has caused educational challenges in the country.

"There is a shortage of teachers, teachers are not

appointed according to their specializations, and resources are distributed unequally and unjustly," said Waseel.

The Deputy Minister of Education said that since the return of the Islamic Emirate, this is the second time they have announced their vacant positions and emphasized that during this period no teacher has been appointed by decree, and all teachers have been recruited through examinations.

Hanafi asks China's support for Afghanistan at intl level

KABUL (TOLONews): The Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, Abdul Salam Hanafi, in a meeting with Li Qun, China Vice Minister of Culture and Tourism, and Zhao Xing, the Chinese ambassador to Kabul, requested that China continue supporting Afghanistan's position on the international level as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

The Arg in a statement said that Abdul Salam Hanafi also expressed appreciation for China's support as an important economic and political partner of the Islamic Emirate, and highlighted that China has been a good friend to Afghanistan throughout history. In the statement, it is mentioned that Hanafi added that the Islamic Emirate will not allow any country to use Afghanistan's territory against China and other countries.

Hamdullah Fetrat, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, said: "The Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs expressed appreciation for China's support as an economic and political partner of Afghanistan and said that China should continue its support for the Islamic Emirate's position on the international level as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council."

"China's membership in those global organizations can be influential, and if China sincerely wishes, it can help Afghanistan overcome its current challenges," said Edris Mohammadi Zazi, a political analyst. Meanwhile, this Chinese delega-



tion, in separate meetings with interim government officials, stressed its commitment to the preservation of historical artifacts in the Mes Aynak mine in Logar, stating that this country has a lot of experience in mining amid historical artifacts.

They described the current relations between the two countries as positive and stressed that cultural cooperation between Beijing and Kabul could pave the way for cooperation in other sectors as well.

"We hope that in the current conditions when this project starts, they should be very serious about not damaging our historical areas and preserving the Buddha statues and other artifacts located there," said Najibullah Ahrar, a cultural activist. Islamic Emirate officials, in their

meeting with the Chinese delegation, also said the Wakhan road and the Mes Aynak project in Logar are important for expanding economic relations between the two countries and emphasized the start of practical work on the Mes Aynak copper mine.

Analysts said that China is one of the countries that has expanded its relations with the interim government since the Islamic Emirate's return to power. "Wakhan is one of the national projects, and connecting with China can free us from the monopoly of neighbors and lead us towards self-sufficiency," said Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an economic analyst.

After the Islamic Emirate's return to power, China was the first country to accept an Islamic Emirate ambassador in its capital.

Foundation laid for new waiting area at Kabul intl airport: Ministry

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Transportation and Civil Aviation laid the foundation stone for a new waiting area costing 300 million afghani on Thursday, July 25, at Kabul International Airport.

According to the acting Minister of Transportation and Civil Aviation, this waiting area will have three floors and will be completed within the next 18 months.

Acting Minister Hamidullah Akhundzada said at the opening ceremony of the waiting area project that the ministry is striving to establish a transportation system with global standards to foster economic growth in the country.

Akhundzada said: "The Ministry of Transport has initiated a total of 43 major



infrastructure projects in the transportation and aviation sector for the year 1403 (solar year), currently in the procurement stage. Among these, five projects are in the aviation sector with a total value of 530 million afghani."

Akhundzada further highlighted that the value of the new waiting area

project at Kabul Airport costs over 300 million afghani and it will have the capacity to accommodate 150 people.

The acting minister said: "The investment value of this project exceeds 300 million afghani, and it will be completed and operation within 18 months."

Meanwhile, officials from the contracting company stressed the quality of work on this waiting area, assuring that the project will be completed on schedule.

"This waiting area will be constructed with all the standards of a waiting hall, and all services for passengers will be considered in this hall," Ahmad Niaz Ahmadi, the head of the contracting company, told TOLONews.

The acting Minister of Transportation and Civil Aviation also said that from 1401 to 1403 (solar year), more than 30 partnership projects with the private sector, valued at over 2.5 billion afghani, have been signed. These projects include the construction of terminals, waiting areas, and aviation facilities.

B A D A K H S H A N

(TOLONews): Some residents of a village in Wakhan district, Badakhshan, comprise of 400 families, said that they do not have access to clean drinking water.

They say they walk for hours to obtain clean drinking water and, therefore, urge the Islamic Emirate to

address their challenges.

