

IHC halts EC's probe
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has issued a stay order halting the Election Commission's investigation into alleged electoral fraud in NA-18 Haripur. The court's decision came in response to a petition filed by PML-N candidate Babar Nawaz. PTI leader Omar Ayub had challenged the Election Commission's proceedings and its order dated July 10.

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ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari welcoming the Secretary-General of Commonwealth, Ms Patricia Scotland, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Masoud sworn in as Iran president

TEHRN (AFP): Masoud Pezeshkian has taken oath as the new Iranian president in an ceremony that took place at the Iran's parliament on Tuesday. Pezeshkian was the 9th president in the history of Iran who took the oath of office during the ceremony that began at 16:00 local time in the main hall of the Iranian parliament in Tehran today.

More than 70 foreign delegates, including senior officials and secretary generals of regional and international bodies, attended Iran's President Pezeshkian's swearing-in ceremony, according to the state broadcaster. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei formally endorsed Masoud Pezeshkian as Iran's new president on Sunday who won the July 5 runoff.

He emerged victorious in the second round of the presidential election on July 5 defeating former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, garnering 53.7% of the vote, while Jalili received 44.3%, according to final results announced by the Interior Ministry. The snap election was called shortly after President Ebrahim Raeisi lost his life in a tragic helicopter crash in May.

According to Mojtaba Yousefi, a member of the parliament's presiding board, the president will have 15 days to present his proposed ministers to the parliament for a vote of confidence. As per parliamentary rules, Pezeshkian will officially renounce his lawmaker mandate on July 31, Yousefi added.

Iran's presidential election took place against a backdrop of heightened regional tensions since the Gaza war began in early October, disputes with Western powers over Iran's nuclear programme and domestic dis-



responsibility for the attack that killed 12 children but the Iran-backed Lebanese group has denied any involvement. During the ceremony, parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf gave a speech lambasting what he called Israel's "crimes" in Gaza.

Some Iranians present in parliament chimed: "Death to Israel, Death to America." Iran has made support for the Palestinian cause a centerpiece of its foreign policy since the 1979 Islamic revolution, and hailed Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel. Iran's president is not head of state, and the ultimate authority rests with the supreme leader — a post held by Khamenei for the last 35 years.

On Monday, Pezeshkian warned Israel against attacking Lebanon, saying such an act would have "heavy consequences". Since his election, Iran's new president has reaffirmed support for the "axis of resistance", Tehran-aligned groups such as Hezbollah and the Houthis, that support Hamas against arch-foe Israel. Pezeshkian was the only candidate representing Iran's reformist camp allowed to stand in Iran's presidential election, for which all contenders were approved by the conservative-dominated Guardian Council.

During his campaign, the former health minister, had vowed to try and revive a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers which collapsed in 2018 after the United States unilaterally withdrew from agreement. The deal had given Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear activity. Pezeshkian has recently called for "constructive relations" with European countries, even though he accused them of reneging on commitments to mitigate the impact of renewed US sanctions.

11 die as rains water enter in house's basement at Dara

F.P. Report

PM directs NDMA to accelerate relief efforts

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday telephoned Chairman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. General Inam Haider Malik and directed to take all necessary relief measures as heavy rains lashed across the country.

The prime minister asked the Authority to assess the damages to life and properties caused by the rains and improve coordination with provincial disaster management departments, and the disaster management authorities of AJK and Gilgit Baltistan, according to a PM House press release.

He instructed the NDMA to ensure swift restoration of the high-ways and roads damaged by the rains or landslides. Prime Minister Shehbaz also called for providing all possible healthcare facilities in the rain-affected areas, besides ensuring the supply of relief items including medicines and other commodities.

He expressed deep grief over the deaths caused by heavy monsoon rains and consequent floods. He prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed souls and sympathised with the bereaved families. The prime minister also instructed to extend all possible medical treatment to those injured in the rain-related incidents.

DARA ADAM KHEL: At least 11 people died after rains water has entered in the basement of a house at Dara Adamkhel in Kohat district on Tuesday night. Police and Rescue 1122 spokesman said that the tragic incident occurred at the house of Amjad Khan at Barikhel village, trapping 11 people including three women and six children.

All of them died in the heavy rains water. The bodies were retrieved and laid to rest at their ancestral graveyard. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur have expressed deep condolences with members of the bereaved families.

They prayed for eternal peace of all the victims and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this loss with patience. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic deaths of ten persons in a house in Dera Adam Khel, caused by floodwater entering their basement.

The Governor expressed heartfelt and sympathy to the bereaved families, offering prayers for the elevation of the deceased's ranks and patience for the relatives. Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the need for improved safety measures in light of the increased monsoon rains expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the entire country. He urged that proactive and effective safety measures could help mitigate potential losses caused by the monsoon rains, thus preventing both human and material damage.

Mother, son swept away by flooding nullah in Kaghan valley: Flooding nullah swept away two family members including mother and teenage son in Kaghan valley on Tuesday.

Torrential rain flooded the nullahs of Kaghan valley resulting in damages to residential house, shops and agricultural land. Flooded Manoor nullah of Mahandri swept way two people including 45-year-old Abida Bibi w/o Abdul Rehman and her 13-year-old son Abdul Rehman. Search for the bodies of the two family members was underway.

Mud-sliding claims two lives in Dir: Two minors were killed in rain related incidents in the Lower Dir district here on Tuesday. It continued to rain heavily for more than three hours in the upper parts of the district late on Monday night. Due to heavy rains, streams were flooded while water level in the Panjkora River rose too.

According to locals two children identified as Hameedullah 8 and Junaidullah 5 were killed when a mudslide hit a house at Bosta village of Miskini Dara in the jurisdiction of Mayar police station. Locals retrieved the bodies. Moving scenes were witnessed when bodies of the two minors were brought for a funeral prayer and burial. The Mayar police registered a case.

Meanwhile, Rescue 1122 safely recovered a man identified as Abbas Khan, a resident of Odigram, who had been trapped in the floodwater at Konai Khwar while collecting firewood from the stream. The Lower Dir deputy commissioner has imposed section 144 crpc on bathing and collecting of firewood in the Panjkora and Swat rivers but despite the imposition of ban the incident occurred in the jurisdiction of Balambat police station.

Also on Tuesday the Rescue 1122 divers retrieved the body of Maaz Khan, 13 from the Panjkora River at Jughabanj area of Upper Dir. He had drowned in the river while taking a bath four days ago. The body was handed over to the heirs.

Hundreds of tourists stranded in Kaghan Valley: Hundreds of tourists hailing from different cities across the country were stranded in Kaghan valley as due to landslides and flashfloods causes by heavy rains.

According to details, heavy rains lashed different areas of the valley causing landslides and flooding the nullahs. Flooded nullah at Mahandri swept away the steel girder bridge due to which road was closed completely. Landslides at various localities of Kaghan road also resulted in disruption of traffic and long of queues were witnessed at different localities. Bridge collapse at Mahandri has increased worries of not only the visitors but the local people.

President for stronger cooperation with C'wealth

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasised the need for stronger cooperation with the Commonwealth in areas of climate change, education, parliamentary exchanges and disaster preparedness. He called for enhanced interactions among Parliamentary bodies, particularly young Parliamentarians and students, to further strengthen and promote the bonds of friendship with Commonwealth member states.

The President expressed these views while talking to a delegation led by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday. Welcoming the delegation, the President said that Pakistan, being the founding member of the Commonwealth, attached great importance to this organization for promoting cooperation among member states.

The meeting exchanged views on the consequences of climate change for Pakistan. The President said that Pakistan had suffered a lot due to the impacts of climate change. He informed that over 2 million mangroves had been planted in Sindh to mitigate the impacts of climate change which had also earned \$ 27 million by trading carbon credits in the international market. He also mentioned that the Sindh Government had started constructing 2 million flood-resilient houses in the wake of the floods of 2022.

Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said that Pakistan was facing huge challenges relating to Climate Change and was among the countries most vulnerable to its consequences. She highlighted the Commonwealth's robust engagement with Pakistan and expressed her gratitude for Pakistan's continuous support for the work of the organization.

The President appreciated Secretary-General Patricia Scotland's climate advocacy for Pakistan in meeting the adverse impacts of climate change, especially in the aftermath of the climate-change-induced devastating floods in 2022.

Imran 'ready to hold talks' with military

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan said on Tuesday his party was ready for talks with army as they had never levelled allegations against the military but only criticised it.

Speaking to journalists in Adiala Jail, the former prime minister said the PTI had mandated Mahmood Khan Achakzai for talks with army but no one was nominated from the other side. "We have complete trust on Achakzai," he said.

Imran Khan said the first demand for negotiations was the return of the stolen mandate. The second demand is the release of arrested workers and quashing of cases. The third stage is saving the country, which is not possible without clean and transparent elections, he made it clear. Responding to a question about Fazlur Rehman's call for resigning from assemblies, he said: "He is talking about the third stage".

He also threw his weight behind the ongoing sit-in by the Jamaat-e-Islami, saying he would direct party leaders to join the protest immediately. The PTI founder also talked about the May 9 incidents, saying the CCTV footage could prove their innocence. "If anyone from PTI is involved in May 9, he or she should be brought to justice".

"I never engaged in violence during my 28-year political struggle," he said. He accused the government of trying to wipe out the PTI by pitting it against army, adding that both parties [PML-N and PPP] were about to vanish.

Joining political parties after time lapse

PML-N presents bill in NA against independent MPs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The PML-N on Tuesday tabled the Election Act (Amendment) Bill, 2024, in the National Assembly, calling for a restriction on independent lawmakers joining political parties after a certain period.

Tabled by PML-N MNA Bilal Azhar Kayani, the bill's statement of object and reasons argued that Articles 51 and 106 of the Constitution provided for the allocation of seats to the National Assembly and provincial assemblies, along with the mechanism for the elections. It said they also detailed the treatment for independent candidates that may join a political party within three days of the publication in the official Gazette of the names of the returned candidates.

"The Elections Act, 2017 and rules made thereunder also provide for the right to independent returned candidate or candidates to duly join a political party at his consent. Neither the Constitution nor the Elections Act, 2017 provide for joining a political party by an independent returned candidate or candidates at subsequent stage when they have already exercised the option to join the political party at a point of time as specified in the Constitution.

"To provide clarity in the law in true spirit of the Constitution, this bill has been designed to expressly provide for that no independent candidate or candidates shall exercise his/their right to join a political party at a subsequent stage after the period specified for the purpose in the Constitution and the law," the statement reasoned.

The bill said that a candidate would be

considered an independent instead of a party candidate if they did not file a declaration with the returning officer before the allotment of the election symbol showing their affiliation with a political party through a certificate from the party confirming the same.

"An independent candidate shall not be considered as the candidate of any political party if at later stage he files a statement duly signed and notarised stating that he contested the general elections as a candidate of the political party specified therein." Another change proposed by the bill said that if any political party failed to submit its list for reserved seats within the prescribed period then it would not be eligible for the quota of reserved seats at a later time.

The change proposed said: "Consent for joining of political party by independent returned candidate to be irrevocable. Notwithstanding anything contained in this act or any other law for the time being in force or a judgment, decree or order of any court, including the Supreme Court of Pakistan and a high court, the consent of an independent returned candidate once given for joining a political party for purposes of clause (6) of Article 51 or clause (3) of Article 106 shall be irrevocable."

Immediately after the bill was tabled, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar suggested it would be appropriate if the bill was referred to a committee for input from all political parties. National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq subsequently put the motion to a vote and granted leave to introduce the bill. The development is the latest in the reserved seats saga.

State Dept unaware of Taliban's non-designation as terrorist organization

Jail Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: At the press briefing today in US State Department, Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel expressed his belief that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan is already designated as a terrorist organization. However, *The Frontier Post* pointed out that while the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is listed as a terrorist group by the US Justice Department, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan is not. Mr. Patel seemed unaware of this discrepancy.

Mr Vedant made this reply to a question asked by *The Frontier Post* about a bill recently submitted to US Congress by Republican Congresswoman Nancy Mace which calls for the Taliban

regime in Afghanistan to be designated as a terrorist organization.

The *Frontier Post* also inquired whether the US had lodged any protest with the French government over an alleged insult to Jesus (Prophet Essa, AA) during the Olympics opening ceremony, which purportedly offended both Christians and Muslims. Mr. Patel responded that he was not aware of any such incident and confirmed that it was not an issue the US had raised or intended to raise in the context of the Olympics.

The *Frontier Post* also asked about the recent political developments in Pakistan, where 93 members of parliament have reportedly joined Imran Khan's party, PTI. When asked if the US viewed this

as a positive development indicating that justice was being served by the Election Commission of Pakistan, following orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Mr. Patel reiterated that the US does not take sides in Pakistani domestic politics.

He emphasized that it is for the Pakistani people to decide their political direction. The US, he stated, will continue to partner with any government that serves the interests of both the Pakistani people and the United States. The briefing highlighted the US stance on non-interference in the domestic affairs of other nations while underscoring its commitment to maintaining cooperative relationships based on mutual interests.

Tarar: Imran's call, another conspiracy against state

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar Tuesday said the call made by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder for negotiation with the institution was nothing but another conspiracy against the country.

This is another attempt of the PTI founder to drag the state institutions in his "dirty politics", said the minister in a media talk outside the Parliament. He wondered how the PTI founder quickly changed his own stance on the concept of the neutrality of the institutions. "It is not acceptable for him that the state institutions are neutral and now for his own political benefits, he wants them to be involved in the politics which is regrettable," he added.

The minister believed that the call for negotiation was made as the PTI founder preempted stern action against himself and his party after a raid on their social media cell which was operating in connivance with the enemies of the state. He said further investigation into the operation of the social media cell would expose their alleged relations and connection with the state's enemies who were involved in formulating anti-state policies.

The minister said economic progress of the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also perturbed the PTI founder who had completely molded his harsh stance and tone. "The PTI founder takes another U-turn today by suddenly requesting the institution to appoint a representative for talks," the minister said wondering how quickly he transitioned from his earlier stance of "I won't let go" to "Please talk to me."

Calling out him for his hypocrisy, Tarar said the PTI founder had resorted to the requests for talks after he realized that his shallow threats to the institutions would not work in any way. He made it clear that there would be no compromise on the national security calling the PTI founder a "security risk" for the country due to his alleged involvement in the anti-state activities such as a malicious campaign against the state institutions on social media, attack on the army installations and defiling of the memorials of martyrs on May 9.

According to the minister, the PTI founder had a long list of crimes which included attempts to sabotage a deal of the Government of Pakistan with the IMF to default the country, and a "cipher conspiracy" aimed to harm the

Rauf Hassan sent to jail

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Judicial Magistrate Shabbir Bhatti has ordered PTI spokesperson Rauf Hassan and others to be sent to jail on judicial remand. The decision follows a case registered under the PICA Act, which was heard at the District and Sessions Courts Islamabad. Rauf Hassan and his co-accused were presented in court after their physical remand had concluded.



KARACHI: People puch their bikes to cross accumulated rain water after rain in Provincial Capital. —INP Photo

Sindh, fed govts agree to establish Special Economic zone

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Industries & Production Rana Tanveer, in their meeting at CM House, discussed the revival of the Pakistan Steel Mill plan and the establishment of a Special Economic Zone on the remaining land.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister Industries Jam Ikram Dharejo, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Industries Yasin Shar, and the Federal Minister was assisted by Federal Secretary for Industries Saif Anjum and his team, according to a CM House communique on Tuesday.

The CM said that the proposed Special Economic Zone project was discussed in the cabinet on May 30, 2024. He added that his cabinet proposed the federal government establish the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on the extra land of Pakistan Steel Mill. CM Murad Shah said that

his cabinet was of the view that the 700 acres of land earmarked for the Pakistan Steel Mills plant should be kept intact for the revitalisation of the Steel Mills Plant or setting up a new Steel Mill, any additional requirement of land for the purpose should be worked out mutually.

At this, Federal Minister Rana Tanveer proposed that the Federal Government was ready to allow the Provincial Government to revive the old steel mill plant or install a new one on its 700 acres. The CM said that the 4,840 acres of land may be utilized to set up SEZ for the federal and provincial government. Rana Tanveer said that the federal government from its resources would start developing the SEZ to be given to Chinese investors.

Murad Shah said that the SEZ was located close to the sea, and its infrastructure was in place along with necessary water and gas facilities. He added that these facilities would be enough to

make the SEZ one of the best zones in the country. The provincial and federal governments agreed to complete the paperwork at the earliest so that the zone could be established promptly.

The Special Economic Zone would generate employment opportunities and contribute to the country's economy. The CM said he, with the support of the federal government, would make all-out efforts to revive Pakistan Steel Mills on Pakistan's People's Party mode so that this national asset could be utilized for employment and economic development.

CM Murad Shah said that his government was working hard to strengthen the agro-economy by introducing cropping patterns, strengthening and reviving the industrial sector and providing technical education to the youngsters. This is to generate a technical and non-technical workforce to accommodate them in the growing industrial sector.

Shocking raid at Khyber DC office unveils stash of currency and weapons

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a dramatic operation, federal intelligence agency conducted a raid at the Deputy Commissioner Khyber office (Khyber House), seizing a substantial amount of domestic and foreign currency, along with a significant cache of weapons and explosives.

Acting on a tip-off, the federal intelligence operatives stormed the office and discovered a shocking array of items in the residential quarters of Rizwanullah, a

licensing clerk, and his son Naeemullah, an establishment clerk. The raid led to the seizure of prize bonds worth PKR 7.5 million, 8,750 Saudi Riyals, four SMG rifles, three boxes of cartridges, 14 magazines, three bulletproof vests, two hand grenades, 20 pairs of government-issued shoes, a communication device, and three bandoliers.

Both Rizwanullah and Naeemullah are residents of Malagori. The raid took place as the suspects were in the process of transferring the seized items using two

vehicles brought to Khyber House for this purpose. The incident raises serious questions about security lapses within the DC compound, a high-security zone.

When questioned, DC Khyber, Captain (Retd.) Sanaullah, told Syed Adnan (Reporter Frontier Post) that an inquiry has been launched. He stated, "There is no evidence at this time to suggest that Rizwanullah and Naeemullah have ties to any terrorist organizations. The seized items appear to be personal property, but the investigation is

ongoing to determine the origin of these items."

This discovery in such a secure area has sparked concerns about the effectiveness of security measures and the potential for further breaches. The district administration is under pressure to provide explanations and ensure that stringent measures are in place to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The investigation continues as authorities seek to uncover the full extent of the activities and connections of the two clerks.

Azma Bokhari likens PTI founder to Hitler

LAHORE (APP): Information Minister Punjab Azma Bokhari said that Imran Khan is Hitler-2 and he should be ashamed of accusing Maryam Nawaz of being a fascist.

In a statement, she said, "Imran had Maryam Nawaz arrested in front of her father. The fascist leader who demanded Article 6 cases against political opponents and installed cameras in jails to inflict torture was Fitna Khan." Azma Bokhari said that Maryam Nawaz did not have

Bushra Bibi or any of his four sisters arrested.

"You were the one who fled in fear from a wheelchair. Maryam Nawaz did not make you stand. You were the fascist and personally vindictive ruler who, as Prime Minister, had more than a hundred League leaders arrested in political cases. Despite daily arrests, not a single leader abandoned Mian Nawaz Sharif and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz," she added.

The provincial information minister said that the

"revolutionaries" of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held press conferences in lines after spending just one night in jail. "Don't blame Maryam Nawaz for your crimes of a failed coup and anti-Pakistan conspiracies. Why don't you feel ashamed of a call for negotiations with the army? First, you attack military installations, burn statues of martyrs, and then play innocent. You will have to account for the failed coup of May 9 and face the consequences," she added.

Major drug bust in Peshawar

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant operation, the Excise Intelligence Bureau (EIB-1) and the Excise Police Station Peshawar successfully intercepted a substantial quantity of narcotics being smuggled into the city. The operation took place in the Peshawar Cantonment area, resulting in the seizure of a vehicle laden with drugs.

The officials confiscated a total of 240 kilograms of narcotics from the vehicle bearing registration number LEA 3766. The haul included 192 kilograms of hashish and 48 kilograms of opium.

Acting on intelligence reports, the Excise Intelligence Bureau was informed about a vehicle loaded with narcotics enter-

ing the cantonment area, with plans to move the drugs to a secure location.