Abdul Wodood, a resident of Wakhan district, said: "Our main problem is water, we walk two or three kilometers to get water."

Be Qara, another resident of Wakhan district, said: "We urge the rulers of the Islamic Emirate to be aware of the people's situation and address their

unbearable problems."

Meanwhile, the deputy governor of Badakhshan pledged efforts would be made to address this challenge.

Aminullah Tayeb, the deputy governor of Badakhshan, said: "We have referred the issue to some organizations and institutions, and work is

ongoing, and the drinking water problems of Sarhad Broghil village will be resolved."

Badakhshan, in the northeast of the country, is a province where most of its districts' residents do not have access to clean drinking water and are constantly calling on officials to solve this challenge.



KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari shaking hands with Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, Head of the Dawoodi Bohra community, at Bilawal House.

Bloody clash in Karachi's DHA 17 people from Bugti clan arrested

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Karachi police on Friday said they have so far arrested 17 suspects after five people were killed and two others were critically injured in a shootout between members of the Bugti clan last night.

Two groups, led by Fa-had Ahmed Nawaz Bugti and Ali Haider Bugti, had engaged in a gunfight on late Thursday night near the former's residence in Defence Housing Authority's (DHA) Khayaban-i-Nishat. The clash resulted in the killing of 50-year-old Fa-had — a nephew of slain Baloch chieftain Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti — while Ali Haider, also a maternal ne-p-hew of the Bugti chieftain, was injured. Stating that four others were also killed, Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) South, Asad Raza, told media that two people were injured, not three as previously reported.

"Earlier on Friday, police took action in DHA, detaining 17 individuals belonging to the Bugti clan, including two gunmen, DIG Raza said. He added that the suspects belonged to both supposed rival gangs within the Bugti family.

"Eight individuals were arrested soon after the inci-

dent while the remaining suspects were detained early Friday morning," Raza explained. He further said that two injured Bugti family members had been shifted to the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) for treatment, where police guards have been deployed due to investigators treating the wounded as suspects in the clash.

Sharing further details of the incident, Raza said that at about 11:25pm on Thursday, an exchange of fire took place between the two tribal groups at DHA's Nishat Commercial Lane 10 within the limits of the Darakhshan police station. As a result, Fahad and 35-year-old Naseebullah Bugti died. From the Ali Haider group, three persons — Mir Ali Haider Bugti's sons Meer Mohsin Bugti and Mir Essa Bugti as well as their gunman Ali lost their lives.

Meanwhile, Ali Haider along with his group mate Qaim Ali Qadir sustained injuries. Both were directly taken to the AKUH for treatment, police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed said. According to the police surgeon, the post-mortem examination of two bodies was conducted at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, while the autopsy of three other bodies was carried out at the Civil

Hospital Karachi. They "all sustained multiple firearm injuries", Dr Syed stated.

Both groups, one led by slain Fahad and the other by Ali Haider, provided different versions of the incident during a preliminary probe by the police, DIG Raza said. Fahad's side claimed they were attacked by Ali Haider and his gunmen, causing them to retaliate in "self-defence". On the other hand, the Ali Haider group claimed they were the ones attacked first.

The DIG said investigators asked Ali Haider's side about their purpose for visiting Fahad's residence in Nishat Commercial, where the incident had occurred. According to Raza, CCTV footage obtained by the police showed that Fahad Bugti, along with his gunmen, came out of his house sitting in two luxury vehicles, while Ali Haider — travelling in a single vehicle along with his gunmen/relatives — hit the car on the bumper of Fahad's vehicle. Soon after, a heavy exchange of gunfire began between both sides. The DIG said the bloody clash took place near the main gate of Fahad's residence. He said initially, the shots were fired on the left side of Ali Haider's vehicle and it appeared that straight bullets were not fired at him.

PHC reinstates 11 Judicial Officers including D&SJ

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) Referee Judge Justice Naeem Anwar has reinstated 11 judicial officers, including a District Session Judge and six Additional Session Judges, four Senior Civil Judges and one Civil Judge who were dismissed in 2017 on allegations of corruption, on Friday.