Upon receiving this tip-off, a team from the Excise Intelligence Bureau and the Excise Police Station Peshawar mobilized to intercept the vehicle. As the team approached, the suspects attempted to flee, leading to a high-speed pursuit.

The suspects tried to escape through various routes within the cantonment area. The chase culminated near Edwards College, where the fleeing vehicle collided with an oncoming Aqua car, causing significant damage to both vehicles.

The suspects, identified as Junaid Ahmed, son of Bakhtiar Khan, and Asif Jan, son of Khan Mahmood, residents of

Charsadda, were apprehended after a strategic pursuit.

The suspects and the vehicle were taken into custody and transported to the Excise Police Station Peshawar using an official vehicle.

A case has been registered against the suspects under sections 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, and 9D of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Control of Narcotic Substances Act (KPCNSA) and section 427 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) at the Excise Police Station Peshawar Region.

This successful operation underscores the relentless efforts of the Excise Intelligence Bureau and the Excise Police to combat drug trafficking and ensure the safety and security of the region.

CS inaugurates monsoon Tree Plantation campaign

KARACHI (APP): Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah inaugurated the Commissioner Karachi Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign by planting a sapling here on Tuesday.

This campaign will run from July 30 to August 31, during which 200,000 trees will be planted in the city. The Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah said that the primary objective of this campaign was to encourage people to plant as many trees as possible.

He mentioned that environmental change is the biggest challenge of this century, with Pakistan being one of the most affected countries by climate change. Planting trees will help mitigate its negative impacts. He further emphasized that the goal of the campaign is not only to plant trees but also to ensure their growth and care so they become fully grown trees.

He urged government departments and civil society to actively participate in the tree plantation campaign. He directed the initiation of an awareness campaign about the environmental and economic benefits of tree plantation. He emphasized that all segments of society need to play a coordinated role in the protection and promotion of forests.

Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi informed the Chief Secretary that 200,000 trees will be planted in various parts of the city during the campaign.

CM chairs 12th cabinet meeting to discuss key agendas

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presided over the 12th meeting of the provincial cabinet on Tuesday to discuss and make decisions on key agenda items and significant projects.

The CM said that price control and law & order are the main focus of the government, adding that failure to control rates in a district will be considered failure of the Deputy Commissioner concerned. She highlighted that vegetables should be grown locally as per demand of every city, so that transportation costs can be reduced.

The CM said the government is like a mother, it has to take care of everyone. She directed the department concerned to draft guidelines for establishing a housing scheme for artists. She also directed all departments to start paid internship program to better engage fresh graduates.

The Cabinet approved Chief Minister Punjab Climate Leadership Development, Internship Program, under which 03 months internship to 2000 students @ Rs 25000 per month will be given, along with issuing them Social Service Certificates on completion in order to help them get admission in good foreign universities.

The Cabinet directed the Punjab government to pay all charges except insurance cost in the e-bike scheme. Now the Punjab government will pay charges for documentation, registration and number plate etc. Approval was also given to add 10,000 more electric bikes in the scheme.

The Cabinet also approved Chief Minister District Sustainable Development Goals Program, under which about 3000 projects including roads parks, drainage, clean water, street lights, tube wells and others will be completed in the districts at a cost of Rs 80 billion. The completion period of these development project is fixed at one year, no project shall exceed its completion period.

The Urban Unit is task to monitor the successful execution of this first comprehensive plan for the sustainable development of districts. It will not only monitor but would also evaluate the projects with the help of Geographical Information System (GIS).

The Cabinet was briefed that people who are not able to work will get stipend through Himat Card. The Cabinet gave a go-ahead to increase the quarterly spend of Himmat Card holder to Rs 10,500. Madam Chief Minister directed the authorities concerned to go to the doorsteps of special persons for their verification to issue them Himat Card.

The Cabinet approved the establishment of Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority, which will work at provincial, district and tehsil levels. It also approved Higher and School Education e-Transfer Policy.

The Cabinet approved amendments to Section 144 under the Criminal Code, 1898, under which Deputy Commissioner is entitled to impose Section 144 for 30 days, Home Secretary for 90 days, and the Cabinet for a longer period of time. It empowered National Highway and Motorway Police, Punjab Transport Authority and Traffic Police to inspect records of official vehicles and impose fine in case of any violation. It also gave approval of the proposed amendments in clauses 12, 14, 25, 59, 67 of the Procurement Rules 2014 to streamline the procurement process.

Pakistan can bring \$12 bln per month if youths get IT education

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Muhammad Kamran Tessori has said Pakistan can earn \$12 billion monthly as foreign exchange if one million youth be equipped with Information Technology education.

He said that Governor House is providing opportunities for IT Advanced Courses to 50,000 youths while 450,000 male, as well as female students, are being given online training.

In an interview with the APP, Governor Kamran Khan Tessori said as many as 80,000 youths appeared for IT course tests in Hyderabad and around 50,000 youngsters would be selected for IT advanced courses.

The governor said that the youth are undergoing Advanced IT courses in the Governor House, are earning \$ 600 to \$ 800 per month. "If we provide IT education to at least one million youth of the country, we would be able to bring billions dollars in Pakistan, as a result of which the country's economy could be stabilized", he underlined.

Elaborating his vision, Governor Tessori said as soon as he assumed office the governor, he was determined to do something for the country and the province and for this purpose, he chose the IT sector to be worked for.

He said the Governor House was selected as the place from where youth have to be trained so that they could achieve their skill to be used for the country's economic stability.

Kamran Tessori said he would extend such training facilities to other cities and Hyderabad has already been selected for the purpose. He said recently a test was conducted at Niaz Stadium for the selection of the youth and 80,000 young boys and girls appeared in the exam.

Governor hoped that 50,000 youth of the second largest city of the province would be given opportunity to learn IT skill.

Commissioner announces measures for traffic management

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Zaid Bin Maqsood has announced a new initiative aimed at improving traffic flow in the provincial capital.

As part of the strategy, the Traffic Engineering and Planning Agency (TEPA) will conduct operations three times a week to remove illegal signboards from roads. The agency has been instructed to expedite the installation of missing and clearly visible signboards to enhance public guidance.

During a meeting of the Coordination Committee for Traffic Management, the commissioner revealed that AI (Artificial Intelligence) learning technology is now being employed via Safe City cameras to address traffic blockages at five identified points. This technology is expected to help identify and mitigate factors causing traffic disruptions in the future. Additionally, the commissioner emphasized the need for effective planning around 22 key drainage points in Lahore to ensure smooth traffic flow during rainy conditions.

The commissioner also directed that containers should not be removed entirely from any point but rather relocated to avoid blocking roads. He instructed the Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL), and district administration to take action against those disposing of construction debris on roads. TEPA has been tasked with checking lane markings at traffic signals and accelerating the process for improved road management.

The meeting decided that all signboards on Canal Road will follow a uniform pattern, and signboards throughout Lahore will adhere to a standard design. It was reported that all illegal and extra signboards on Mall Road have been removed. A designated area will be allocated for rickshaws, and containers from eight major roads have been repositioned to alleviate traffic congestion.

The meeting was attended by key officials including Deputy Commissioner Lahore Rafia Haider, DG LDA Tahir Farooq, CTO Amara Athar, CEO MCL Ali Abbas Bukhari, Deputy CEO LWMC Muhammad Aurangzeb, Deputy MD WASA Abdul Latif, Additional DG PHA, Chief Engineer TEPA Iqbal Hussain, and officers from Punjab Safe City Authority.

830 kilometers roads adversely affected by floods

KARACHI (APP): The Project Director, Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project Ghulam Asghar Kanasro on Tuesday said that out of total 143 roads affected by flood in interior Sindh measuring 830 kilometers, 45 roads measuring 226 kilometers have so far been completed while another 30 roads measuring 191 kilometers to be completed in next 15 days/ while the remaining 68 roads will be complete by the end of current year.

While briefing the World Bank review meeting, Kanasro said the remaining 68 roads will be completed by the end of current year.

He informed that embankments of the roads so rehabilitated were designed on resilient standards so that future climate shocks can be sustained and further widening of roads can be done with a minimal expenditure. The number of beneficiaries using these roads would be up to the tune of at least five million.

Abhas K Jha, World Bank's Practice Manager for South Asia Infrastructure Resilience Policy and Finance Unit, expressed his satisfaction over the pace and quality of rehabilitation work undertaken by

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Bishop of Lahore calls on Punjab Governor

LAHORE (APP): A delegation, led by Bishop of Lahore Nadeem Kamran, called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the Governor's House here on Tuesday.

Talking on this occasion, Governor Sardar Saleem Haider said that the Christian community is playing a positive role in the development of the country. He said that religious harmony and tolerance is very important for peace in society.

The Punjab Governor said that Pakistan People's Party has always given respect to the minorities. He said that the doors of the Governor's House are open to all people including minorities, students and party workers.

The delegation informed the Governor Punjab about various problems faced by them. The Governor assured the delegation to play a role in solving the problems. The delegation comprised Amanat Barkat, Cyrus Bhatti, Reverend Qaiser, Reverend Zaman Sultan and others.

Three held for illegal currency exchange

LAHORE (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Tuesday arrested three people involved in 'Hawala' and illegal currency exchange activities from the provincial capital, recovering millions of rupees.

On a tip-off, a team of FIA raided various areas and arrested Haris Mahmood, Muhammad Asghar, and Fazal Wahid from Hall Road and Nolakha Bazaar, for their involvement in illicit hawala network and recovered over Rs 11.9 million from them. The authorities also seized documents related to hawala operations, including records, registers, receipts, and mobile phones. Further investigation was underway.

Six killed in rain-related incidents: PDMA

LAHORE (APP): Six people were killed and as many injured in rains-related incidents during the last 24 hours.

According to a report issued by PDMA, 39 people died as well as 113 others were injured due to the rains in July. The PDMA said 61 houses were damaged and 39 animals were killed. PDMA Director General Irfan Ali Kathia said that according to the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, financial assistance would be ensured to the bereaved families. Citizens are requested to stay away from old and dilapidated buildings, he added. He advised citizens to avoid unnecessary travel in bad weather conditions.

From July 30 to August 4, moderate to high flood conditions may occur at Mangala in the Jhelum river. Flood situation may also occur at Marala, Khanki and Kadirabad in the Chenab river. Monsoon rains are expected across Punjab in the next 24 hours, the PDMA added. The spell of monsoon rains is likely to continue till August 4. In case of emergency, contact PDMA helpline 1129, he added.

Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project.

اصلاح/تصحیح

Corrigendum

عوامل الناس کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے۔ بحوالہ اشتہار نمبر INF (P) 1759/24

20-07-2024 مقامی اخبارات میں شائع ہوا ہے۔ مندرجہ ذیل تصحیح کی جاتی ہے۔

1۔ یہ کہ سیریل نمبر 13 کو منسوخ تصور کیا جائے۔

ٹیڈر رجسٹر کرانے کی آخری تاریخ 05-08-2024 صبح وقت 11 بجے ہے۔

جو کہ ای دی دفتر میں دن 12 بجے متعلقہ فرموں کی موجودگی میں پریچریشن کے سامنے کھولے جائیں گے۔

INF (P) 1878/24

میڈیکل سپر سٹریٹ میاں راشد حسین شہید میموریل ہسپتال ہی

Email: mrhsmhospital@gmail.com



Governor lauds lawyers in stability of democracy

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday underscored the crucial role of lawyers in the stability of democracy.

He noted that lawyers have consistently played a positive role in the country's stability, development, prosperity, and democracy.

The legal community is also playing a significant role in providing justice to the public. The professional role of lawyers is of utmost importance for the strength and stability of the state system.

The Governor expressed these views during a meeting with the Tangi Tehsil Bar Association at the Governor House.

The delegation was led by Advocate Muhammad Ibrahim Mohmand, and included former Assistant to the Caretaker Chief Minister Zafarullah Khan, Qasim Ali Khan, Gul Bacha, Nasir Khan, and others.

The delegates briefed the Governor about the problems and challenges faced by the Tangi Tehsil Bar Association. They mentioned that the Tangi Tehsil

Bar Association is the second-largest bar in the province. Over the past two years, the bar has not received any grants from the provincial government, leading to difficulties. They requested the Governor's support for the disbursement of a grant.

The Governor Faisal Kundi assured the delegation of his full support in resolving the issues and stated that the federal government would soon ensure the provision of the grant to the Tangi Bar Association.

He added that establishing and improving the justice system is essential for the betterment and proper functioning of the state.

The Governor emphasized that if every individual in society adopts justice and fairness according to their role and responsibility, societal reform can be achieved, with the legal community bearing a significant responsibility in this regard.

Governor highlights role of minorities in Pakistan's independence

The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday emphasized the significant role of minority communities in Pakistan's independence and pledged to work diligently for their rights.

He made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation from the minority community, led by Kishwar Kumar, a former MPA, and General Secretary of the Minority Wing KP.

During the meeting, discussions also focused on August 11, Minority Day.

The Governor said that the day is celebrated with great enthusiasm across Pakistan to convey the message to the world that minorities face no issues and are living happily in the country.

Governor Faisal Kundi assured that no effort would be spared in addressing the issues faced by minority women also.

He reiterated the Pakistan Peoples Party's long-standing stance of providing services to people at their doorsteps.

Governor Faisal Kundi mentioned that he is visiting churches and other places of worship in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to understand and address the issues faced by minority communities.

Meanwhile, Maqsood

ANP rejects decision to sell land of universities: Spokesperson

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party has rejected the decision of provincial government to sell land of universities and said that it the responsibility of provincial authorities to arrange funds for educational institutions.

In a statement issued by

Bacha Khan Markaz, Provincial spokesman for ANP, Arsalan Khan said that we reject the decision of provincial government to sell land of Bacha Khan Greater Educational Complex.

He said that the decision would negatively impact

overall education system adding that it is astonishing that provincial government deliberately did not took any step to ponder the issue during their eleven years tenure in KP.

ANP spokesman said that the decision to sell land of universities has proved

Ignite signs agreement with LMKR led consortium to operate NIC

PESHAWAR (APP): Ignite National Technology Fund, a company incorporated under the Ministry of IT & Telecom here Tuesday signed an agreement with a consortium led by LMKR to operate the National Incubation Center (NIC) in Peshawar.

This consortium includes prominent partners like Orbit Startups, an international investment accelerator and the most active VC in Pakistan.

According to a press release, the other key partners include LMKR, Accelerate Prosperity, Sybrid (a Lakson Group Company) and Institute of

Management Sciences, Peshawar.

The new chapter of NIC Peshawar is strategically supported by over 80 ecosystem partners, significantly enhancing the opportunities and resources available to NIC Peshawar startups.

NIC Peshawar aims to expand horizons, embrace cutting-edge technologies and foster a global perspective.

This vision will guide efforts to nurture startups that not only excel locally but also compete on the international stage.

Adeel Aijaz Shaikh,



PESHAWAR: National Technology Fund signs agreement with Consortium led by LMKR to operate National Incubation Center in Peshawar.

Training for prosecutors kicks of

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Directorate General Law and human rights Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) conducted 2 days training workshop for District Attorneys and human rights professionals. This training Workshop was inaugurated by Aftab Alam Afridi, Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights Department, on Tuesday.

The workshop was designed and dedicated to promote international humanitarian law and legal education. Its primary objective was to enhance and develop the understanding and application of humanitarian law in District Attorneys, Human Rights professionals, educators and policymakers. It also aimed to foster collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations in

promoting and protecting human rights across the province

In his opening remarks, the Minister for Law Mr Aftab Alam emphasized the critical importance of human rights education in the development of a just, tolerant and equitable society. "This workshop represents a significant step forward in KP Government commitment to uphold and advance fundamental human rights in the province. By equipping legal and HR professionals with the necessary tools, knowledge and skills regarding promotion of human rights, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is trying to ensure a brighter and more just future for all," said the Minister.

Ghulam Ali (Director General Law & Human Rights, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) said that it is also important to remember that the principles of humanitarian law are not just legal mandates; they are reflections of our shared humanity. They remind us of our collective responsibility to protect and preserve human dignity, even in the most trying circumstances. He elaborated that as district Attorneys and human rights professionals, you have the power to make a significant impact in this realm. Your work can save lives, bring perpetrators to justice, and provide solace to those who have suffered.

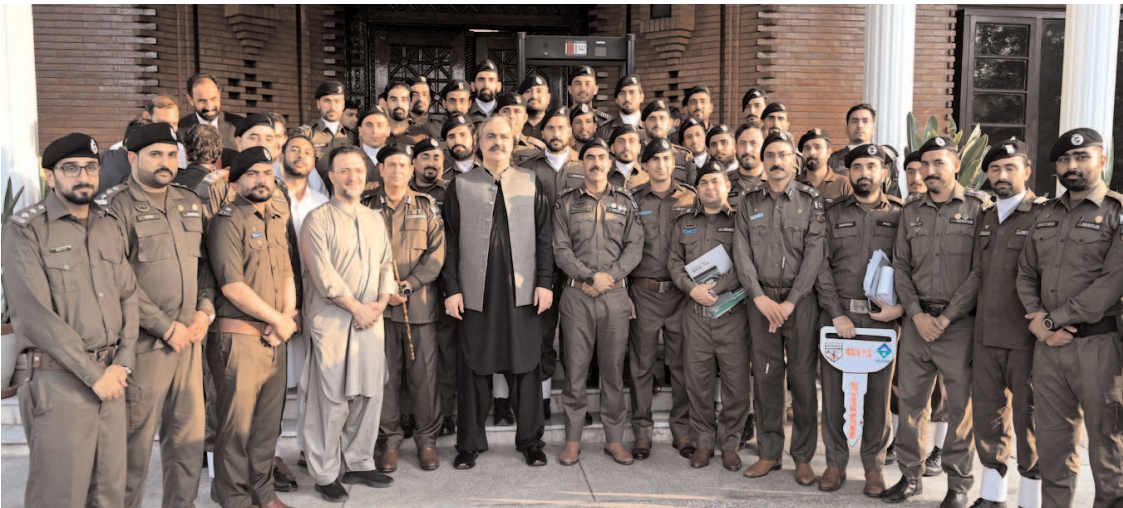
The ICRC, renowned for its humanitarian efforts worldwide, has generously sponsored this workshop. The organization's representative, Miss Edithe Joseph highlighted the importance of continued education and training in the field of humanitarian law. "We are honoured to support this initiative, which aligns perfectly with our mission to promote humanitarian principles and strengthen legal frameworks that protect human values and dignity," stated the ICRC representative.

The workshop features a series of comprehensive sessions covering a range of topics, including:

- Introduction to International Humanitarian Law,
- Mechanisms for the Protection of Human Rights specially in conflict zones and other troubled spots,
- The Role of Legal Professionals in upholding Human Rights,
- Case Studies and Best Practices in Human Rights Advocacy.

Participants also engaged in interactive discussions, group activities, and expert-led presentations designed to deepen their understanding and practical application of humanitarian law.

This workshop marks the beginning of a series of collaborative efforts between Directorate General Law and human rights and the ICRC to promote human rights education and awareness.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in a group photo with Rescue 1122 staff.

Governor expresses grief over deaths

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic deaths of ten persons in a house in Dera Adam Khel, caused by floodwater entering their basement.

Governor expressed heartfelt and sympathy to the bereaved families, offering prayers for the elevation of the deceased's ranks and patience for the relatives.

Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the need for improved safety measures in light of the increased monsoon rains expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the entire country.

He urged that proactive and effective safety measures could help mitigate potential losses caused by the monsoon rains, thus preventing both human and material damage.

Committee holds monthly meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): The monthly meeting of the District Oversight Committee for Central Jail and Human Rights was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Captain (R) Samad Salim Akram.

The meeting was attended by administrative officers, the Health Department, Central Jail Peshawar, the Social Welfare Department, and all committee members.

The committee reviewed the implementation of decisions from the previous meeting.

Members briefed the committee on their departments' performances concerning jail services. Key discussions included the provision of facilities and addressing the problems faced by prisoners.

Deputy Commissioner directed officers to ensure the implementation of critical matters such as the provision of medicines, the cleaning of drains, and other issues.

He also emphasized to maintain better cleanliness in the kitchen, organize monthly sermons by renowned scholars, and ensure the availability of teachers.

Excise police foil drug smuggling bid

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Excise Police and Excise Intelligence Bureau, in a joint operation, successfully thwarted a major drug smuggling attempt and arrested two accused here on Tuesday.

According to excise police, the Peshawar Excise Police and Excise Intelligence team intercepted the drug-laden vehicle after a chase and resistance.

The vehicle attempted to escape through various routes in the Cantonment area but crashed into an oncoming car near Edwards College due to high speed.

During the operation, 240 kilograms of drugs were seized from vehicle number LEA 3766, including 192 kilograms of hashish and 48 kilograms of opium.

As a result of the accident, two suspects in the vehicle, Junaid Ahmad and Asif Jan, both residents of Charsadda, were arrested.

The suspects and the vehicle were taken to Peshawar Excise Police, where a case was registered against them under the Narcotics Act.

Saif: May 9 judicial commission will be last nail in PML-N's coffin

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif said on Tuesday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was all at sea after the KP government decided to from a judicial commission on May 9 related incidents.

He said in a statement that the PML-N especially Maryam Nawaz had been groaning after the

announcement of the judicial commission of the KP government, adding that something fishy was going on in the rank and file of the PML-N.

He went on to say that neither the PML-N led government wanted to form a judicial commission itself neither did it want us to constitute one, citing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan's call

KP to equip 2000 women with technological skills

PESHAWAR, (APP): The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the assistance of TVET Sector Support Programme would equip 2000 women with digital technological skills in the fourth-phase of a phase-wise training programme. In this connection, a consultative workshop of all stakeholders was held at the Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences) with Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher as chief guest here on Tuesday.

Besides, Director IMSciences, Usman Ghani and teaching staff of the institute, Director General (DG) NAVTCC, the representatives of universities, GIZ, British Council, Academia, experts from private sector and public sector authorities were also included in the participants.

Addressing the participants of the workshop, the experts stressed on the elimination of unemployment

and also bringing the nation at par with the developed world.

He said that 15 industrial institutions are providing on-the-job training opportunities to the students, wherein financial stipends will also be paid to the under training students.

The Special Assistant said that about Rs.4 billion will also be disbursed in the shape of credit to the pass out trainees through Akhuwat Foundation to begin a technical or skill based business.

He described the digital skills development of women in the fourth phase of the TVET sector as a very useful initiative and said that the girls will take benefit from this project and assured the full support of the provincial government in this regard.

A question and answer session was also held on behalf of the stakeholders and they shared their views and suggestions to make the fourth phase more useful and effective.

3 including woman held for murder of woman

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital City Police arrested three persons including two men and a woman for alleged murder of a woman on Tuesday.

The arrested accused include husband, sister-in-law and her husband.

A young married woman Mst (S) wife of Ayub, resident of Palosai was murdered and police after reaching the spot shifted the body to hospital for autopsy. On the complaint of Noor Badshah, brother

of the victim registered an FIR against the accused.

SP Cantonment Waqas Rafiq while taking notice of the murder an investigation team comprising ASP Town Nazish Shehzadi, SHO Tehkal Noor Mohammad Khan and investigative officers.

Tehkal Police traced out the involved accused within a few hours and conducted roads along with lady police and arrested them.

The accused include Kamran son of Sher

Dr. Ali Sher defends Ph.D thesis in BioTechnology

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Doctrate of Philosophy (Ph.D) Scholar Ali Sher successfully defended his PhD thesis titled "Citrus limetta's fruit waste assisted green synthesis of metal nanoparticles" at the Center of Biotechnology and Microbiology, University of Peshawar, on Tuesday.

The scholar completed his thesis under the supervision of Dr. Kafel Ahmad (Associate Professor, UoP) and co-supervision of Dr.

Ali Talha Khalil (Lady Reading Hospital MTI), Sher's research focused on developing an environmentally friendly method for producing metal nanoparticles using citrus limetta fruit waste.

Dr. Muhammad Zahid (Chairman, Department of Zoology, Islamia College University, Peshawar) and Dr. Basit Rashid (Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Peshawar) served as external examiners. Professor Dr. Sumera Afzal, Director

of the Center of Biotechnology and Microbiology, congratulated Sher on his achievement and commended his research efforts.

The external examiners praised the scholar's work, highlighting its significance in promoting sustainable waste management and the innovative use of fruit waste for nanomaterial synthesis. Sher expressed gratitude to the Director of COBAM, his supervisors, and collaborators for their support.



In brief

Four killed as car overturns

CHAGAI (PPI): Four persons, including three children and a woman, were killed and seven others injured when a vehicle they were travelling in overturned near Pedak Mustarika check post area in district Chagai on Tuesday. According to levies, a car overturned near Pedak Mustarika check post in district Chagai, resultantly, four persons, including three children and a woman, died and seven others sustained injuries. The bodies and injured were shifted to Basic Health Unit, Pedak. After providing initial treatment, the injured were referred to District Headquarters Hospital Noshki for treatment while the bodies were handed over to the heirs after fulfilling necessary medico-legal formalities. Further investigation was being conducted by the concerned levies authorities.

Kissan Sahulat Center opened

F.P. Report

TOB TEK SINGH: According to the details, Acting Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Malik Abbas Zulqarnain Awan inaugurated Kissan Sahulat Center in Tehsil Pir Mahal of Toba Tek Singh. On the occasion of the inauguration, the Deputy Commissioner said that according to the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif Kissan Sahulat Center has been opened for agro-medicines at 20 percent discount from the Local market which is beneficial to the farmers. This convenience center contains Pesticide, Herbicide, Zinc Sulphate and 42 Product available. He said that the Punjab government is trying to provide all the facilities to the farmers that they are entitled to and requested the farmers to take advantage of this facility center. At the inauguration, Assistant Commissioner Pirmahal Adnan Saqib, Deputy Director of Agriculture (Extension) Toba Tek Singh Dr. Naushir Khan and Assistant Director of Agriculture Pirmahal Mahar Ijaz Saleh were present.

Seven arrested in crackdown

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Sukheki Mandi police arrested seven accused during a crackdown against illegal arms and registered separate cases against accused. According to details, newly appointed SHO Police Station Sukheki Mandi Mian Zaeher Ahmad soon after taking charge of his post launched special crackdown against illegal arms and arrested seven accused from different places on carrying illegal arms. Police recovered different kind of arms from possession of accused and registered separate cases against accused Imran Ali, Nawazshah Ali, Ameer Hamza, Rab Nawaz, Abdul Qayyum resident of village Parr Lakhani, Sanaullah resident of village Bhorra and Imran Ali resident of village Thatha Langer. Meanwhile, the local leader of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party Zaighum Sultan Tarar shoot to death on revenge of litigation. Police registered a case against 6 accused. According to details, local leader of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party Zaighum Sultan Tarar was on its way to village Kot Ishaq from Hafizabad on his vehicle when he reached near village Kolo Tarar six-armed people opened firing to take revenge of litigation. As a result of which, he killed on the spot while accuse flew away from crime scene. Police registered a case against six accused Zaki, Qasim etc. further investigation was underway.



HYDERABAD: Activists of PPP (SB) holding a protest in favour of their demands.

Governance matters

Muhammad Mushtaq Jadun

PAKISTAN'S justice system is adversarial. In this system prosecution and defense present opposing arguments to a judge. So each case is hotly contested, with focus on accusations and winning. Such system is costly as both sides have to engage lawyers, present evidence, both verbal and documentary.

Delays and high cost is thus inevitable which is beyond financial access of aggrieved common man.

Contrary to this inquisitorial justice is based on the principles of Inquiry, with an approach of investigation and truth. More common in Western and some Asian countries like Japan and Korea. Pakistan, as member of United Nations, is signatory to various international protocols and declarations, major being, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Geneva Convention (1949), ILO CEDAW 1979 and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children 1989. With manifold increase in population, urbanisation and technological advancement public service delivery and customer satisfaction is now focus of all the public service providers.

Range of public service

delivery broadened. Meanwhile at world level various indices devised to measure the effectiveness, transparency, accountability, public participation and gender gap in the public service delivery.

Few such surveys are Global Governance Index, Global Gender Parity Index, world Justice Project, rule of Law Index, Human Resource Development Index Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, Gender Forum and Human Freedom Index, just to name a few. Unfortunately Pakistan is not in an enviable position in all such international surveys. The state of Pakistan, being signatory, and member of United ovation is bound, under international law, to abide by these conventions, protocols and declarations. Weak writ of the State, Corruption, inefficiency, costly and delayed dispensation of justice warrants out of box solutions with innovative measures.

In USA Administrative justice forum advises the Ministry of Justice in regard to right of the administrative justice and tribunals system. Article 212 of Constitution of Pakistan States that the Federal Government may establish administrative courts and tribunals.

Fundamental rights as enshrined in our Constitution (articles 8 to 28) and principles of policy (article 38(d) ensure equality of citizens, dignity of man, inexpensive and expeditious Justice. It includes physical, social and financial access to justice and public service delivery.

Establishment of Wafaqi Mohtasib Office under Order of 1983 was first such step. Its working was further reformed under Reforms Act, 2013 and Regulations 2013.

Since its inception it has witnessed forty momentous years of growth and progress. Today the Institution comprises of Head Office, 17 Regional Offices and four Complaints Collections Centre's in all the Provinces and regions of the country. During 2023 a total of 194,106 complaints were received, out of which 193,030 disposed of. It recorded an increase of 18% over the preceding year with an impressive rate of 96% disposal. Substantive increase in registration of Complaints speaks of public trust in the office of Wafaqi Mohtasib Office.

The author is ex-public servant and author of FCR commentary reports on merged tribal areas and non-formal education.

Int'l moot on agriculture kicks off at BKU Charsadda

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: A three-day international conference on agriculture organized by Bacha Khan University has commenced with the aim of devising effective policies to achieve economic stability and increase food production. The conference was inaugurated by Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan, Secretary Higher Education Department Kamran Afridi, and Professor Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan, along with Chinese scientist Jianlong Xu.

Around 100 national and international agricultural experts are participating in the conference which will focus on addressing challenges such as population growth, food security, climate change, peace and security. The experts will discuss possible agricultural developments to tackle these issues.

In his address at the inaugural ceremony, Vice-Chancellor of Bacha Khan University Professor Zahid Hussain, Secretary Higher Education Department and Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan highlighted the impact of water scarcity, outdated agricultural systems, decreasing arable land, climate change, and terrorism on agricultural productivity. They emphasized the need to adopt modern agricultural technologies, remove obstacles to agricultural development, reduce economic dependence on international financial institutions, and take steps towards economic stability and employment generation.

The conference will stress that agricultural development is essential for industrial growth and that the agricultural sector is the backbone of a country's economic development. Therefore, reforms in the agricultural sector are crucial to put the country on the path to progress.

Girl injured

GUJRANWALA (INP): A girl was critically injured as she jumped the roof top of a guest house here on Tuesday.

According to details, unidentified accused attempted to rape a young girl in a guest house located in jurisdiction of Model Town police station, Gujranwala. The girl in attempt to save her of being raped jumped down the roof top of the guest.

Assessment of rain-related damages directed

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Muhammad Ayaz has directed the administration of Mardan and Swabi to immediately complete the survey of the loss of life and property caused by the recent rains in Mardan Division, especially in Swabi district, so that the losses of the affected people can be immediately remedied.

He also directed to inspect the machinery of the concerned institutions and keep it ready to deal with any sudden calamity in both the districts, in the meeting, Additional Commissioner Naem Akhtar, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Mian Behzad Adil, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Nasrullah, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners,

Additional Assistant Commissioners, Secretary Regional Transport Authority, Revenue and Municipal Officers participated. Commissioner Mardan Division was informed about the performance of administrative officers in both the districts. Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Ayaz appreciated the performance of the administrative officers of both districts regarding the inspection of development projects, handling of public complaints, collection of various provincial taxes and campaign against polythene bags and directed to deal with the revenue cases pending in different courts.

The process should be accelerated. He directed the authorities concerned to create a mechanism to regularize the system of various contracts through

stamps so as to discourage its illegal use. Commissioner Mardan Division issued orders to make the campaign against polythene bags effective in both districts and seek police assistance to stop its delivery at district entry points.

In the meeting, the ongoing campaign against electricity theft and kanda culture was also reviewed and it was decided to intensify the efforts in this regard. Commissioner Mardan emphasized on the need to improve service delivery in all cases and to take immediate measures to solve public problems and periodically review the ongoing development schemes in their respective areas as per the good governance agenda of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

Complete cease-fire in Kurram: Commissioner



F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Mutasim Billah Shah has said that Alhamdulillah, due to round-the-clock efforts of the district administration, security forces, divisional grand jirga leaders and tribal elders, a complete ceasefire has been achieved at various places in Kurram District and the uncertainty has been ended. The bunkers have been handed over to the Police, Pak Army and FC.

These views were

expressed by the Commissioner Kohat Division while presiding over the Grand Jirga comprising of Divisional Leaders and Tribal Elders held in the office of the Deputy Commissioner Kurram.

On this occasion, Regional Police Officer Kohat Sher Akbar Khan, Deputy Commissioner Kurram Javedullah Mehsud, Jirga Members, Tribal Elders and other concerned officers were present.

Commissioner Kohat while paying rich tributes to the chiefs of Divisional Grand Jirga said

that their role in establishing peace and order in the Kurram district is commendable. He further said that he will continue to visit Kurram district time to time till resolution of the problems of the district concerned on permanent basis. He added that he will be in close contact with the local leaders to develop an atmosphere of trustworthiness among all the sects here so that no untoward incident happens in the future. At the end, special prayers were made to make Kurram district a cradle of peace on a permanent basis.

Chaghorzai Democratic Movement elect cabinet

F.P. Report

BUNER: Chaghorzai Democratic Movement (CDM) chose Arshad Khan Buner, Chairman, Abdul Waris Khan, Vice Chairman, Sanaullah and Jameel Shah have been chosen as cabinet members for Chaghorzai Democratic Movement.

A meeting of the people of Chaghorzai has been held at the location of Shaheedah Sar to form the cabinet of Chaghorzai Democratic Movement. People belonging to social organizations and sectors have participated and one by one have introduced themselves on the stage and expressed their commitment to face the people of Chaghorzai from the platform of Chaghorzai Democratic Movement, apart from political affiliation.

They will sacrifice their lives and money for the solution of problems and difficulties. On this occasion, opinions were taken

and the names of the cabinet were chosen by consensus and it is hoped that the officials of the cabinet will work for the welfare of the people of Chaghorzai. Imtiaz will bring his energies to work.

Chairman of Chaghorzai Democratic Movement, Arshad Khan, Buner Abdulwaris Khan, Sanaullah Khan and Jameel Khan have thanked the people of Chaghorzai during the election process and assured that they will spend their full strength for the development of Chaghorzai Tehsil and will work for the welfare of the people.

The CDM chairman and cabinet members claimed, very soon the volunteers for Chaghorzai Democratic Movement in other areas of Chaghorzai will be inducted. They announced they will meet with DC Buner and inform them about the problems and difficulties faced by the people of Chaghorzai and to ask them to take time and finalize

day to visit Chaghorzai. They will request to be specified issues so that practical work can be started in true sense for Chaghorzai people, they concluded. At the end grand "Mango Party" was arranged in the honour of the participants.

3 electrocuted

TOBA TEK SINGH (INP): Three persons were electrocuted while three were injured when an iron rod came into contact with a live wire while erecting a tent at Sasta Bazaar in Pir Mahal near Toba Tek Singh on Tuesday.

The incident took place at the city's main bazaar. The deceased were identified as Zafar, Babar and Bashir. On the other hand in Gujranwala, the owner of a pan shop was killed when a speeding motorcycle rammed into him.

Kumrat valley shines as tourists flock to monsoon paradise

DIR (APP): Kumrat Valley is basking in its monsoon glory, transforming into an idyllic retreat for tourists and adventure sports enthusiasts arriving from plain districts of KP and Punjab provinces amid great fun and laughter.

The valley's charm is heightened during monsoon by the melodic chirping of birds in the Deodar forests and the delicate hovering of butterflies over vibrant seasonal flowers take tourists over the lap of serenity. The region's unique weather patterns, featuring playful interludes of clouds and sunshine alongside moderate to erratic rains, have been a major draw for visitors and adventure enthusiasts seeking respite from the sizzling heat.

The cool breeze emanating from snow clad hills of Kumrat valley and refreshing climate add to the allure of this picturesque locale. Families are relishing the serene atmosphere, with children playing joyfully around them and indulging in delicious Chappli Kabab and green tea on the banks of the Kumrat River.

Among the delighted visitors

is a family of Qaiser Khan from Wapda Town Peshawar, who expressed their elation at finally experiencing their dream destination during the monsoon. There are many hidden jewels in Pakistan which are yet to be explored – be they natural sites, valleys or minerals- and Kumrat Valley is one of them which was explored few years back and now has become one of the favorite destinations for many national and international tourists due to its untouched beauty.

Known for breathtaking natural beauty, deodar forests and magnificent waterfalls, Kumrat Valley's beauty is still not fully discovered by the tourists who fell into the lap of serenity once they reach the valley. Located some 45 kilometers of the Thall town on the bank of River Punjokora mostly originated from Dir, Kohistan and Swat's snow-capped mountain peaks of over 81,000 feet sea level, Kumrat Valley's hotels and makeshift inns are jam-packed with tourists with many witnessed living in tents to enjoy its pleasant weather.

Impressed by its deodar forest, snowfall and waterfalls, Gulzar Khan, a former Conservator of Forests told APP here that Kumrat Valley's black Cheshma (waterfall), brown trout fish and cool breeze originating from snow-clad mountains of Gabral Kohistan, Dir and Swat impressed him the most. Enjoying "Sohni Dharti" song with his family on mobile phone while preparing tea on stove and children playing football around him, he said deodar and chairpine trees add charm to the valley and their cutting must be stopped by providing gas facilities to local people.

Urging the provincial government to regulate hotel room charges for the facilitation of tourists, he said the hoteliers were charging people heavily due to lack of camping pods and rest houses. Unnerved by the poor condition of Pathrak-Thall Bazaar, he said roads leading to Kumrat were needed to be repaired immediately so that tourism could be promoted further here as better road infrastructure would bring more people to

the valley which would mean more income generation and uplift in the well-beings of the locals.

Dr Zilakat Malik, former Chairman, Economics Department University of Peshawar, said tourism was a big source of bringing direct foreign investment and bolstering rural economy. He claimed that China had earned about USD 814.1 billion from tourism and travel industry in 2022, Malaysia's 13.13 billion ringgit and Indonesia's tourism share was 413.73 trillion rupiah in 2021.

Despite enormous tourism potential and home to Ghandhara and Indus Civilizations together with five mountain peaks of over 8,000 meter height, he said Pakistan was unable to earn much from tourism and there was a need to promote the country's splendid sites enriched with enormous beauty by using digital technology. "Today was the age of digital media and Kumrat valley's beauty needs to be showcased properly through digital technology, documentaries and films abroad to attract foreign

tourists, which is inevitable to bolster the rural economy," he said.

These hidden treasures requires to be projected through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other digital media tools with small videos to take the country out of existing economic challenges. Tourism in Pakistan especially in Gilgit Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would grow after completion of CPEC projects and time has come to increase linkages between Pakistani and foreign tourist companies for the promotion of tourism and generation of employment.

Swat was going to become a hub of international and domestic tourism due to its unique features of snowfall, watersports, adventure tourism, skiing and trout fish, adding more facilities at Kumrat valley would reduce tourists' load on Kalam and Malam Jabba. Omair Khattak, General Manager Investment, Tourism Authority Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said Kumrat Valley and Madaklasht would become a hub of tourism

and adventure sports after construction of a cable car between these scenic valleys of Dir Upper and Chitral Lower.

The proposed Kumrat-Madaklasht cable car would be constructed with assistance of the World Bank. "The 14 to 16 kilometer long cable car would have 5,280 meter height with facilities of a base station at Kumrat, intermediate stop stations and car parking plazas for 500 vehicles," he said, adding base station hotels, mosques, hydro plants, walking tracks and final station at Madaklasht would also be built under the project.

Khattak said the feasibility study of the mega project had been started and the project would be completed in seven to eight years. Besides development of infrastructure and construction of access roads, he said additional aspects such as waste management would also be evaluated. The cable car project on completion would attract an estimated 1.2 million domestic and international tourists annually to Malakand division giving a real boost to the tourism KP.