The appellants including District Session Judge Sardar Irshad, Additional District and Session Judges named Manzoor Qadir, Mrs. Rafat Amir, Qaiser Rahim, Malik Amjad Rahim, Senior Civil Judges Shah Hussain, Safer

Qaiser Malak, Rashid Rauf Swati, Adil Akbar, and Civil Judge Tasawar Hussain.

The counsel including Zia ur Rehman Tajik, Ahmad Sultan Tareen, and Fida Gul advocates argued that the petitioners were dismissed without any evidence or proof of corruption. They said that the officers were serving in Grade 18, 19, 20 and 21 judicial officers who were dismissed without being given a chance to depend themselves.

The lawyers argued that the petitioners Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) are available before PHC and there was no evidence of corruption

against them. They said that the officers had been promoted to their current positions based on their seniority and performance.

The lawyers also argued that the officers' reputations had been damaged due to their dismissal, and they had suffered irreparable losses. They requested the court to reinstate the officers with honor.

PHC's Referee Judge Justice Naeem Anwar reinstated 11 judicial officers including a District Session Judge and six Additional District and Session Judges after hearing the arguments with honor and declared their dismissal null and void.

Netanyahu meets Trump

WASHINGTON: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has visited former United States President Donald Trump at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida for talks that could ease tensions between the two leaders. Netanyahu met Trump, the Republican candidate in November's presidential election, on Friday, a day after Netanyahu met Democratic President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, who is expected to run against Trump.

The Florida meeting capped a weeklong US visit by Netanyahu that has been met with widespread protests, boycotts from US lawmakers and warnings from rights groups about Israel's war on Gaza. Speaking next to Trump, Netanyahu said Israel would be dispatching a negotiating team to discuss a proposal for a Gaza ceasefire in Rome "probably at the beginning of the

week", according to pool reporters.

Netanyahu's visit followed an address to a joint session of the US Congress, a White House meeting with Biden and a separate meeting with Harris. Long seen as adept at navigating shifting US political winds, Netanyahu's final US stop on the trip has widely been viewed as an effort to mend ties with Trump before the November 5 election. Trump, whose term as president stretched from January 2017 to January 2021, took a permissive and transactional approach to US-Israeli ties that empowered Netanyahu's government while largely sidelining Palestinian interests.

But Netanyahu's acceptance of Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election while Trump claimed fraud saw the relationship sour. "F*** him," Trump said of Netanyahu in an

interview at the time. "I still like Bibi," he added. "But I also like loyalty." Before Friday's meeting, officials told Israeli media that Netanyahu's media had already begun his charm offensive, calling Trump for the first time in years this month.

During his speech to Congress, Netanyahu took particular time to highlight several of Trump's actions while in office, including mediating the Abraham Accords, which saw Israel establish ties with several Arab countries, as well as Trump's decision to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognise Israel's claim to the Syrian-occupied Golan Heights. Trump later thanked the Israeli leader during an interview on Fox News. Standing next to Netanyahu on Friday, he maintained the pair "always had a very good relationship". — Aljazeera

Court acquits 197 members of BSC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court has acquitted 197 members of the Baloch Solidarity Committee (BSC), citing the prosecution's failure to prove the charges.

Judicial Magistrate Shehzad Khan accepted the defendants' acquittal requests, ruling that the prosecution could not substantiate the allegations. According to the case, the defendants were accused of calling for a protest in the Red Zone in December 2023, intending to prevent entry to key locations such as the Prime Minister's House, Supreme Court, and President House. They were also accused of inciting unrest against state institutions. The court noted that the Baloch Solidarity Committee, led by Dr. Mah Rang Baloch, held a 23-day sit-in. Despite warnings, the protesters allegedly tried to enter the Red Zone, engaged in stone-pelting, and clashed with the police.

However, the court concluded that the prosecution failed to prove acts of vandalism or obstruction of official duties by the defendants. Except for one accused, Zaheer, the prosecution could not establish charges against the others. The prosecution also failed to distinguish between actual perpetrators and innocent students among the 197 accused. The court ruled that there was no likelihood of proving the crime, and proceeding with a trial would waste judicial time. Consequently, 32 petitioners and other arrested students have been acquitted.

PTI activist Aneela sent on remand

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Lahore's Cantonment Katchery has sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) worker Aneela Riaz to jail on judicial remand. Police presented Aneela Riaz, who is also known as Neeli Pari, before the judicial magistrate and requested the physical remand of the PTI activist.