Ex-SA President Zuma expelled from ANC

CAPE TOWN (BBC): South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has been expelled from the African National Congress (ANC), the party he once led, after campaigning for a rival party in the 29 May general election. The ANC's disciplinary committee found Mr Zuma guilty of "prejudicing the integrity" of the party by joining uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and has given him three weeks to appeal against its ruling.

"His platform is dangerous, appeals to extremist instincts in our body politic and riles up a political base that may foment social unrest," the ANC said in a statement. MK has said that Mr Zuma was not informed of the decision taken by a "kangaroo court". Mr Zuma, 82, was an ANC veteran but fell out with the party after he was forced to quit as president in 2018 over corruption scandals. He has always denied any wrongdoing.

He had been suspended by the ANC in January after creating MK, which now sits in opposition to the ANC-led government in parliament. In a statement, MK said it was shocked to learn from media reports that Mr Zuma had been expelled. The disciplinary proceedings were conducted "in a manner akin to a kangaroo court", the party said. "It is a foundational legal principle that no person, not even those accused of a serious crime, should be punished or sentenced in their absence," it added.

The ANC's disciplinary



committee held a virtual hearing, which Mr Zuma refused to attend, saying he wanted to be physically present. At a press conference confirming Mr Zuma's expulsion, ANC secretary-general Fikile Mbalula said the party had refused to agree to Mr Zuma's presence at the party's headquarters as he "wanted a rally". "Even when they [MK supporters] were told that the disciplinary hearing was virtual they still came here. So it tells you that Jacob Zuma wanted a movie," he added. Mr Mbalula denied that Mr Zuma had not been informed of his expulsion. "[The] kangaroo court is that MK. Who are they to lecture people about a due process?," Mr Mbalula said. He added that the ANC did not think that at any point in its history it would have to deal with a former president "campaigning decisively against the party he was a member of". South Africa's current President Cyril Ramaphosa replaced Mr Zuma in 2018, promising to clean up government.

But in the 29 May elections, the ANC suffered its

worst result in 30 years, pushing the ruling party to form a coalition to share power. uMkhonto we Sizwe - meaning "spear of the nation" - became the country's third-largest party, largely by taking votes from the ANC. It won almost 15% of the vote and obtained 58 seats in the 400-member parliament. MK became the official opposition in parliament after the second-biggest party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), joined the coalition government.

Mr Zuma was barred from being an MP because he was given a 15-month prison sentence in 2021 for contempt of court. He defied a court order to appear before an inquiry investigating corruption during his nine-year presidency. His arrest sparked the deadliest riots since the end of white-minority rule in 1994 and led to the deaths of more than 300 people. And he now faces corruption charges over a 1999 arms deal. He has chosen an ex-judge, who was impeached for gross misconduct, to lead MK in parliament.

Two children killed near Liverpool

LONDON: Two children have died following a knife attack in northwest England, police say, adding they had arrested a 17-year-old male on suspicion of murder and attempted murder. Nine others including other children were injured, six of them critically, in the attack on a Taylor Swift-themed yoga and dance workshop in Southport town near Liverpool.

Police said they had seized a knife from the suspect after being called to a property in Southport at 11:50 am (10:50 GMT). They added that the motive behind the incident was unclear. The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) said it "dispatched 13 ambulances along with specialised resources" and had taken patients to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Aintree University Hospital and Southport and Fomby hospital.

Alder Hey Children's Hospital said its emergency department was extremely busy, asking parents only to bring their children in if it was urgent. Meanwhile, police officials have restricted flights to Southport and have cordoned off the location where the incident occurred. Local business owner Colin Parry, one of the people who called police, told the domestic Press Association news agency that he believed several "young girls" had been stabbed.

"The mothers are coming here now and screaming. It is like a scene from a horror movie," Parry told the UK PA news agency. "It's like something from America, not like sunny Southport," he added, noting that the police have now caught the suspect. British PM Starmer, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper and Mayor of Liverpool Steve Rotherham all have expressed their concern and said that they're monitoring the situation closely. Starmer said the incident was "horrendous and deeply shocking". "My thoughts are with all those affected. I would like to thank the police and emergency services for their swift response. I am being kept updated as the situation develops," he added on X. Knife crime incidents have become increasingly common across England and Wales in recent years. According to the Home Office, in the 12 months to December 2023, some 14,577 offences were recorded.

Prior to winning the general elections in July, Starmer had vowed to tackle knife crime in the UK, and said it would be "an absolute priority". At the King's Speech in July, Starmer's government introduced a new crime bill for the country that also seeks to crack down on the sale of ninja and samurai swords, in an effort to tackle knife crime. — Aljazeera

Germany lacks leadership

BERLIN: Three days after Russia invaded Ukraine, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivered a speech to the Bundestag, the federal parliament, reflecting a radical swerve in foreign policy. He called for immediate military aid to Ukraine, economic sanctions against Russia and rebuilding of Germany's neglected armed forces with a special 100 billion-euro (\$108bn) fund.

"We are living through a watershed era," Scholz said. "And that means that the world afterwards will no longer be the same as the world before." It became known as his Zeitenwende speech, after the word meaning epochal change. Two and a half years later, Germans are divided. Some have sharply criticised Scholz for falling short of his stated ambitions. "There has been no Zeitenwende in Germany," Benjamin Tallis, an international relations expert at the Centre for Liberal Modernity, a Berlin-based think tank, told Al Jazeera. "There has been no major strategic transformation that leads Germany to rise to its security responsibilities or to meet the geopolitical moment." He and the other experts interviewed for this article spoke to Al Jazeera on the sidelines of a recent symposium, "Zeitenwende: The changing role of Germany in the Baltic", convened by Cambridge University's Centre for Geopolitics. — Aljazeera

Protests break out in Venezuela after election results

CARACAS (AP): Venezuelans have taken to the streets after the electoral authority officially declared President Nicolas Maduro the winner of an election that the opposition says was marred by fraud. Protests have erupted across the country, with demonstrators even toppling a statue of Maduro's predecessor, Hugo Chavez, in the state of Falcon.

In the Petare area - one of the poorest parts of the capital, Caracas - demonstrators shouted slogans against the president, and some masked young people tore down his campaign posters from lampposts. Some protesters were also headed towards Miraflores, the presidential palace.

Police were deployed in large numbers across the city, and members of the National Guard were seen to be firing tear gas to disperse demonstrators. There were also reports of "colectivos" - pro-Maduro paramilitary groups - firing at protesters. "It's going to fall. It's going to fall. This government is going fall!" some of the protesters shouted. Public anger swelled after the National Electoral Council (CNE) formally confirmed that Maduro had been re-elected by a majority of Venezuelans to another six-year term as president "for the period 2025-2031".

But the CNE, which is controlled by Maduro loyalists, has not released the tallies from each of the 30,000 polling stations across Venezuela, fuelling political tensions in the South American nation and calls for greater transparency. Opposition representatives said the counts they collected from campaign representatives at the centres show presidential candidate Edmundo Gonzalez trouncing Maduro. In a press conference, opposition leader Maria Corina Machado claimed her coalition had more than 70 percent of the votes tallied and catalogued in an online database. "They show we have a president elect, and that person is Edmundo Gonzalez," Machado said, turning to the presidential candidate, who stood by her side.

The CNE, however, maintained Gonzalez had failed to defeat the president, earning 44 percent of the votes compared with Maduro's 51 percent. Speaking in a televised address from Caracas, Maduro, 61, claimed, without providing evidence, that "an attempt is being made to impose a coup d'etat in

Venezuela". "We already know this movie, and this time, there will be no kind of weakness," he added, saying Venezuela's "law will be respected". As Maduro spoke, demonstrators began to gather in Caracas, and some tried to block freeways, including one that connects the capital with a port city that is home to Venezuela's main international airport.

Opposition leaders also rejected Maduro's allegations, calling for peaceful protests across the country. "The Venezuelans and the entire world know what happened," Gonzalez said in his first remarks since the results were announced. Later, during the press conference, he reiterated his claim to victory while urging supporters to remain calm. "I speak to you at peace, knowing the truth. And I want to tell all the Venezuelan people that their will expressed yesterday through their vote will be respected. We will make sure that happens," Gonzalez said.

"That is the only path towards peace. We have in our hands the records that show our triumph - our overwhelming triumph that cannot be reversed." Eating breakfast on a bench next to an unopened business in Caracas, 28-year-old voter Deyvid Cadenas said he felt cheated. "I don't believe yesterday's results," Cadenas, who cast a ballot in a presidential election for the first time, told AP. As the political uncertainty continues to swirl, election observers and foreign leaders from around the world have urged Venezuela to release a full breakdown of the election results.

A spokesman for United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the UN chief was calling "for complete transparency" and "the timely publication of the election results and their breakdown by polling stations". "The secretary-general trusts that all electoral disputes will be addressed and resolved peacefully and calls on all Venezuelan political leaders and their supporters for moderation," Stephane Djarric told reporters at UN headquarters in New York. The Carter Center, which sent a team of electoral observers to Venezuela for the election, also called on the electoral authority to immediately publish the presidential voting results by polling station. "The information contained in the polling station-level results forms as transmit-

ted to the CNE is critical to our assessment and important for all Venezuelans," the group said in a statement.

Maduro, who first came to power in 2013 after the death of his mentor and predecessor Chavez, has presided over an economic collapse that has pushed millions of people to leave the country. Venezuela also has been isolated internationally amid sanctions imposed by the United States, the European Union and others, which have crippled an already struggling oil industry. Reporting from Buenos Aires, Argentina, Al Jazeera's Teresa Bo said there was an immediate sense of disappointment amongst Venezuelans "who were hoping for change" at the ballot box.

Many also expressed anger over the election results and how they were announced. "What we saw happening is unprecedented in Venezuela. It was about one o'clock in the morning, and the president of the electoral council came out and announced that Nicolas Maduro was the winner." Bo noted. "However, he never showed the results. We have never seen something like this." Venezuela's Attorney General Tarek Saab, a Maduro ally, said that his office had launched an investigation into an alleged cyber attack on the electoral system that slowed the vote count. Saab accused opposition leaders - including Machado - of being involved, but did not offer any evidence to back up his claim. "What we're seeing from the government right now is a government that is saying it won the elections, saying that it's under attack," Bo reported.

This is not what people on the streets are saying. Millions of Venezuelans are convinced that there was massive fraud." A cacophony of banging came from Caracas's Petare and 23 de Enero areas - traditionally major working-class bastions for the United Socialist Party - as neighbours took part in a "cacerolazo", a traditional Latin American protest in which people bang pots and pans. "Maduro yesterday shattered my greatest dream, to see my only daughter again, who went to Argentina three years ago," retiree Dalia Romero, 59, told the Reuters news agency in Maracaibo, a city in northwestern Venezuela. Advertisement

Diplomatic spat erupts between Hungary and Poland

WARSAW (AP): A diplomatic spat has erupted between Poland and Hungary that lays bare the deep tensions within Europe over how to deal with Russia when it is waging war on Ukraine. Poland, like Germany, France and most other European nations, is a staunch ally of Ukraine while Hungary's populist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is widely considered to have the warmest relations with the Kremlin among all EU leaders.

The Polish government has been openly critical of Hungary for its stance. The spat erupted when Orbán lashed out at Poland over the weekend. "The Poles are pursuing the most sanctimonious and the most hypocritical policy in the whole of Europe. They are lecturing us morally, criticizing us for our economic relations with Russia, and at the same time they are doing business with the Russians and buying oil indirectly, and running the Polish economy with it," Orbán said. That triggered a

denial and angry response from a Polish deputy foreign minister, Władysław Ciolek, who said: "We do not do business with Russia, unlike Prime Minister Orbán, who is on the margins of international society - both in the European Union and NATO." Poland was once dependent on Russian energy sources, but has been working for years to wean itself off Russian oil and gas. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Poland decided to end its Russian oil imports.

Magda Jakubowska, vice president of Visegrad Insight, a policy journal focused on Central Europe, said Poland might still have some Russian oil in reserves from past deliveries, but that it no longer imports oil from Russia. The Druzhba pipeline, which brought oil from Russia to Poland, "is no longer working," she said. About 50% of Poland's imports now come from Saudi Arabia and some from Norway, she said. She said it was possible some of

the oil imports arriving in Poland could be traced indirectly to Russia, but that the amounts would be insignificant. A year ago Orbán could have made his claim, but not now, she said. "Maybe he hasn't been updated," Jakubowska said. Bartoszewski added that Orbán should join a union with Putin and even suggested he should leave Western organizations. His comments were reported by the Polish state news agency PAP. Hungary has found itself isolated in the EU due to its rogue approach to Russia, and friendliness to China as well. Top EU officials have been boycotting informal meetings hosted by Hungary, which now holds the EU's rotating presidency. "If you don't want to be a member of a club, you can always leave," Bartoszewski said. "I don't really understand why Hungary wants to remain a member of organizations that it doesn't like so much and which supposedly treat it so badly."

The digs didn't end

there, Hungary's Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó shot back at Bartoszewski on Facebook by saying: "For a long time we tolerated the provocations and hypocrisy of the current Polish government with the intention of preserving the Polish-Hungarian brotherhood, but we have had enough." Poland and Hungary historically have strong ties. Orbán got along very well with the conservative populists who governed Poland from 2015-2023 due to their shared views on migration and the EU. They both opposed allowing migrants from the Middle East and Africa into Europe. And both governments accused the EU of seeking to take away powers from the nation states. Those ties only began to sour when Russia invaded Ukraine, aggression that Poles also feel as an existential threat in the region. They have gotten worse since a pro-EU government took over in Warsaw under Prime Minister Donald Tusk in December.

86% of Gaza now under Israeli evacuation orders

NEW YORK: The United Nations says 86 percent of the besieged Gaza Strip is now under Israeli evacuation orders as 33 more Palestinians are killed in yet another day of attacks and displacement. Thousands of Palestinians fled the Bureij and Nuseirat refugee camps in central Gaza after the Israeli army issued new evacuation orders.

"We have been displaced from the north. They told us: 'Leave to central Gaza, then to Rafah.' We went to Rafah, then went back up to Nuseirat. We got stuck. Then we received instructions to move further south towards al-Mawasi," Mohammed Naserallah, a displaced Palestinian, told Al Jazeera. "Our life is in pieces. We have nothing, no one but God." Philippe Lazzarini, head of UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, said 86 percent of the besieged enclave is under evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military.

Kahder Baroud, a blind Palestinian man wearing black sunglasses, said he received a call from the Israeli army to leave his house in Nuseirat. "We are already struggling with our situation because my daughters and sons are also blind. ... We live in fear, in frightening circumstances. We left home, but we don't know where we can go now," he said. Reporting from Deir el-Balah, also in central Gaza, Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud said recur-

rent mass displacements have become the norm with the Israeli military.

"The majority of the displaced population is flowing to the Deir el-Balah city that is already packed with displaced families and has no sufficient space or resources to accommodate people," he said. In addition, schools that have been turned into shelters for the displaced have been targeted. "The attacks on schools in the past two days have shattered any sense of safety left for people staying in evacuation centres and has pushed people into further internal enforced displacement. There is literally no safe place in Gaza," he said. Meanwhile, at least three people were killed and others wounded when the Israeli army again bombarded al-Mawasi, an area in southern Gaza previously declared a "safe zone" by Israel.

Officials in Gaza said 33 Palestinians were killed across the enclave while the overall deaths since October were reported at 39,363 with more than 90,000 others wounded. An estimated 1,139 people were killed in Israel during the Hamas-led attacks on October 7 and more than 200 were taken captive. The relentless Israeli offensive has also worsened Gaza's health emergency as its Ministry of Health declared it a "polio endemic area". In a statement on Telegram, the ministry said the situation "poses a health threat to the residents of

Gaza and neighbouring countries".

The World Health Organization (WHO) has also confirmed the spread of the life-threatening polio virus, detecting it in sewage samples. Already scarce supplies of drinking water in the densely populated Gaza Strip are at risk of being contaminated by the virus. "This is only the start of the wave of diseases the Gaza Strip is going to face," Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary said, reporting from Deir-el Balah.

"Palestinians have been living in makeshift tents without any bathrooms, without any hygiene, without access to water, sanitation. Sewage is everywhere," she said. On Friday, the WHO said it was sending more than one million polio vaccines to Gaza to be administered over the coming weeks to prevent children from being infected. Israel's military also said it would start offering the polio vaccine to soldiers in Gaza. Also, Israel and Hamas traded blame over the lack of progress in reaching a ceasefire and hostage release deal in the Gaza Strip despite international mediation. Hamas accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of adding new conditions and demands to a United States-backed truce proposal. Netanyahu, however, denied making any changes and said Hamas was the one insisting on numerous changes to the original proposal. — Aljazeera

Russian commander killed in sandstorm ambush in Mali

BAMAKO (BBC): A commander in a Russian mercenary group has been killed in Mali following an attack by rebel fighters during a sandstorm, the group said. The military regime in the West African state had turned to the notorious Wagner group in 2021, seeking support in fighting jihadist and separatist forces.

The Russian outfit - which has now morphed into a group named Africa Corps - said it had joined Mali's military in "fierce battles" against separatist rebels and jihadist militants last week. However, the separatists launched a major attack, killing an estimated 20 to 50 mercenaries, sources close to Africa Corps told the BBC.

Similarly, several Russian military bloggers reported that at least 20 were killed in the ambush near the north-eastern town of Tinzaouaten. In an official statement posted to Telegram, the Russian mercenary group did not specify how many of their troops had died, but they confirmed suffering "losses". This included a commander, Sergei Shevchenko, who was killed in action. The mercenaries initially "destroyed most of the Islamists and put the rest to flight", the statement said.

"However, [an] ensuing sandstorm allowed the radicals to regroup and increase their numbers to 1,000 people," it added. The Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace,

Security and Development (CSP-PSD), a separatist group dominated by the Tuareg ethnic group, claimed responsibility for the attack. "Our forces dealt a decisive blow to the enemy columns," AFP quoted the CSP-PSD's spokesperson as saying. Prisoners were taken and "a large amount of equipment and weapons were damaged or captured", the spokesman added. The rebel group has shared video footage which shows numerous white men in military fatigues lying motionless on a sandy plain. Another shows a group of mostly black men wearing blindfolds with their hands tied behind their backs. The BBC has not been able to confirm the authenticity of the videos.

bathrooms, without any hygiene, without access to water, sanitation. Sewage is everywhere," she said. Dr Tanya Haj-Hassan, a paediatric intensive care physician, told Al Jazeera in an interview earlier this month that the presence of the polio virus in sewage was a "ticking time bomb".

"Normally if you have a case of polio, you're going to isolate them, you're going to make sure that they use a bathroom that nobody else uses, make sure that they're not in close proximity to other people, [but] that's impossible," she said. "You have everybody clustering in refugee camps at the moment without vaccines for at least the past nine months, including children who would otherwise have been vaccinated for polio and adults who, in the setting of an outbreak, should receive a booster, including healthcare workers." — Aljazeera

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US demonstrates

SPEAKING with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in the Laotian capital of Vientiane on Saturday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted that although the United States and China had restored communication on many levels and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries had also increased, the US has not stopped its containment and suppression of China, and it has even intensified its efforts in that regard.

In yet another move that only serves to show the truth of Wang's words, the US announced on Sunday that it would revamp its military command in Japan to deepen coordination with its ally's forces, with US and Japanese officials falsely portraying China as the "greatest strategic challenge" facing the region. US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, while trying to justify the upgrade to the US command in Japan, again resorted to lies about China "engaging in coercive behavior and trying to change the status quo in the East and South China seas, across the Taiwan Strait and throughout the region", with the US statement pointing to what Washington perceived as Beijing's "provocative" maritime actions. Yet the criticism targeting China sounds more like self-exposure of Washington's own misdeeds in the Asia-Pacific region, as it is the US that has been seeking to build up its regional allies' ability to host nuclear weapons and engaging in provocative activities posing increasing threats to peace and stability in the region.

The US military has conducted multilateral anti-submarine war games in the Western Pacific, joint operations with the Philippine navy in the South China Sea, and trilateral drills with Japan and the Republic of Korea in the East China Sea. It has also held naval exercises in waters off the Philippines with Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force. Such activities, in addition to the provocations on China's doorstep, which include "long-term, large-scale and frequent close-in reconnaissance" in the waters and airspace around the country, have greatly increased regional tensions. That the defense chiefs of Japan, the US and the ROK also agreed to a land-mark security cooperation framework on Sunday, with China in mind, adds to the risk of frictions in the region sparking a firestorm. It is dissembling by the US, which has around 300 military bases dotted around China, to accuse the latter of posing the largest security threat to the region.

No matter how the US tries to distort reality, China does not seek hegemony or practice power politics, and as a major country, it has the best record on peace and security in the world. As such, the US should recalibrate its China strategy based on the clear position staked out in the just-concluded third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which reaffirmed the country's commitment to the path of peaceful development and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. The US should refrain from making any further moves to contain and suppress China so as to help maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. It should recognize that there is no place for its Cold War mentality in the world today.

Bigger BRICS building

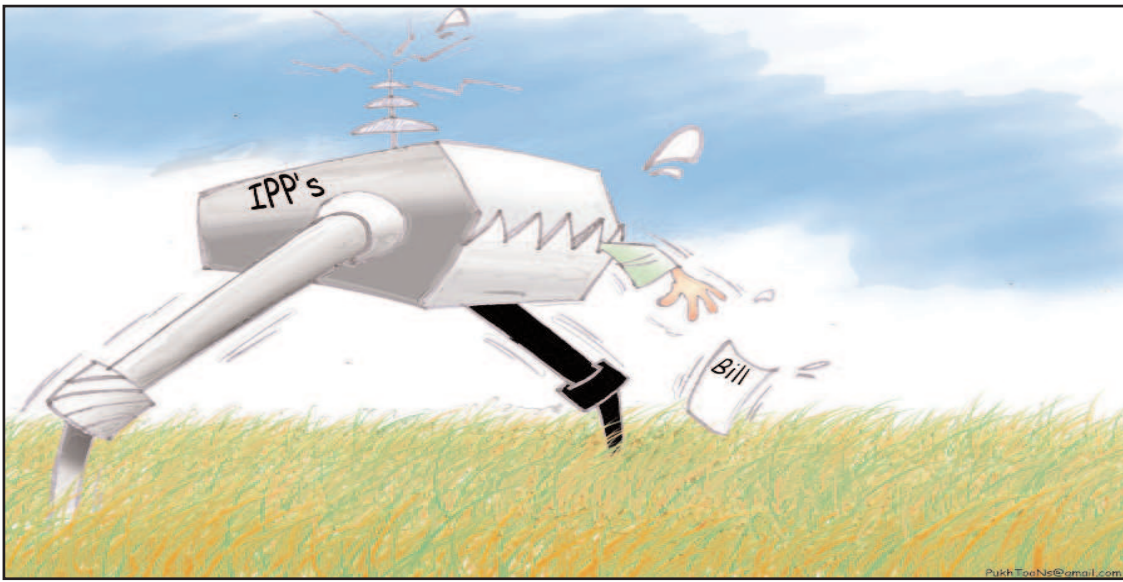
MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced on Sunday that Malaysia has officially applied to join the greater BRICS grouping. In late May, Thailand's Cabinet approved a draft application to join the newly expanded BRICS. If the two key regional players in Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are accepted as members of the grouping, which accepted Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia as new members earlier this year, it will have significant geopolitical ramifications, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Their joining the group will further enlarge the platform, giving it greater representative of the Global South.

The total economy of the enlarged BRICS accounts for about 60 percent of that of the G7. The strong appeal the grouping has for emerging market economies and the great potential it has demonstrated to act as a responsible representative of the Global South make it a player on world stage that no party can afford to ignore. While some in the West tend to increasingly view the swelling BRICS as an anti-West geopolitical tool, particularly against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis and the United States' China-containment strategy, with Russia and China being members of the organization, they simply turn a blind eye to the fact that grouping is not a military alliance like NATO but largely an economic one that operates following the principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, inclusiveness, consensus and strengthened collaboration. It is the organization's openness and fairness, and the shared conviction of its members that the Global South deserves its due say in global affairs and the reform of global governance that have attracted new countries that recognize that the organization can provide them with a platform for strengthened coordination and cooperation to that end.

Unlike the G7, the expanding BRICS group is not a clique pursuing narrow interests. It provides a large space for countries to uphold their strategic autonomy and calls for resolving differences through dialogue and negotiations. Only those holding a zero-sum game Cold War mentality, or those thinking the rise of the Global South threatens to touch their cheese, would try to sow discord between the members of the augmented BRICS, or seek to misinterpret any country's application to join or display of interest in being an observer in the grouping. In the face of the contest between those countries seeking to build a multipolar world and those upholding the unipolar hegemony, and the clash between economic globalization and "de-globalization" tendencies, the growing BRICS grouping follows the trend of history, stands on the side of fairness and justice, and makes the right choices. The accession of more countries to the enlarged BRICS can accelerate the process of building a multipolar world, and promote a more just and equitable international order. The organization should always stay committed to its original aspiration of openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation to elevate the practical cooperation among its members to new heights. Apart from pooling efforts to make unique contributions to resolving world hotspot issues, the grouping, in the face of the new technology revolution, should give full play to their strengths in terms of natural resources and market size, strengthen the supporting role of financial and trade cooperation, facilitate energy and food security cooperation, promote innovation cooperation, and act as a bridge for people-to-people and cultural exchanges so as to give meat to the bones of its principles. Those claiming the expanded BRICS is nothing more than a "symbolic" troupe will have their eyes opened as what they regard as symbolism is materialized into results through down-to-earth actions that deliver real benefits to the people.

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ICJ opinion on Israel's occupation leaves US facing a hard choice

H A Hellyer

ON July 19, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory ruling pertaining to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories of Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank. Much will go into analysing that ruling, but there is one big question that needs to be asked: how is this reminder of international law, and its position on Israel's occupation, going to reverberate in the United States particularly, and the West more widely?

The content of the ruling was not entirely unexpected - international law, when it comes to this particular issue, is rather clear, and has been for decades. Nevertheless, it was a reconfirmation of where international law stood: all of these territories are under Israeli occupation; that occupation is unlawful; and it should not be normalised. In the Arab world, and much further afield in the Global South, there was a good deal of support expressed for the ruling, also unsurprisingly.

Of course, Israel rejected the court's findings, which was quite expected. But an irony was, emphatically manifested in how the US specifically, but also much of the West, responded to, quite literally, the "World Court": by suggesting that its authority, which they say they recognise and respect, does not extend to them and their allies. This, while ironic, was also hardly surprising.

The US has long publicly expressed support for the "rules-based order", and international law that is meant to underpin those rules, but ignored international law when it fell foul of its interests and even tried to circumvent its institutions. Take, for example, the institution of the International Criminal Court (ICC). A Democratic president, Bill Clinton, supported the establishment of the court during his tenure - but the Rome Statute that established the court was never ratified by the US. In the past few years, elected US officials have simultaneously supported and attacked the ICC. When the ICC issued arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin, for example, the US supported its work. But when the ICC prosecutor, Karim Khan, declared he was seeking arrest warrants for Israeli officials (as well as Hamas'), Washington rejected the notion altogether, with US President Joe Biden saying it was "outrageous". Secretary of State Antony Blinken said thereafter that the administration would work with Congress to essentially

punish the ICC, due to precisely these warrants.

Elections are due in the US in less than 100 days. A Republican victory is entirely possible, which would thus deliver not only a second Donald Trump administration but also an administration that would contain a vice president who demanded only a few weeks ago that the Department of Justice investigate and prosecute Khan due to these proposed warrants on Israeli officials. It is a staggering prospect, but one that JD Vance takes seriously enough that he signed onto a letter (PDF) along with several other Republican senators, which accused Khan of supporting terrorism through his "targeting of Israeli officials", and thus ought to be investigated by the Department of Justice for breaking US law. As damaging as that might be vis-a-vis the integrity of the ICC, it ought to be noted: the ICC is an institution that Washington does not recognise the authority of, and never has. That is very different from the ICJ, which the US does at least recognise. On the ICJ, the most aggressive responses in Washington, DC came from outside the Biden administration, on the right of the political spectrum. Much like several Israeli politicians, they attacked the June 19 ruling as "anti-Semitic", but considering so many rights and legal organisations have already come to the same conclusions about the Palestinian territories over the decades, the objections appeared less than convincing, particularly when one considers the wide swath of even of European political opinion that expressed support for the ruling. That included barometers of establishment thinking such as the Financial Times, the European Union's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, and many others. Poignantly, High Representative Josep Borrell noted, "In a world of constant and increasing violations of international law, it is our moral duty to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to all ICJ decisions in a consistent manner, irrespective of the subject in question."

But there was still a bipartisan consensus of sorts in DC, at the minimum, that the ICJ ruling that Israel had to immediately withdraw from the occupied territories was contrary to the "established framework" for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict. That consensus is correct, but not in the way that perhaps it is meant; international law itself assumes a very different framework than what has been taken by political leaders to be the way forward. The real critique, therefore, is really about the framework - not international law and the ICJ.

Bearing that in mind, what does that mean for the US? As much as it might be tempting to consider that this is an isolated, cordoned-off part of US foreign policy, the world will not see it as such. One intriguing comment in this regard came from one of the most noted Conservative politicians of this generation in the United Kingdom, perhaps the most stalwart of US allies.

"Beyond the customary verbal condemnation, the West turned a blind eye to these breaches [of international law]. We made it clear by our apathy that Israel was an exception to the rules. We in the West are now dangerously exposed by that apathy," Nicholas Soames, a Conservative member of the House of Lords and grandson of former Prime Minister Winston Churchill, said at a July 25 debate.

In September 2022, the UN independent commission concluded in its report to the UNGA that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory 'was unlawful under international law owing to its permanence and to actions undertaken by Israel to annex parts of the land de facto and de jure'. The commission stated that the permanent occupation and annexation by Israel could not remain unaddressed, and the General Assembly requested that the ICJ provide an advisory opinion. That opinion finally arrived on Friday. It stated that the occupation of Palestinian territory is illegal under international law. This ruling was welcomed as historic, clear and unambiguous, but it only formalised what we already knew ... If the West is to maintain any hold or credibility in upholding the rules-based order on which we all depend, the rule of law must apply to all equally."

Soames was referring to Israel's conduct in light of international law, both in Gaza, and in the rest of the occupied territories of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The point that he raised vis-a-vis Western credibility in upholding the rules-based order is rather poignant; because, indeed, it is that system which states, large and small, depend upon. At the same time, it is an order that can only claim any validity, if the rule of law is regarded as valid upon all as well.

Otherwise, these are not rules - they are simply arbitrary tools and will be regarded as such by the international community writ large. That not only means that the world will see the US as hypocritical - but, critically, that the rules-based order no longer has any meaning to it. And that would have consequences far beyond the present moment.

There may be some that regard such a development to be insignificant or unsubstantial, but that would be remarkably shortsighted. Whether it is a Republican or a Democrat in the White House, it will still be a USA that will seek to engage in the world. For all the bravado and rhetoric about a return to "American isolationism", if Trump returns to the White House, it is remarkable how much he wants to be involved in the world. His motto, after all, is not "America Only" - it's "America First". Indeed, even if the US wanted to genuinely withdraw from the world, it wouldn't be able to; international health issues like COVID, climate change, and many other crises do not pay attention to national borders. In the Middle East, a Republican-led US would continue to be involved, but differently; the same in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

But herein lies the rub; if the US is going to continue to be involved in the world beyond its borders - it will, by necessity, have to build alliances, and rely on at least some multilateral institutions. How much political capital will the US find itself having with would-be partners in the world of multilateralism and alliance building if, indeed, Washington is perceived as considering itself and its allies above the law? If the international order - such as it is - begins to go through a slow meltdown, due to the weakening of international legal institutions; if the multilateral system becomes more and more fragile, as a result of the fracturing we see; what then is the alternative? A return to "survival of the fittest", but in the 21st century, where technology can make almost every crisis existential quite quickly?

As Soames declared: "We can either cast aside selective blindness, recognise and act upon Rule of Law, without fear or favour, however difficult it may be. Or we can continue in determined blindness. But if we do that latter, we must know that we are jettisoning an order that was hard-won, we cannot be surprised when other world actors replace it, and we cannot be surprised at the consequences that follow." Is that better for the US and Western interests, after all?

months, provided an example of its arsenal that is much different than what it possessed in the 2006 war. In return, Israel has demonstrated its technological superiority by killing hundreds of Hezbollah fighters. It may not be a cake-walk for Israel, but it will be catastrophic for Lebanon. Lebanon is weak on all levels. Its institutions are crumbling. Its people have grown accustomed to the vacuum in the presidency. The parliament is almost crippled and the caretaker government is paralyzed. The Lebanese people are divided over numerous issues, including the war between Hezbollah and Israel, as they sink deeper into poverty and are lured more and more to emigration.

The Lebanese state is no longer a serious player, either in the south or in Beirut. A large segment of the people believe that Lebanon has been forced to take on a regional role that is beyond its means. In recent months, it has been incapable of applying the

same de-escalation policy that Syria succeeded in implementing to avoid a wider war. Many believe that if the war on Gaza is greater than Gaza, then any wider war on Lebanon will be much greater than Lebanon. What went on in Netanyahu's head when he returned to Israel? Will he spark a major, yet limited, fire the way he did with the Houthis? Or does he believe that Israel cannot coexist with Hezbollah's arsenal on its border? The calls to act against Lebanon are not limited to his camp, as they have also risen from the opposition.

The coming days will prove whether the US, which is lost between Harris and Trump, is still capable of upholding its decision to prevent a regional war from erupting. It will prove whether it can speed up an end to the war in Gaza in the hope that it will also end the wars that have emerged across several countries. Dousing the flames demands a complicated tango between the US and Iran. Is the latter prepared to help in putting out the fires? By what means and at what price?

Paris Olympics opening ceremony was an insult to millions

Julie Bindel

I was really looking forward to the opening ceremony of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. I love a big spectacle - I still remember the 2008 opening ceremony in Beijing, which has been deemed "the greatest ever" by many owing to its grand extravagances. And of course the one in London, in July 2012, which included everything, from politics to humour and great music, and successfully presented the very essence of Britain to millions of viewers across the world.

I loved it all, and this is why, last Friday, I could hardly contain my excitement as I sat in front of my TV to see what Paris had to offer this year.

The ceremony, for lack of a better word, was a crashing disappointment. It wasn't just the rain that dampened proceedings, but the perplexing artistic choices made by the organisers, and the lacklustre performances of so many of the people involved. The French media said it cost around \$130m, some four times the cost of London's critically acclaimed 2012 offering. Where was the money spent?

The performances took place on a bridge over the River Seine, around a table that doubled as a catwalk. Parisian models, dancers, fashionistas and drag queens adorned the table. At the centre of it all was Barbara Butch, a plus-size lesbian DJ, clad in a sequined blue dress and a golden, halo-style crown. At first sight, what was before us appeared to be a recreation of the biblical scene of Christ and his 12 apostles sharing a last meal before his crucifixion by a bunch of drag queens. There was a transgender model, a near-naked Greek god of wine, and music by DJ Butch: a woman who, by virtue of being proudly Jewish, fat and a lesbian, ticked a lot of boxes in the A-Z of "inclusivity", which appeared to be the primary theme of this year's ceremony.

Butch, whose style was more drag queen than feminist, was in my opinion still the best thing on that stage, as she was at least an actual woman rather than some bloke portraying - or parodying - one. Butch has since revealed some behind-the-scenes details about the opening ceremony, including that the idea behind the tableau was to "celebrate love, inclusivity, diversity through music and dance to unite all of us". This tableau supposedly aimed at "uniting" people also included a blue Dionysus - Greek god of wine, festivity and fertility - portrayed by French singer Philippe Katerine, who laid naked on a platter among the drag queens. According to the International Olympic Committee, this performance by what was essentially a man dressed as a Smurf was aimed at making us realise "the absurdity of violence between human beings".

The ceremony, watched by over 28 million people, certainly managed to unite millions of people, just not in love and celebration, but disappointment and anger. The French Catholic Church went berserk about what they saw as a parody of the Last Supper, and by

extension, their entire religion. Christian conservatives in Europe and America, and even their Muslim counterparts across the world, followed suit expressing their outrage. The show was branded "blasphemous" and "an abomination". There were calls for boycotts from Latin America to the Middle East. To so many, the expensive, poorly performed extravaganza on the Seine was an insult to everything they consider sacred.

Further, some suggested the tableau in Paris was not even a parody of Leonardo da Vinci's famous "Last Supper" painting, but was intended to be a recreation of "The Feast of the Gods" by Jan van Eyck. That said, even if we accept, as the Olympic Committee suggested in the apology it offered to outraged Catholics, that the show had no intention of "showing disrespect" or parodying "any religious group", there is still reason for disappointment and anger, because there is no question in my mind that the show was parodying women.

Indeed, I am sick and tired of drag and the media and the entertainment world's seemingly never-ending obsession with it. I have had enough of men parading around as caricatures of women, and everyone "celebrating" their "art", not realising how offensive this all is. It was enraging to see it take centre stage at an event that is supposed to bring peoples of the world together, and according to the organisers' own testimony, celebrate love and inclusion. When people look at minstrel shows of the past caricaturing enslaved Blacks, they immediately see there is no art to them - they are horrifically racist and insulting. But somehow, no one seems able to see how similarly insulting drag is to women.

Catholics accused the Olympic opening ceremony organisers and performers of disrespect towards the Church, but I honestly think that women were the ones being mocked and ridiculed on the global stage last Friday. As a country, France is rightly proud of its artistic freedom but, to me, this ceremony reflected and perpetuated the misogyny within French culture. I don't think it set a good tone for how the Olympics views women. We're only a few days in and already there has been controversy over certain male fans complaining that female beach volleyball players have been allowed to reject the bikini bottoms they were previously required to wear - with the International Olympic Committee even mandating how skimpy they had to be - in favour of leggings.

Over the years, there have been numerous controversies surrounding the Olympic Games, from allegations of sexism and cultural relativism to just plain mismanagement. But as far as I'm concerned, the opening ceremony in Paris this year was conspicuous for its mediocrity. It obviously tried very hard to represent an inclusive culture, but it ended up looking like a drunken fight in a fairground.

Aljazeera

Israel and the limits of fire

Ghassan Charbel

WHAT went on in Benjamin Netanyahu's head on his flight back from the US? The conclusions he reached in the US will impact the entire region, including Lebanon and Gaza. Did he conclude that he had mended his ties with the US after holding talks with Joe Biden, Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, despite some reservations?

Does Netanyahu believe that he received the green light to continue the wars? Does he believe that the months that separate us from the election of a new American president are an opportunity to finish the job in Gaza? Does he think that what took place in Majdal Shams in the occupied Golan Heights gives him the opportunity to pursue a similar job on the Lebanese front?

The members of Congress applauded the Israeli visitor, who now holds the record for the number of times he has addressed them. However, the number of vacant seats was obvious. Harris, who is busy with her presidential

campaign, did not deem it necessary to attend and listen to Netanyahu's speech.

Did the visitor sense that America may have changed, even just a little bit? Did he sense that what has taken place on the streets and at university campuses was not a passing event and that the days of America's absolute support are over? It is hard to guess what went on in Netanyahu's head. There are fears that the strike on Majdal Shams was a prime opportunity - that may not happen again - to replicate the scenes in Gaza in Lebanon, or at least on the Lebanese border with Israel. These are the fears of people who believe it is an opportunity to wage a battle to return 100,000 Israelis to the settlements and villages they evacuated due to the attacks Hezbollah launched in the wake of the Al-Aqsa Flood operation.

Netanyahu is aware that the time of lightning wars is completely over. Israel is no longer capable of declaring an

end to a war through a mighty deadly strike. The type of combatants has changed and so has the nature of war. Netanyahu also knows that the Lebanese front has been and continues to be more dangerous than the Gaza front. He knows that Hezbollah boasts a much larger arsenal than Hamas. He also knows that an attack on Hezbollah would bring Israel closer to war with Iran itself. He knows that Tehran would not tolerate the same assault that Israel has waged on Hamas being launched against Hezbollah. He knows that the front lines for war with Hezbollah stretch from southern Lebanon to Tehran. He knows that the involvement of countries that have supported Hamas during the Gaza war will double when it comes to Hezbollah.