The court sent Aneela Riaz to jail on judicial remand by rejecting the police request of physical remand. Tahir Anjum submitted his written response to the SP Investigation questions and informed that the accused and her family had sought apology to him and he had accepted the apology. She will be released from jail after submitting an apology letter in the court by lawyer.

It is pertinent to note that actor Tahir Anjum filed a case of alleged assault against Aneela Riaz in the Qila Gujjar Singh police station. Aneela Riaz is accused of assaulting Tahir Anjum outside the Punjab Assembly on Wednesday last on the allegation of creating a video against PTI founder Imran Khan.

Police release HRCP chairman

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Gulberg police on Thursday late night "picked up" Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Chairman Asad Iqbal Butt from his house but allowed him to go after questioning him for a couple of hours.

According to a police source, he was taken into custody in a raid on his residence in Federal B Area "in a bid to stop his participation in the July 28 rally against enforced disappearance in Gwadar." He said the HRCP chief was "detained" over reports that he was going to attend a rally was being organised by the Baloch Yakjehi Committee (BYC).

According to HRCP member, Prof Dr Tauseef Ahmed, police raided his at around 1:30 after midnight. They took him to police station for "interrogation" about his intention to attend the rally. He (Dr Tauseef) and other rights activists reached the police station on receiving the news of his arrest. Police allowed him to go at around 4pm, he added. Meanwhile, the BYC organisers said that several of its workers had been arrested by law enforcement agencies from different parts of Karachi since Wednesday.

Will not be silent in face of Gaza suffering: Harris

WASHINGTON: US Vice President Kamala Harris said that she expressed concern about the situation in the Gaza Strip to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their meeting at the White House.

"I made clear my serious concern about the dire humanitarian situation there, with over 2 million people facing high levels of food insecurity and half a million people facing catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity," Harris told reporters after the closed-door meeting with Netanyahu. The meeting came a day after Netanyahu addressed a joint session of the US Congress, where he claimed that the conflict in Gaza has "one of the lowest ratios of combatants to non-combatant casualties in the history of urban warfare". Harris said that what has happened in Gaza over the past nine months was "devastating".

"The images of dead children and desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety, sometimes displaced for the second, third, or

fourth time. "We cannot look away in the face of these tragedies. We cannot allow ourselves to become numb to the suffering. And I will not be silent," she added.

Harris stated that she assured Netanyahu of her unwavering commitment to ensuring Israel's ability to defend itself. "I told him (Netanyahu) that I will always ensure that Israel is able to defend itself, including from Iran and Iran-backed militias, such as Hamas and Hezbollah," Harris told reporters after meeting with Netanyahu. "From when I was a young girl, collecting funds to plant trees for Israel, to my time in the United States Senate and now at the White House, I've had an unwavering commitment to the existence of the State of Israel, to its security and to the people of Israel," she added.

Harris reaffirmed her backing of Tel Aviv's right to self-defence and denounced Palestinian resistance group Hamas as a "brutal terrorist organisation". "On Oct 7, Hamas triggered this war when it



massacred 1,200 innocent people, including 44 Americans. Hamas has committed horrific acts of sexual violence and took 250 hostages," she said.

Israel, flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire, has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct 7 attack by Hamas. Nearly 39,200 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, and over 90,400 injured, according

to local health authorities. Over nine months into the Israeli onslaught, vast tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine.

Israel is accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which ordered it to immediately halt its military operation in the southern city of Rafah, where more than 1 million Palestinians had sought refuge from the deadly fighting before it was invaded on May 6. — Anadolu Agency

Israeli troops battle Palestinian fighters in Gaza city of Khan Younis

UK drops plans to challenge ICC over Netanyahu arrest warrant

LONDON (AFP): The UK's new government will drop its challenge to arrest warrants sought by an international court's prosecutor for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Downing Street confirmed on Friday, Former prime minister Rishi Sunak's government had told the International Criminal Court (ICC) it intended to submit a challenge to prosecutor Karim Khan's request in May for arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his defense minister Yoav Gallant over alleged war crimes in Gaza. The UK had until Friday to submit its questions to the court in The Hague, but the recently elected Labour government has confirmed it will not follow through with Sunak's plan.