The Lebanese people have, in recent months, heard alarming Israeli threats. Some have confirmed Israel's ability to replicate the horrors of Gaza

in Beirut. Some have spoken of the Israeli army's ability to return Lebanon to the Stone Age. The threats have not - with a few exceptions - been translated into actions that have gone beyond the rules of engagement. Washington has succeeded in making Israel commit to refraining from sparking a broad regional war. The Majdal Shams strike has prompted the extremists in Netanyahu's government to demand that the prime minister wage an all-out war against Lebanon. They have even demanded that Beirut be razed to the ground. The Israelis displaced from the north have accused Netanyahu of disregarding their plight. Others speak of Israel becoming an unsafe country, with many of its residents seeking other countries for security in a sign of reverse migration.

Should it happen, a war on Lebanon would not be a walk in the park for Israel. Hezbollah has, in recent

months, provided an example of its arsenal that is much different than what it possessed in the 2006 war. In return, Israel has demonstrated its technological superiority by killing hundreds of Hezbollah fighters. It may not be a cake-walk for Israel, but it will be catastrophic for Lebanon. Lebanon is weak on all levels. Its institutions are crumbling. Its people have grown accustomed to the vacuum in the presidency. The parliament is almost crippled and the caretaker government is paralyzed. The Lebanese people are divided over numerous issues, including the war between Hezbollah and Israel, as they sink deeper into poverty and are lured more and more to emigration.

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same de-escalation policy that Syria succeeded in implementing to avoid a wider war. Many believe that if the war on Gaza is greater than Gaza, then any wider war on Lebanon will be much greater than Lebanon. What went on in Netanyahu's head when he returned to Israel? Will he spark a major, yet limited, fire the way he did with the Houthis? Or does he believe that Israel cannot coexist with Hezbollah's arsenal on its border? The calls to act against Lebanon are not limited to his camp, as they have also risen from the opposition.

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Billions Britain needs are at Rachel Reeves’s fingertips, and no fiscal promises need be broken

THAT was authentic anger, Rachel Reeves's indignation well justified as she thundered in the Commons at the inheritance she has been left. Labour is genuinely outraged at the destruction the former chancellor Jeremy Hunt deliberately inflicted, knowing his party would be out of there for years to come. They did indeed "put party before country", as she said, by cutting tax without having the funds to pay for their promises. The Treasury's audit shows her victorious battlefield strewn with landmines: unfeasible commitments for Boris Johnson's fantasy 40 new hospitals, roads without budgets, every public service burned out and councils everywhere tipping into bankruptcy. This was not mere fecklessness but deliberate sabotage, an act of treason against the country.

That Tory wreckage will stay vividly imprinted in the public memory. All that matters now is how to find the resources to breathe renewal and growth into the national decay all around us. The depth of the dishonesty in this year's budget meant she made tough cuts in-year: the winter fuel allowance made no sense for pensioners not on benefits. Social care charging caps, endlessly delayed, will not go ahead: the idea needs to be wrapped up in a better future reform. She will pay all public employees the raise they deserve, though this is still behind the private sector. Cutting £3.2bn shared between every cabinet minister's budget looks too harsh after the starvation years: what "efficiency" savings could there be?

But don't despair at this revelation of a worse-than-empty Treasury. Wait for Reeves's autumn budget for her path to growth. Her inbox is flooded with abundant ways to harvest money

without breaking her promises on the three main taxes. Billions are suggested by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Resolution Foundation and multiple other towering authorities, and some she will follow.

Let's rehearse just a few. The frontrunner is raising capital gains tax (CGT), levied on money earned in idleness from rents and shares, to level out the discrepancy with the far higher income tax paid on hard work. Dan Neidle, an eminent tax reformer, says Reeves is right not to announce it in advance or everyone will cash in early to avoid it. Why, the IFS's Paul Johnson asks in his book Follow the Money, is capital gains tax not due on a lifetime of shares, property or antiques, swollen in value but absolved on death? Seeing this coming, the Telegraph dubs that a "double death duty". Don't expect them to remind their readers that capital gains is mainly about the wealthy: only 0.5% of people had a taxable capital gain last year.

Reeves is already committed to stopping private equity fund managers misrepresenting their earnings as a capital gain to pay less tax than their cleaners. IFS research shows raising CGT doesn't kill off investment either. "The rich will flee!" is their allies' last defence. But they are not as mobile as they pretend, with family roots that resist being dug up. Tired of London, tired of life, they fear getting very bored in these "culturally barren" tax havens, finds Sam Friedman, professor of sociology at the London School of Economics. His team interviewed a raft of the top one-percenters and found none planning to emigrate.

The golden goose has plenty more eggs, with inheritance tax (IHT) paid by just the wealthiest 4% of estates and too easily

avoided: why do pension pots, farms and family businesses escape it?

It's time to charge national insurance (NI) on all income, not just on pay, including on pensions above a threshold. That's serious money. Exempting the self-employed from NI costs the Treasury £5.9bn, mostly from well-off "self-employed" partners such as City lawyers or private medics. It's a "deceit", says Helen Miller, creator of IFS Taxlab, which checks what each tax raises. Pensions tax relief is ripe for reform: high earners get 40% and 45% relief subsidised by the state, while ordinary earners get just 20%.

Reform of council tax, long overdue, would stop the richest in southern England paying less than the northern average. Tax Justice UK, with the admirable Patriotic Millionaires, urges the rich to be taxed more, suggesting "10 tax reforms to raise £60bn for public services and a fairer economy". Just as a thought experiment, the LSE's wealth commission shows a one-off raid on wealth above £2m, charged at 1% a year for five years, would bring in £80bn.

So there is money. Excess wealth and income is there for the plucking, and everyone knows it: the public is ahead of Labour in calling for tax rises. YouGov finds most people expected it to happen before the election. Attitudes towards tax changed when the bankers' crash, Covid and the cost of living crisis reminded everyone how much we relied on the state. A British Social Attitudes survey found 52% in favour of higher taxes, while the Financial Fairness Tracker survey shows more than half of people are happy for spending increases on public services, even if it meant personally paying more tax. Another

study found that a majority (64%) said they'd be more likely to vote for a party committed to higher taxes on the wealthiest to invest in the NHS and public services.

This election marked the final demise of the Thatcherite small-state era. The country now has a stronger social democratic impulse than Labour yet dares trust. As the Tories veer rightwards in their search for a new leader, watch them still promise tax cuts despite the total failure of their election bribes.

The money is there for the taking. Plucking the fatter geese will please most voters, and do no economic harm to Reeves's hard-earned reputation for stability. On the contrary, finding money for productive capital investment in Labour's priorities for growth, green energy and a housebuilding bonanza is being welcomed by markets as an economic stabiliser.

Her October budget will define the nature of this government by its early spending priorities. Paying underfunded public employees and the junior doctors their due is the right, and totemic, start. Raising benefits is essential, not just abolishing the two-child cap, but restoring what was stripped from families since 2020.

The NHS needs £38bn in this parliament, says the Health Foundation, just to keep pace with rising major illness, mainly among older people. Yet children should come first: early years and skills after 16 are the emblematic investment for any country that thinks about future life and growth. Only the budget will reveal the true character of this government, by how fairly it gets, and how well it spends, the country's money. The scandalous disarray of the last budget is a low bar to soar above. But beyond emergency repairs, we wait to know the moral nature of Labour's endeavour.

The Guardian

Gaza is the fate of humanity

Ognian Kassabov

even higher.

While some have attributed Israeli brutality to a vengeful pathology, there is a clear economic logic behind it. And this makes the ongoing genocide even more terrifying. The native Palestinian culture and life - the careful tending of the land embodied in the slow growth of the olive tree - have to be exterminated to make way for an ultrafast, high-tech intensive extraction of value that bulldozes over sustainable social and environmental relations to usher in a faceless high-end urban dystopia.

As the genocide unfolds, plans like Gaza 2035 serve to obscure the suffering of Palestinians by the allure of "civilisation", just as Netanyahu told the US Congress. But this is not just a PR stunt. It is what political elites in Israel and beyond are moving towards. Over the past nine months, meetings have been held between companies and various business and political entities to discuss reconstruction megaprojects in Gaza, all while its population is being exterminated. Participants include a company that "designs large-scale urban development projects" and a major international consulting firm.

Meanwhile, Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of US presidential hopeful Donald Trump, has publicly praised the "very valuable potential" of "waterfront property" in Gaza. Elements of Gaza 2035 are apparent even in the way the extreme right part of Netanyahu's government tries to run Israel. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, for example, is pushing forward a 2025 state budget that would impose austerity on ordinary Israelis and prioritise the high-tech and real-estate sectors.

A high-tech future requires a high-tech force to first lay down the foundation. Already a major exporter of military technology, Israel has deployed all its latest destructive advances to "battle test" on Palestinians. The trendiest of them has certainly been artificial intelligence (AI), which now reigns over the battlefield in Gaza. Global and US tech companies have been Israel's longstanding partners in this sphere.

According to the Israeli +972 Magazine, AI has relegated the creation of "targets" to an automatic "factory", outsourced human decision-making regarding the "ethics" of battle action, and suggested cost-effective ways of deploying "dumb" 2000-pound bombs to eviscerate entire buildings. Phone numbers and social media data have been plugged into these AI

weapons, which apparently decide whether a Palestinian should live or die based on what WhatsApp group they are in.

Meanwhile, global media have nonchalantly reported that other armies - both learners and potential clients - are watching closely what is happening in Gaza, Israel's open-air lab for AI urban warfare. The unfolding genocide cannot but remind us of "technofeudalism", a notion that Yanis Varoufakis coined to describe the mutation of the global capitalist system into one that concentrates power through digital technologies controlled by a small elite. It seems that in Gaza this is already transmuting into an exterminatory form of oppression that turns powerless "serfs" into an amorphous human mass, available as a resource to be manipulated or eliminated at the whim of the war tech "overlords".

It is now clear that we have not heeded the warnings and are living the horror of an extended extermination of industrial proportions that gets justified as rational and moral - a gruesome failure of the 21st century to abide by the "never again" pledge. The UN and the international legal regime meant to protect universal human rights and dignity are showing themselves void of the power to actually regulate human affairs.

Even moderate politicians, like EU high representative for international affairs Josep Borrell, have voiced this realisation publicly. In March, Borrell observed: "[Gaza] is a graveyard for tens of thousands of people, and also a graveyard for many of the most important principles of humanitarian law." Former New York Times journalist Chris Hedges has bleakly noted that in a world beleaguered by the pursuit of profit amid a grotesque concentration of military and financial power causing a climate catastrophe along the way, genocide will not be an anomaly, but the new norm. "The world outside of the industrialized fortresses in the Global North is acutely aware that the fate of the Palestinians is their fate," he wrote in a recent article.

As human dignity is bulldozed over by the profit-churning, AI-powered war machine, and as the resources of our planet and lives are viciously extracted to accumulate wealth for the fintech elite, it is up to us to decide whether we want Gaza 2035 to be our collective future. Action - disciplined, aware, transnational and adamant - is needed to avert a global catastrophe and shape a brighter future for our children.

What Paris Games' emblem really means

David Jobin

UNDENIABLY, 2024 marks a milestone in my professional life. From the initial drafts on office paper, to the screens on our laptops and countless discussions in the meeting room, the symbol of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games has transformed from a mere idea to a vibrant reality.

Now, this emblem is flying high over the sky of Paris, gracing public transport, welcoming people from around the world, and appearing on T-shirts, hats and tote bags. The symbol of the Paris 2024 Games is not just a sign, an icon or a logo; it is an idea. An idea rooted in the very essence of the Olympic motto: "The most important thing is not to win but to take part." So, when we took part in the competition to create this logo, what did we have in mind?

Beautiful is boring. A symbol does not need to be conventionally beautiful; it needs to be meaningful, especially for the Olympics, a moment when the world unites to celebrate human excellence. The Olympics represent the top performances of human beings. But the Games belong to all the people. We designed the logo to shine a light on those who are often overlooked - the marginalized, the unseen, the voices in the shadows. The image of a woman in the logo is a testament to this belief. Sports are often associated with muscle, power and strength - attributes traditionally linked to a male image. By placing a woman at the forefront, we have spotlighted those who are ignored, forgotten and left behind.

Paris 2024 will be the first Games where the numbers of female and male athletes will

be equal. Back in 1900, Paris became the first Olympic venue to have women, 22 female compared with 975 male athletes. The Paris 2024 Games will also be the first time when the Paralympic and Olympic Games share the same logo, emphasizing that no distinction should be made between men and women when we talk about Olympics or the Olympic Spirit. The Olympic Games are about creating awareness that what we have in common far outweighs our differences. The pursuit of excellence, mutual respect and shared goals unites us. When we chose a human face - a woman's face, neutral and universal - we wanted all men and women to feel represented. It symbolizes a human face looking toward the future, holding out hope. This positivity unites us. The Paris 2024 Games' emblem serves as a trait d'union, a link that bridges the difference, divergence and disagreement gaps. It reminds us that through sports, we find common ground, fostering a sense of global community and understanding.

When we think about the Games, we leave conflicts, divergences and disagreements behind. We think about humanity - people running to surpass their limits, jumping to go beyond and diving into the infinite challenge of human capabilities. As Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the International Olympic Committee, said in 1892, "It is clear that the telegraph, railways, the telephone, the passionate research in science, congresses, and exhibitions have done more for peace than any

Voices of peace can find strength through unity

Ronald S. Lauder

THE late King Hussein of Jordan once shared a poignant message in an interview with a magazine, highlighting that the dividing line does not exist between Jordan and Israel but between the proponents and opponents of peace. His words resonate deeply today as we witness ongoing efforts to sow division and hatred, eroding the prospects for peace in the region. It is truly disheartening to see attempts to drive a wedge between the daughters and sons of Abraham.

Looking at recent developments in the US and Europe, it is concerning to witness the spread of division and hatred within Jewish and Muslim communities. It is a stark reminder of the voices that stand against peace, as described by the late king. Let us join hands and strive to foster empathy and understanding, standing together in our pursuit of hope and peace within our communities. Each one of us, as a member of the Jewish, Muslim or Christian community, has a crucial role to play in this journey toward peace. As history has shown, when a minority becomes a scapegoat, it inevitably affects other minorities as well. Recent statistics reveal a disturbing increase in antisemitic and Islamophobic attacks. This urgent issue must be addressed collaboratively by Jews and Muslims.

The time for action is now. Long-term solutions to combat

those sowing division and hatred can only be effective if Abraham's descendants unite, standing with one voice against those who seek to lead our children and grandchildren into a future marred by destruction, warfare and hate. There is much work ahead, but my commitment to collaborate with Arab and Jewish communities against hatred and division is unwavering. And I am excited that I have partners on both the Jewish and Muslim sides who are committed to joining me in this fight. Hope blooms from ideas that pave the way forward. Recent discussions with senior officials from Arab states, the US and Europe have seen growing support for the concept of a "NATO for the Middle East," as people increasingly acknowledge the threat posed to the region by the opponents of peace and its proxies.

Additionally, more leaders are embracing the notion of a "Marshall plan" for the Palestinian territories, which could eventually lead to a two-state solution. I initially presented both these ideas in this publication and their traction is a cause for optimism. Despite the challenges on our journey toward a more peaceful world, I remain hopeful that those advocating for peace will ultimately prevail.

My optimism stems from encounters with other voices of hope and peace. Recently, several

friends, both Jews and Muslims from different parts of the world, shared with me the story of an Israeli-Palestinian youth chorus that took part in the TV show "America's Got Talent." I must confess that I do not usually watch this show, but seeing so many individuals from diverse backgrounds reaching out to me with the same news was remarkable. After listening to their song "Home" and watching their interview, I understood why this group of young performers had touched so many people of different backgrounds. They represented voices of hope. One of the girls from the chorus told the judges: "We are the Jerusalem Youth Chorus, a group of Palestinians and Israelis. We believe through music, working together and communicating, we are moving toward creating a future where justice, freedom, equality and inclusion exist."

I saw a group of young individuals standing up against hatred and division at that moment. They taught us leadership and courage by uniting as a voice for hope, peace and a brighter future. The chorus could be an example of what the future of the region and the children of Abraham could be: A future where Israelis and Palestinians - including Jews, Christians and Muslims - come together in the spirit of mutual understanding, free from hate and terror, to build a bet-

ter world. Their story is a beacon of hope, showing us that a brighter future is within our reach. As I watched them sing, my heart ached for all the innocent civilians who have lost their lives in the recent conflicts - young women and men, boys and girls, both Israeli and Palestinian. It breaks my heart to think about the potential futures they could have had and the positive impact they could have made in this world if it were not for the voices of the opponents of peace. The tremendous destruction caused by those opposed to peace, igniting the flames of conflict on Oct. 7, is devastating.

I firmly believe empowering those who advocate for peace is crucial. We must establish a clear path forward; the two-state solution is the only viable long-term option. We must acknowledge that this region has been the historical home of Jews, Christians and Muslims for millennia. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve the chance to live and dream of a peaceful and prosperous future for their children. We cannot let terrorism and the threat to a nation's existence dictate our future. It is time for the proponents of peace to come together and raise their voices. Let us unite under the banner of #2states4peace and work toward a better future for all. Remember, our strength, as proponents of peace against the opponents of peace, lies in our unity.

Arab News

What a Harris presidency might mean for Palestinians

Chris Doyle

WITH fewer than 100 days to go until the Nov. 5 election in the US, campaigning is about to get red hot, even radioactive. It has already been a momentous campaign, even without competitive primaries for both parties. A candidate has been shot at. Another has stood down. The levels of polarization are precarious, with the middle ground a no man's land between two warring factions.

The rest of the world is watching. The fascination is sharpened because two different Americas are competing for power and other powers will have to adapt to whatever vision prevails. An isolationist or an internationalist US? A US that works with allies versus one that sticks rigidly to its own self-interest. What might this mean for the Middle East and, in particular, for the crisis of the moment, Israel-Palestine? In past elections, Palestinians would often say that it would make little difference who was in the White House, and they watched as candidates competed to embrace Israel. For sure, none of the potential contenders will be dancing dabke and quoting Mahmoud Darwish while wearing a "Free Palestine" T-shirt, but their visions and direction of travel will be markedly different.

The decision of President Joe Biden to stand aside has shaken up

the race. All of a sudden, it is Donald Trump who has to answer questions about his age. He looks like the one fighting off the insurgent, not the other way round. Assessing what Trump will do with the Middle East, as with anything with him, is tough. During his first term, he was the most pro-Israeli, anti-Palestinian American leader in history. Yet the caveat to this was his falling out with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Their meeting last week in Mar-a-Lago was their first in almost four years and Trump even had to deny a rift, saying that it "was never bad ... we've always had a very good relationship." Also, just how much appetite will Trump have for dishing out billions of dollars of US taxpayers' money for a foreign government? This is not something he typically likes doing. But as the polls now narrow to margin of error levels, one has to assess how a Kamala Harris presidency might look for the Middle East. She definitely looks likely to be - not least after the Obamas' endorsement - the Democratic Party candidate. She has the momentum.

Much was made of Harris not being present for last week's Netanyahu jamboree at Congress. Would she like to have been part of the dozens of standing ovations? Clearly not. After they did meet in

private, her comments were direct and not entirely to Netanyahu's liking. She called it a "frank and constructive meeting," diplomatic code for tense. Harris also said: "I will not be silent ... It is time for this war to end." Netanyahu, who opposes any Palestinian state, would have hated her saying: "A two-state solution is the only path that ensures Israel remains a secure Jewish and democratic state, and one that ensures Palestinians can finally realize the freedom, security and prosperity that they rightly deserve." Few US leaders have talked about Palestinian freedom and security, so to do this in the wake of a face-to-face meeting with Netanyahu was notable.

Even before becoming a candidate, Harris had sounded more empathetic than Biden. Back in March, she called for an immediate ceasefire. She was clear: "People in Gaza are starving (being starved, to be precise). The conditions are inhumane and our common humanity compels us to act." The empathy is there but will a change of tone and more humanitarian aid be enough? Many Arab Americans want action and, above all, the end of US complicity in the Gaza genocide by shutting off the US weapons pipeline that permits it to continue.

Yes, this is an exercise in straw-clutching. Harris knows she has to

win Michigan, a key swing state that has a large Arab American population. She has to be more energetic, more determined than Biden and a little tougher on Israel, but not an opponent. She will, most believe, remain within the traditional Democratic consensus. She will not back the International Criminal Court against Israel, for example. In this sense, her stance will be more predictable than Trump's. That said, Netanyahu and his coalition will fret over a Harris presidency. Netanyahu has once again been pretty clear that he prefers Republicans over Democrats; Trump over Biden or Harris. "There will be no halt to the war, Madame Candidate," Netanyahu ally Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's racist national security minister, posted on X.

Biden may have to cede a degree of policymaking to Harris to help her win in November. She will have a more central role and will stage a higher profile on the world stage. Her stance matters from here on in. This electoral hate-fest has just been given a huge jolt and Trump knows it. The incredible contrast of the two likely candidates in terms of age, gender, race, experience, world outlook, and politics serves to sharpen the divisions. It is the Palestinians who fear that they will once again be one of the primary victims of this inglorious jamboree.

The China Daily



PSX turns bearish, loses 198 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 198.94 points, a negative change of 0.25 percent, closing at 78,628.81 points against 78,827.74 points on the last working day.

A total of 313,085,457 shares were traded during the day as compared to 371,087,020 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 17.615 billion against Rs 19.156 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 447 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 152 of them recorded gains and 239 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 56 companies remained

unchanged.

The three top trading companies were The Organic Meat with 24,830,333 shares at Rs 40.47 per share, The Searle Company with 24,067,099 shares at Rs 60.31 per share and Fauji Cement with 15,819,905 shares at Rs 21.63 per share.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 77.44 per share price, closing at Rs 7,590.00, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Services Limited with a Rs 38.57 rise in its per share price to Rs 819.02.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 97.13 per share closing at Rs 6,852.80, followed by

Pakistan Engineering Company Limited with a Rs 56.40 decline to close at Rs 603.60.

Rupee sheds 15 paise against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 15 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.65 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.50.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.5 and Rs 280.06 respectively.

The price of Euro came down by 35 paise to close at Rs 301.57 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.92, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen lost 02 paise and closed at Rs1.79, whereas an increase of Rs1.22 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.17 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs356.95.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 04 paise each to close at Rs75.86 and Rs74.27 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs.400 per tola to Rs.252,300

The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.400 and was sold at Rs. 252,300 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs. 252,700 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 344 to Rs. 216,306 from Rs. 216,650 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold down to Rs. 198,281 from Rs. 198,595, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,860 and Rs.2,451.98 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$2 to \$2,388 from \$2,390, the Association reported.

47 illegal connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In a determined effort to curb gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has conducted extensive raids across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad, resulting in the disconnection of 47 illegal gas connections and the imposition of Rs 3.3 million in fines.

In Lahore, the SNGPL team disconnected 18 illegal connections and levied fines totaling Rs 2.72 million. Additionally, one FIR was lodged against those involved in gas theft. The Multan team disconnected 16 illegal connections, while the Faisalabad team disconnected 2 connections and imposed fines amounting to Rs 0.04 million.

In Bahawalpur, the team disconnected 4 illegal connections and 3 connections involving the use of compressors. The Gujranwala team disconnected 2 illegal connections, imposing fines of Rs 0.09 million. In Sheikhupura, 2 illegal connections were disconnected with fines totaling Rs 0.49 million, and one FIR was lodged against gas thieves.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely Lotus A, Sweet Judi, Clipper Erisand Sea Luck-II scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice, Condensate and Chemicals berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminals, FOTCO Oil Terminal and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Sweet Lady-III, Kourous Queen, Canopus and Elim Grace also arrived at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

Eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Milaha Qater, Ocean Poiner, Xia Hai Tong and Lotus Aleft the port on Tuesday.

A cargo volume of 66,473 tonnes, comprising 29,817 tonnes imports cargo and 36,656 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 292 Containers (TEUs) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Five ships are at outer anchorage of port, out of them three ships, Elim Grace, Kourous Queen and Butinah & another ship Apillon-Dcarying Palm oil, Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at QICT, MW-4, PIBT and LQCT respectively on Tuesday, while three more ships, Maersk Cape Town, Addison and MSC Roma carrying Containers are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of Furniture Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa meeting with President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fuad Ishaq at Chamber's House.

SCCI' elections: Furniture Association announces full support to BF

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Furniture Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced full support to the Businessman Forum in upcoming Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections.

The assurance was given by a delegation of Furniture Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led by its chairman Syed Ejaz Ali Shah during a meeting with the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry

President Fuad Ishaq held here at the chamber house on Tuesday.

The Association office bearers including president Feroz Shah, General Secretary Asif Khan, Senior Vice president Umair Jamal, Joint Secretary Ulfatur Rehman, executive member Syed Asim Ali, and media advisor were present in the meeting.

Members of the delegation announced full support to the Businessman Forum in SCCI' election 2024-26

and expressed trust upon the leadership of the forum leader, former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour.

The delegation said the Businessman Forum is an effective voice of the business community, which is fully capable to highlight the community issues and resolve them amicably by taking up with government and relevant institutions.

Fuad Ishaq while speaking on the occasion said SCCI has always struggled for protection of business

community interests, resolution of issues and provision facilities and incentives, in which they remained successful.

Earlier, the Association chairman Syed Ejaz Ali Shah apprised the SCCI president Fuad Ishaq regarding issues attached with the Furniture Industry.

Fuad Ishaq assured the delegation to take up all issues with relevant authorities in an effective manner and resolve them amicably.

Forest Town commemorates landmark plot balloting event

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Forest Town announced the successful completion of its highly anticipated plot balloting event, that took place the Golf Marquee, Rawalpindi Golf Club. This pivotal event signified a stride to establish a sustainable and tranquil community.

The occasion attracted a sizeable audience, including prominent city dignitaries, real estate industry leaders, and eligible end-users who engaged in the initial balloting of the General Range at Forest Town.

During his address, Forest Town Chairman, Malik Shahzaib Ishrat, underscored the company's

unwavering commitment to fulfilling its pledges. "Forest Town is dedicated to delivering residential plots to our esteemed clientele within the prescribed timelines. The remarkable response and trust exhibited by our customers have been truly heartening," he remarked.

Co-Chairman, Malik Yaqoob, conveyed appreciation, stating, "We express gratitude to the Almighty Allah for empowering us to undertake a project that is affordable to all segments of the society. We are resolute in our mission to establish an exclusive residential community in Pakistan."

CEO, Raja M. Khaleel,

echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the accomplishments of the day. "The success of today's balloting event underscores our commitment to realizing the aspirations of our customers. We extend our felicitations to our clients on securing their plot allocations and assure them of a remarkable living experience."

Brig. Waqar Bangash, Director of Special Projects, elaborated on Forest Town's overarching vision. "Forest Town epitomizes our vision for sustainable, environmentally friendly, and forward-thinking living. We remain steadfast in our pursuit of crafting an innovative and environ-

mentally conscious community."

Chaudhry M. Saqib, Country Head of Sales, extended gratitude to the attendees for their active involvement. He thanked the real estate agents for their wholehearted backing, which has been instrumental in the success of Forest Town. "We look forward to nurturing this enduring partnership that we hold in high regard," he concluded.

During the event the shield of honour and awards were bestowed upon the realtor community leaders and guests of honour by the Forest Town management team. The guests were served dinner at the end of the event.

7th International Solar Energy Meet Exhibition: SOGO and SOGO Solar Solutions shine as Gold Sponsor

F.P. Report

KARACHI: SOGO and SOGO Solar Solutions proudly participated as the Gold Sponsor at the 7th International Solar Energy Meet Exhibition, held at the Expo Centre Karachi from July 25th to 27th. The event, organized by ISEM, witnessed a significant turnout, highlighting the growing interest and demand for solar energy solutions in Pakistan.

Over the course of three days, SOGO's booth attracted numerous visitors and key personalities from the business community. Notable attendees included the Convener of the FPCCI Anti-Corruption Committee, the Chairman of the Pakistan Electric & Electronics Merchants Association, the Head of Trade from Habib Metro Bank Ltd, and the Deputy Convener of the FPCCI Solar Energy Committee. Their presence underscored the importance of sustain-



able energy solutions, and the pivotal role SOGO is playing in this sector.

"We are honored to have been the Gold Sponsor of this prestigious event," said Mr. Shoaib Jafrani, CEO at SOGO Solar Solutions. He further said, "The overwhelming response from the visitors and the interest shown by key figures in the business community reinforces our commitment to delivering top-notch solar solutions that meet the

growing energy needs of Pakistan."

As Pakistan continues to face energy challenges, SOGO and SOGO Solar Solutions remain dedicated to providing innovative and sustainable solar solutions that contribute to the nation's energy security and environmental sustainability. The company's participation in the exhibition marks another milestone in its journey towards a greener and more energy-efficient future.

SOGO Solar Solutions is a leading provider of solar energy solutions in Pakistan. Committed to delivering high-quality and reliable solar products, SOGO aims to revolutionize the energy sector by promoting sustainable and cost-effective energy alternatives. With a focus on innovation and customer satisfaction, SOGO Solar Solutions is dedicated to making solar energy accessible and affordable for all.

CISO NBP attended policy roundtable host by CASS

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Khawaja Mohammad Ali, Chief Information Security Officer, National Bank of Pakistan and Cyber Warfare Subject Matter Expert at Dept. of Defence & Strategic Studies attended a policy roundtable "Cyberspace as a Global Common; Formulation and Applicability of International Law" hosted by the Center for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), in Islamabad.

Khawaja as a keynote presented on "National Cyber Security Policy, Cyber Threats to National Security & Response Mechanism". Other discussants of the roundtable included: Air Marshal Javid Ahmed, President - CASS and Mr. Jamal Aziz,



Executive Director - Research Society of International Law (RSIL), Dr. Kashif Kifayat, Director - National Centre for Cyber Security (NCCS) and Dr. Zunera, Director - NCCS.

The session was moder-

ated by Air Marshal Zahid Mehmood, Director - National Security at CASS, and was attended by participants including key stakeholders, regulars & policy makers from civil and military.

'Hum(AI)n Expedition' event organized

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Ipsos in Pakistan presented innovative insights at the "Hum(AI)n Expedition" event held at Marriott Karachi. The session focused on international best practices in qualitative research, emphasizing the integration of Humanized AI (Artificial Intelligence + Human Intelligence). By comparing global methodologies with local practices, the event showcased the potential for innovation within Pakistan's research sector, highlighting how AI combined with human insight can enhance consumer understanding and drive business growth.

Cristina Craciun, Global President of Motivational Research at Ipsos Understanding Unlimited, delivered the keynote

address. Insights were also shared by Abdul Sattar Babar, CEO and MD of Ipsos in Pakistan, and Sahira Muzaffar, Director of Ipsos Understanding Unlimited in Pakistan. The event drew CEOs, directors, and marketers from prominent multinational companies, keen to delve into innovative qualitative research practices.

In her keynote address, Cristina Craciun emphasized the transformative potential of qualitative research through hands-on practices and interactive sessions. She stressed the importance of integrating global best practices with local insights to drive innovation, demonstrating how combining AI with human intelligence can significantly improve consumer understanding and business growth.

Building on Cristina's insights, the event highlighted the urgent need to understand human behavior in an era marked by deep-fake technology and declining trust. It underscored the critical importance of balancing AI with human intelligence to navigate these challenges effectively. Participants learned how global best practices, combined with local insights, can enhance qualitative research methods. This balanced approach is essential for fostering empathy, trust, and deeper consumer connections.

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

Textile Asia Int'l Exhibition to be started from 3rd August

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry collaborated with E-commerce Gateway Pakistan (Pvt.) Limited as a strategic partner for organizing a three-day joint exhibition "Textile Asia International Exhibition" here at the

Lahore Expo Centre from August 3 to 5, 2024.

Addressing a review meeting held at PCJCCI on Tuesday, Dr. Khurshed Nizam, President and Vice President, M. Uzair Nizam, E-Commerce Gateway Pakistan, said that the exhibition will bring together industry leaders, innovators, and enthusiasts from over 11 countries, with over 550 companies with both local and foreign participations. It would also lead the way in delivering the most exquisite opportunities for all participants in different sectors like: buying selling potential of textile & garment machinery, Clothing Textiles Accessories, Textile Raw Material Supplies, Textile Dyes Chemicals, Embroidery Machines, Power & Air Compressors

for Textile Industry and Textile Allied Services.

Mozazzam Ghurki, President PCJCCI, while expressing his views about the event, hoped that "25th Textile Asia International Exhibition", shall act as a source of motivation and real opportunities for business ventures to the local businesses and industries. "We will try to facilitate joint ventures of the international brand owners with local companies from Gujranwala, Lahore, Sialkot and Faisalabad and will also arrange training to engineers from these cities that manufacture spare parts for sewing and textile," he added.

Hamza Khalid, Vice President PCJCCI, added that the exhibition will showcase immense buying, selling potential of textile, garment and allied industries and poised to introduce overseas suppliers of textile and garment materials, accessories and parts and machinery to the textile and garment industry of Pakistan."

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI, expresses pride in strategizing with this platform to showcase Pakistan's textile capabilities and support growth and excellence.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi, Civil Judge-I/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No. 374/1. Institution 19/4/2024. Date of hearing 24/9/2024. Noor Sharif etc. vs. Mst Bibi Haleema etc. Notice to No. (1/1) Matiullah, (1/3) Mst Samena, (1/6) Mst Bahshira daughters of Bibi Haleema w/o Azizullah resident of Leganai, Tehsil Gadezai, District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 a.m. dated 24/9/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court,

Change of Name

Mirwais s/o Burhan ud Din resident of Amin Colony Kohat Road Peshawar, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Mirwais to Mirwais Khan for all purposes. All necessary corrections are requested.



In brief

PM Advisor congratulate volleyball team

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister's Advisor on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan has congratulated the Pakistan Volleyball Team on their outstanding success at the 15th Asian Under-18 Volleyball Championship held in Bahrain. Sanaullah, who also holds the portfolio of Inter Provincial Coordination along with Secretary IPC Ministry, and DG PSB congratulated the Pakistan Volleyball Team on their outstanding success at the Asian Championship. The Pakistan Volleyball Team achieved victory by defeating South Korea 3-1 and India 3-0 in the matches of the championship to continue until August 4. On Tuesday, the Prime Minister's Advisor, Rana Sanaullah Khan, Secretary of the Ministry, Nadeem Irshad Kiani, and DG PSB Yasir Pirzada, in their congratulatory messages, appreciated the hard work and dedication of all the players and coaching staff. They expressed hope that the team would continue to achieve success with the same spirit in the future.

FDA to organize Sports Gala

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) will organize a 3-day Jashan-e-Azadi sports gala at FDA Sports Complex Sargodha Road here from August 01, 2024 (Thursday). After chairing a meeting, FDA Director General (DG) Muhammad Asif Chaudhry said that all necessary arrangements had been completed to organize the sports gala in a befitting manner. He said that male and female players would participate in separate competitions for which the registration of players was started. He said that sports gala would feature lawn tennis, basketball, swimming, table tennis, badminton, squash, snooker and gymnasium competitions which would be held from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Foolproof security arrangements would also be ensured for the participants of sport gala, he added.

Basketball-Spain rally past Greece

LILLE (Reuters): Spain overcame a tricky test to beat Greece 84-77 and Canada stunned Australia 93-83 in the second round of men's basketball Group A action at the Pierre Mauroy stadium on Tuesday. Greek Giannis Antetokounmpo brought all his NBA experience as the Milwaukee Bucks small forward made 27 points, hitting 11 rebounds and three assists. However, he wasn't prepared for Spain guard Sergio Llull, who combined with first-time Olympian and Memphis Grizzlies forward Santi Aldama to make 32 points. "We had a lot of faith even with this up and downs in score. Of course we had some slumps, little slumps. But overall we controlled rebounds which was a little flaw in the last few games," said Spain coach Sergio Scariolo. Canada were up to the task of upsetting third-ranked Australia, who chased the North Americans throughout the game, but were unable to keep up. Chicago Bulls point guard Josh Giddey led the Australians with 19 points, seven rebounds and six assists. But Canada's superior shooting, with combined efforts of RJ Barrett and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, saw them making up to 40 points. Hosts France face Japan and Germany take on Brazil in Group B later on Tuesday.

Mohsin Naqvi decides to 'hand over' cricket affairs to Waqar Younis

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has decided to hand over cricket affairs to former captain Waqar Younis.

According to sources, Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi will focus and look after administrative matters of the board. The sources said that according to vision of Chairman PCB, a cricketer should be responsible for all decisions regarding cricket.

The cricketer will make all the decisions including international, domestic, selection committee matters and NOCs of the players, sources said.

Sources further said that Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi's primary focus is on Champions Trophy management. It was decided to give for-

Naqvi will be new president of Asian Cricket Council

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan will take over the presidency of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) for the next two-year period as Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi will be the new president of ACC.

The ACC president at present is Jay Shah, Secretary of the Indian Cricket Board and his presidency was extended by one year. According to sources, Jay Shah will step down from the ACC presidency on completion of the term.

In the last meeting of ACC, the issue of the presidency for the next term was discussed. The formal chairmanship will be announced in the October-November meeting of the ACC. Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi will be the president of ACC for two years.

mer captain Waqar Younis a higher position in PCB and he will look after Men's Cricket matters.

According to the PCB Constitution 2014, the Chairman has the authority to delegate his power to anyone, sources added.

Waqar Younis will over-

see all matters related to the national team and will see the National Selection Committee, white ball and red ball coaches.

Chairman Mohsin Naqvi wants to involve experienced cricketers in the important aspects of cricket.

Mott steps down as England white-ball coach

LONDON (Agencies): Matthew Mott has stepped down as white-ball head coach after England failed to defend either of the limited-overs World Cups.

Jos Buttler is to remain as captain, with assistant coach Marcus Trescothick put in temporary charge for the series against Australia in September.

Australian Mott, 50, was appointed when England split the head coach roles in 2022 and later that year presided over the triumph at the T20 World Cup in his home country.

But England, champions in 2019, endured a calamitous 50-over World Cup in India last year, winning only three of their nine matches.

And they surrendered the T20 title in the Caribbean and United States in June, beaten in the semi-finals by eventual champions India.

A run to the last four seemed like a minimum requirement for Mott to keep his job, though England managed to win just one of the four games they played against other Test-playing sides.

Immediately after the T20 World Cup, England managing director Rob Key offered no assurances that Mott or Buttler would stay in their roles.

Key has reviewed the tournament and held talks with both men. Buttler is to stay on and Mott exits two years into a four-year contract.

England will now look for a head coach to build towards the next major tournament, the Champions Trophy in Pakistan early next year.

"After three World Cup cycles in a short space of time, I now feel the team



needs a new direction to prepare for the challenges ahead," said Key. "This decision was not made lightly, but I believe it is the right time for the team's future success.

"With our focus shifting towards the Champions Trophy early next year and the next cycle of white-ball competition, it is crucial that we ensure the team is focused and prepared."

Mott, who had previously expressed a desire to stay in the role, said: "I would like to thank the players, management, and everyone at the ECB for their commitment, support, and hard work during my time. I leave with many great friendships and incredible memories."

Who could replace Mott?

Former captain Eoin Morgan, who led England to the 50-over world title five years ago, has already distanced himself from the role.

Ex-England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff, who has been part of Mott's backroom staff and is currently leading Northern Superchargers in The Hundred, is one candidate, having being tipped as a future head coach of the national side by Key.

Jonathan Trott, the former England batter, has impressed as head coach of

Afghanistan but has just taken a role as head coach of the Pretoria Capitals in the SAT20.

Australian Mike Hussey, current head coach of Welsh Fire in The Hundred, has previously been part of England's coaching team.

Whoever takes over will have to deal with a congested schedule. Many of England's white-ball assignments are crammed in between or even during Test series, meaning some first-choice players are often unavailable.

Key split the England head coach jobs after Chris Silverwood left in 2022. Brendon McCullum took the Test job and the white-ball reins were given to Mott, previously in charge of an all-conquering Australia women's team.

At the end of his first series in charge, Mott lost Morgan, who retired after the tour of the Netherlands.

However, Buttler had long been touted as the skipper's successor and England were able to add the T20 world title to the 50-over crown in Melbourne in 2022.

Little has gone right since then. The defence of the 50-over World Cup in India was dogged with problems and heavy defeats, leaving Mott and Buttler under intense pressure.



PALLEKELE: Kusal Mendis made 43 off 41, Sri Lanka vs India, 3rd T20I.

Mandhana, Athapaththu move up in ICC Rankings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Left-handed openers Smriti Mandhana of India and Chamari Athapaththu of Sri Lanka have progressed in the ICC Women's T20I Batting Rankings after some fine performances over the past week in the Women's Asia Cup played in Dambulla.