"This was a proposal by the previous government which was not submitted before the election, and which I can confirm the government will not be pursuing in line with our long standing position that this is a matter for the court to decide on," a Downing Street spokeswoman said. "I think you would note that the courts have already received a number of submissions on either side, so they are well seized of the arguments to make their independent determinations," she added. Labour under former human rights lawyer Keir Starmer swept to power on July 4, defeating the Tories in a landslide general election win. It has since announced the resumption of funding for the main UN agency for Palestinian refugees that had been paused under Sunak after Israeli claims that UNRWA members took part in the October 7 attacks against Israel.

Labour wants an immediate ceasefire in Israel's war with Hamas militants in Gaza and the release of hostages. Israel's top ally the United States is still set to challenge the court's authority to issue arrest warrants against Netanyahu. As well as Netanyahu and Gallant, Khan is also seeking warrants against top Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh and Mohammed Deif, on suspicion of war crimes and crimes against humanity. If granted by ICC judges, any of the 124 ICC member states would technically be obliged to arrest Netanyahu and others if they traveled there. However, the court has no mechanism to enforce its orders.

Hamas appear to indicate that serious differences remain between the two sides. Local residents contacted by messenger app, said Israeli tanks had pushed into three towns to the east of Khan Younis, Bani Suhaila, Al-Zanna and Al-Karara and blew up several houses in some residential districts. The military said air force jets hit around 45 targets, including tunnels and two launch pads from which rockets were fired into Beersheba in southern Israel.

Even while the fighting continued around Khan Younis and Rafah in the south, in the northern part of the enclave, Israeli tanks pushed into the Tel Al-Hawa suburb west of Gaza

city, residents said. A Hamas Telegram channel said fighters targeted an Israeli tank in Tal Al-Hawa and shot an Israeli soldier.

Medics said two Palestinians were also killed in an air strike in western Gaza city. More than 39,000 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting in Gaza, according to local health authorities, who do not distinguish between fighters and non-combatants. Israeli officials estimate that some 14,000 fighters from militant groups including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, have been killed or taken prisoner, out of a force they estimated to number more than 25,000 at the start of the war.

Pakistan Navy commissions third offshore patrol vessel



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has commissioned its Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), PNS HUNAIN at Constanta Port, Romania. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Chief of the Defence Staff of Romania General Gheorghita Vlad and Chief of Romanian Navy Vice Admiral Mihai Panait also attended as guests of honour.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized on the significance of the project and highlighted the additional set of capabilities added to PN sphere of operations with the induction of PNS HUNAIN. He

expressed his confidence that induction of these multipurpose and highly adaptive platforms; equipped with state-of-the-art weapons/ sensors suite, will further enhance PN forward presence and perpetual operational readiness vis-à-vis deployment on Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) in the Indian Ocean Region. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf commended the exceptional professionalism and dedication of DAMEN Shipyard and expressed confidence in prospects of future cooperation in delivering cutting edge technologies to Pakistan Navy.

The newly commissioned, PNS HUNAIN is a

multipurpose and highly agile platform of medium size tonnage. The ship is a state of the art electronic warfare, anti-ship & anti-air warfare capable platform with modern self-protection and terminal defence systems.

The ship is also capable of embarking multirole helicopter and has the ability to operate independently as well as part of a Task Force for enhanced duration to undertake number of missions while safeguarding the Maritime interests of Pakistan. The commissioning ceremony was attended by the high level dignitaries from Pakistan, Romania and Netherlands, including Pakistani community in Romania.

Kurram clashes leaves 10 dead

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Clashes over a piece of land dispute in Kurram Agency, a tribal district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have entered their third day, leaving 10 people dead and 55 injured.

The fighting, which has been ongoing in various locations including Bushera, Dander, Balish Khel, Har Kaley, Piwar, and Shapina Shaga Gedo, has seen both sides using heavy weaponry.

A dozen missiles were reportedly fired at Parachinar town late last night. Hospital officials confirmed the death toll and the number of injured. Police reported intense firing in four locations within Kurram Agency.

Deputy Commissioner of Kurram, Javed Mahsud, stated that members of a grand jirga (tribal council) from Hangu and Orakzai have arrived to negotiate a ceasefire. Efforts are underway to bring an end to the violence.

Meanwhile, the main highway in Parachinar remains closed to all traffic, with hundreds of vegetable trucks stranded on the road.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur takes notice of the killing and orders investigation.