Mandhana has progressed one spot to take fourth position after scores of 55 not out against Bangladesh in the semifinal and 60 against Sri Lanka in the final, two places shy of her career-best second position. Athapaththu scored 49 not out against Bangladesh, 63 against Pakistan in the semifinal and a match-winning 61 off 43 in the final to grab a career best-equaling sixth position.

Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana has moved up three spots to 14th position, India's Jemimah Rodrigues is up one place to 18th while Sri Lanka's Harshita Samarawickrama is back in the top 20 after her Player of the Match effort of 69 not out in the final of the Asia Cup.

Wicketkeepers Muneeba Ali of Pakistan (up six places to 35th) and Nannapat Koncharoenkai of Thailand (up three places to 37th) have also made notable gains while Aliya Riyaz of Pakistan (up two places to 52nd) and Theertha Satish of the United Arab Emirates (up four places to 60th) are among the others to move up the rankings.

In the bowling rankings, Pakistan's left-arm spinner Sadia Iqbal has moved up one slot to fourth after finishing with four wickets in the semifinal against Sri Lanka while India's new-ball bowler Renuka Singh is back in the top five following a three-wicket haul against Bangladesh in the other semifinal.

Pakistan to host Asian U16 Tennis C'ship Qualifiers next year

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) on Tuesday, announced to have successfully secured the hosting rights of the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) U16 Championship Qualifying event, scheduled to be played next year.

"Asian Tennis Federation was requested by President PTF to give us hosting rights of next year's Asian U16 Championship's qualifying event. ATF has very kindly agreed to it," announced PTF.

"This will be for the first time ever that such a multi country event will be hosted by us in Pakistan and will give a great opportunity to our U/16 tennis players to compete with leading

Asian countries on our own courts," it added.

The PTF further shared that their president Aisam-ul-Haq, since assuming the role, has been actively pursuing various initiatives to develop and boost the game of tennis in Pakistan.

During his recent trip to London, Aisam met the International Tennis Federation (ITF) President David Haggerty and ATF President Yuriy Polskiy in a bid to receive their support and approval for a number of projects.

As a result, the international tennis body not only gave its consent to let PTF hold four ITF events in Pakistan but will also provide a 50 per cent grant to ensure the events proceed

smoothly.

Furthermore, the ITF has also agreed to give a subsidy to the PTF for constructing covered courts at the National Tennis Center in Islamabad.

In addition to that, the ATF will grant Pakistan to send one coach to their international coaches conference and will provide the opportunity to two young players to get one-month training in Kazakhstan.

President PTF Aisam-ul-Haq also briefed the ITF about the development activities of wheelchair Tennis in Pakistan. The international tennis body lauded the initiative and offered to provide coaches and staff for further development.

India down Sri Lanka in a super-over thriller to sweep T20I series

PALLEKELE (Agencies): India came from behind to edge Sri Lanka in a super-over thriller and swept the three-match T20I series 3-0.

The last T20I went right down to the wire as skipper Suryakumar Yadav forcing a super-over while defending six runs in the final over.

Washington Sundar bowled the super over for India and he leaked away just two runs before claiming back-to-back wickets to curtail Sri Lanka on a skippy total. Set to chase just three, Suryakumar Yadav hit Maheesh Theekshana on the first delivery to seal an astonishing victory for his side.

Put into bat first, India's inexperienced batting unit struggled against Sri Lanka's ruthless bowling attack and could accumulate 137/9 in the allotted 20 overs. The touring party had a poor start to their innings as they lost half of their side with just 48 runs on the board in 8.4 overs.

Meanwhile, Shubman Gill, who offered a notable fight, finally received ample support at the other end in the form of Riyan Parag. The duo added 54 runs for the sixth wicket before both perished in the 16th over, leaving India reeling at 105/7.

Gill remained the top-scorer for India with his gutsy 39. He conceded 37 deliveries in the process and struck three boundaries while Parag made a brisk 26 off 18 deliveries, peppered with one four and two sixes. Washington Sundar then gave a late push to India's total with a quickfire cameo which lasted on the penultimate delivery of the innings. He smashed two fours and a six on his way to an 18-ball 25.

Maheesh Theekshana starred with the ball for Sri Lanka, picking up three wickets, followed by Wanindu Hasaranga, who bagged two. Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Asitha

Fernando and Ramesh Mendis chipped in with a wicket apiece. In response, Sri Lanka were forced to make hard yards to achieve a modest total as India bowlers forced a late comeback.

The home side had a flying start to the pursuit with openers Pathum Nissanka and Kusal Mendis providing a solid platform with a 58-run stand. Mendis was the core aggressor of the opening partnership while Nissanka anchored through until his departure in the ninth over. He scored 26 off 27 deliveries. Kusal Mendis was then involved in yet another fruitful partnership for Sri Lanka when he put together 52 runs for the second wicket with Kusal Perera. Mendis' dismissal in the 16th over sparked a collapse as Sri Lanka lost four more wickets at an alarming rate and consequently slipped to 132/6 in 19 overs.

GB's Draper out as Gauff suffers shock Olympics defeat



PARIS (Agencies): British men's number one Jack Draper faded in the sweltering Paris heat as the nation's interest in the Olympics singles ended in the second round.

Draper, 22, lost 7-6 (7-3) 3-6 2-6 to American seventh seed Taylor Fritz on the Roland Garros clay.

"It was brutal out there," Draper said. After a strong and aggressive start which led to the first set, Draper was unable to take any of six break points in the third game of the second set.

Fritz, 26, hanging on proved to be pivotal. The energy seemed to be sapped out of Draper, who has struggled in the early part of his career with fitness problems, by a lengthy rally in the fourth game. The world number 27 was broken in the sixth game and, from that point, the match

quickly slipped away from him.

Continuing to wilt in temperatures of over 30C, Draper lost range with his groundstrokes and power in his serves as Fritz won 10 of the next 13 games to reach the last 16. "It is the hottest conditions since I've been out in America at the start of the year, so I'm not used to it," added Draper, who complained he was unable to access cold water during the match.

"My physicality still has to get better but I gave my all."

Later on Tuesday, Andy Murray plays alongside Dan Evans in what could be the final match of the former world number one's illustrious career.

The British pair face Belgium's Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen in the second round of the men's doubles. Katie Boulter and Heather Watson

earned a superb 6-2 6-3 win over German pair Angelique Kerber and Laura Siegemund in the women's doubles, with Watson teaming up with Joe Salisbury in the mixed doubles later.

Tearful Gauff loses in second round

American second seed Coco Gauff fell to a shock 7-6 (9-7) 6-2 defeat against Croatia's Donna Vekic in the third round of the women's singles.

An emotional Gauff disintegrated in the second set after a row with chair umpire Jaume Campistol over a line call which proved pivotal.

Facing a break point at 3-2, Gauff missed a return which was called out by a line judge but the decision was overruled by Campistol for Vekic to move 4-2 ahead. As she argued with officials, Gauff claimed she was being "cheated". Gauff, 20, was among the favourites for a medal at the venue where she reached the French Open final in 2022.

But 28-year-old Vekic, who reached the Wimbledon final earlier this month, continued her recent renaissance. German veteran Angelique Kerber - who announced on Friday she will retire after the Games - continued her farewell with a 6-4 6-3 win over Canada's Leylah Fernandez.

American Danielle Collins, another player quitting the sport later this year, is also through to the quarter-finals. Collins, who spoke in a BBC Sport column earlier this year about why she is retiring despite being in the world's top 10, won 6-0 4-6 6-3 against Colombia's Camila Osorio.

Mushfiqur Rahim named in Bangladesh A squad

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Experienced wicketkeeper batter Mushfiqur Rahim was named in Bangladesh A squad for the first of the two-match red ball series against Pakistan, scheduled in August this year.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Tuesday, announced distinctive squads for their tour to Pakistan which will feature two red-ball fixtures, followed by a three-match One-Day series.

Bangladesh A squad for the first four-day match features veteran wicketkeeper batter Rahim, who will be accompanied by national teammates Tanzim Hasan Sakib and Rejaur Rahman Raja. The three members of the senior team, however, were not named in the Bangladesh A squad for the second four-day match against Pakistan and will be replaced by Saif Hasan, Soumya Sarkar, and Naim Sheikh.

Meanwhile, Soumya Sarkar, Anamul Haque



Bijoy and Mosaddek Hossain Saikat headline the Bangladesh A squad for the fifty-over series.

Bangladesh A will embark on their tour to Pakistan with the first four-day match, scheduled to commence on August 10, followed by the second red-ball fixture that will run from August 17 to 20.

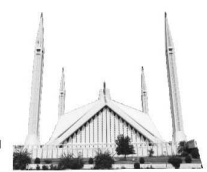
The three-match One-Day series will be played from August 23 to 27. Notably, a number of national men's team players will join the 'A' side on August 6 in Pakistan.

First Four-Day Match Squad: Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Anamul

Haque Bijoy, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shahadat Hossain Dipu, Mosaddek Hossain Saikat, Mahidul Islam Ankon, Nayeem Hasan, Hasan Murad, Tanvir Islam, Hasan Mahmud, Tanzim Sakib, Rejaur Rahman Raja, and Ruyel Miah.

Second Four-Day Match Squad: Anamul Haque Bijoy, Naim Sheikh, Saif Hasan, Soumya Sarkar, Shahadat Hossain Dipu, Mosaddek Hossain Saikat, Zaker Ali Anik, Towhid Hridoy, Mahidul Islam Ankon, Hasan Murad, Tanvir Islam, Mohammad Saifuddin, Tanzim Sakib, Rejaur Rahman Raja, and Ruyel Miah.

One-Day Squad: Soumya Sarkar, Anamul Haque Bijoy, Naim Sheikh, Saif Hasan, Zaker Ali Anik, Towhid Hridoy, Mahidul Islam Ankon, Mosaddek Hossain Saikat, Rishad Hossain, Sheikh Mehedi, Tanvir Islam, Mohammad Saifuddin, Tanzim Sakib, Rejaur Rahman Raja, and Ruyel Miah.



In brief

IRSA releases 340,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 340,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 439,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1521.99 feet and was 123.99 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 259,300 cusecs and 190,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1201.10 feet, which was 153.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 40,200 cusecs and 10,500 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 255,300, 196,300, 145,400 and 76,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 55,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 57,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Rescue 1122 on high alert due to intense rains

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Emergency Service, Rescue-1122 has put its personnel on high alert to deal with any expected emergency situation due to intense rains. Rescue personnel have joined their duties at areas surrounding Nullah Lai and the low-lying areas. The deployment of the rescuers have been made for security measures in Gawwalmandi and other low-lying areas. Residents in the vicinity of the Lai area have been advised to be extra careful during the rains. Spokesman Rescue 1122 Muhammad Usman informed that during the rains, rescue personnel would remain on duty at the deployment places. After heavy rains, there are reports of rainwater entering houses in various low-lying areas of the city. The spokesperson advised parents not to let their children go near drains and electric poles. He also stressed people to drive at low speed during rain. He appealed to the public not to go under weak and dilapidated roofs during rains and to report any emergency to the rescue helpline 1122 immediately. All officers and personnel of Rescue 1122 are present in Fled all the time to serve the public, he said.

IFA conducted 22,221 inspections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has conducted a total of 22,221 inspections, issued 8,089 improvement notices to food establishments, fined 660 businesses, and sealed 300 for serious violations during March 2023 to June 2024. Talking to APP, Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of IFA, Dr Tahira Saddique said that the IFA also held 24 awareness seminars to educate the public and food vendors about food safety standards in this period. In this regard, she said that the Director IFA, Irfan Nawaz Memon has chaired a critical review meeting of the Islamabad Food Authority. The meeting focused on evaluating the authority's recent performance and planning future actions to enhance food safety in the city. Director Memon emphasized the need to speed up the licensing process for food businesses. He highlighted the importance of equipping the Food Authority staff with modern tools to conduct thorough inspections.

Mohsin Naqvi meets Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi met with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi at the Ministry of Interior. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and the overall law and order situation were discussed.

Mohsin Naqvi said that all possible cooperation will be continued for peace and tranquillity in KP. He emphasized that the Frontier Constabulary, Counter-Terrorism Department, and Police in KP are being equipped with modern technology and weapons.

He highlighted that KP is on the frontline in the war against terrorism and the brave personnel of KP Police, FC, and CTD have

written a history of bravery with their blood in this war. He underscored that there is only one option winning this war against terrorism.

The interior minister reiterated the commitment that the nation will eradicate the scourge of terrorism with unity and consensus.

Poverty, unemployment leads to human trafficking: Interior

Ministry: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in his special termed the poverty, unemployment and unequal distribution of resources as major factors behind the rising figures of human trafficking.

He stated on "World Day Against Human Trafficking" that underdeveloped countries were badly affected by human trafficking, and

organized gangs were also active in Pakistan.

He emphasized that FIA always remains vigilant in curbing these gangs and apprehended several suspects. He underscored the need for multi-faceted joint actions from the international community to prevent human trafficking.

Interior Minister said that human traffickers played with the lives of thousands of people, families have been separated from their loved ones. He stressed that people must stand together against the heinous crime. He reiterated that let us work together to raise awareness against human trafficking, address its causes, and strive for a society where no one is exploited due to human trafficking.

Govt wants to bring strong, stable municipality system: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Tuesday said that Punjab Government wanted to bring a strong and stable municipality system across the province.

He was presiding over a meeting regarding 'Suthra' Punjab. The Deputy Commissioners and Tehsil Administrators from across the division participated in the meeting. Detailed briefing regarding outsourcing of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company was given. The outsourcing is being done to expand sanitation services to other districts of Rawalpindi Division.

After completing all the steps, the arrangements would be finalized soon in

this regard, Engineer Aamir Khattak said adding, the Chief Minister's vision for a 'Suthra' Punjab is an excellent road map.

The Commissioner informed that so far, besides pre-qualification advertisement, evaluation and pre-qualified meeting with pre-qualified bidders have also been done. There is a need to outsource cleanliness and sanitation systems in rural areas.

Manual, mechanical sweeping, waste collection, drain cleaning and waste disposal would be ensured, Engineer Aamir Khattak said.

The companies would be selected purely on merit in 148 tehsils of Punjab, he said adding, preference

would be given to the companies which have modern machinery. For the first time, special attention is being given to garbage dumping, he informed.

The Commissioner said that every tehsil must have at least one environment friendly dumping site. There would be no room for laziness in cleanliness operations after outsourcing, he said and informed that the municipality department would monitor the outsourcing system digitally with biometric attendance, vehicle tracking management system, vehicle weighing at dumping site, digital fleet monitoring and container clearance through geo-tagging and prompt resolution of the complaints.

RDA seals 18 private educational institutions

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of the Director General (DG), RDA, Kinza Murtaza, has sealed 18 private educational institutions established in Eidgah Scheme, Asghar Mall Scheme and other areas for non-payment of commercial status fees.

According to RDA spokesman, the Enforcement Squad of RDA while carrying out an operation against unauthorized and illegal residential cum commercial buildings sealed 18 educational institutes namely Thematic Moutessri School, Minar Public School, the Arqam School, Al-Huda School, Allied School, Step College, Jinnah Iqbal Educator, Diction School, Educator School, Jinnah

Foundation School, Educator School, the Future Education, the Future Oasis School, Allied School and the Bestever School in Asghar Mall Housing Scheme, Eidgah Scheme and Dosehra Ground Scheme, Rawalpindi.

He informed that RDA Enforcement Squad including two Assistant Directors Building Control, Building Superintendent, Building Inspectors and others carried out the operation against rules violators and took action in accordance with the law.

The spokesperson said that earlier, notices were also issued to the owners of the properties namely Muhammad Shoaib, Mazhar Anees, Ishiaq Ahmed, Rafique Shah, Mian Naheem, Ch Asim, Muhammad Irfan, Zumard

Javeed Qureshi, Shabir Ahmed Abbasi, Muhammad Irfan, Amjid, Shezad Sadique, Amir Malik, Anjum Butt, Khan Asad, Muhammad Abdul Aziz and Shahid Bilal who violated approved building plans/maps. The owners violating the Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 and RDA Building and Zoning Regulations 2020 constructed illegal commercial buildings without No Objection Certificates.

He said that the DG had directed the LU&BC Wing to take strict action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions and commercial activities without any discrimination. The DG had also directed the authorities concerned to conduct a survey regarding illegal residential and commercial buildings, he added.

CDA to recruit medical staff in Capital Hospital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Tuesday approved recruitment of doctors and paramedical staff against vacant positions in the Capital Hospital.

It was decided in the 9th meeting of CDA Board that met here with Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa in the chair. The meeting also focused on revitalizing the CDA hospital, with plans to enhance operational efficiency and make

it a financially sustainable institution.

Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, emphasized the need for a strong and self-sufficient hospital, capable of delivering quality healthcare services. He further directed that proposals for the establishment of a medical college in the CDA hospital should be presented in the next meeting of the board.

The board meeting decided to carry out study of financial rules of other

institutions in the country regarding the decentralization of financial powers and implement the best financial rules in the institution after a proper study.

It also reviewed the income and revenue generation targets for the current fiscal year. The meeting accorded approval to adopt paternity and maternity Rules for the welfare of employees. It was decided that the CDA Board meeting would be held on a weekly basis.

BISP to impart technical training to women in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) will impart technical training to youth and vulnerable women in Balochistan province for empowering them.

This was discussed during a meeting between Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid and Minister for Education and Technical Training,

Balochistan, Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani.

The meeting was held to discuss this collaborative initiative aimed at empowering youth and vulnerable women through technical training. The program aims at uplifting the lives of BISP beneficiaries through equipping them with the latest skills.

The meeting focused on leveraging the expertise of both departments to provide market-driven skills

training, enhancing employability and economic opportunities for marginalized groups.

The partnership seeks to bridge the skills gap, foster inclusivity, and promote socio-economic growth in Balochistan.

Both leaders emphasized the importance of joint efforts in uplifting vulnerable populations, pledging to work together towards a brighter future for the people.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General Commonwealth Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland KC called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House. —APP Photo

ICT admin on high alert to tackle Monsoon mayhem

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the teams of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration is on high alert after the heavy rain showers in the Federal Capital.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the teams were implementing measures to prevent flooding and ensure smooth traffic flow.

He said the Monsoon rains have hit the city hard, causing widespread water accumulation. In response, Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates were actively working in the field. The Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad has instructed them to expedite the drainage process.

Assistant Commissioners are visiting various low-lying areas to assess the situation. The district administration reported that inspections of city-wide drains were underway to ensure they were functioning properly. Efforts were also being made to maintain drainage on highways. The district administration noted that traffic police were assisting to keep the traffic flowing smoothly despite the challenging conditions.

ANF recovers 8 kg drugs in 6 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 6 operations managed to recover 8 kg drugs and arrested 7 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 84 ice and 99 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of two passengers going to Jeddah and Sharjah at Peshawar Airport.

3.2 kg ice was recovered from a Jeddah-bound passenger at Lahore Airport.

547 grams ice was recovered from another Jeddah-bound passenger at Karachi Airport. 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused netted in Muzaffargarh.

1.4 kg ice was recovered from two suspects rounded up near Chungi No 26, Islamabad.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Adopting AI essential for development, prosperity: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that this is an era of Artificial Intelligence and adopting innovations in all walks of life is essential for development and prosperity.

"Extending parliamentary cooperation among 56 member states of the Commonwealth is essential for regional prosperity and development," he expressed these views during his meeting with Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland along with representatives of parliaments of the Commonwealth who are on a 5-day official visit to Pakistan. He also said that using innovative technologies and Artificial Intelligence is pivotal for ensuring qualitative and public-responsive legislation.

The speaker also highlighted the significance of proactive parliamentary Friendship groups for

enhancing parliament-to-parliament contacts among member states of the Commonwealth.

He also stressed the need to digitalize parliament for effective and public-responsive education. While mentioning the formulation of the Legislative Drafting Council.

He said that Artificial Intelligence is the technological innovation that can help produce synergy among parliaments of commonwealth member states.

While mentioning the Green Parliament Initiative, he said that the Pakistan parliament is the first of its kind which has been solarized completely for its electricity needs. Further, he also said that the Pakistan Parliament established the Secretariat of Sustainable

Development Goals for synergizing among various stakeholders. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the Pakistan parliament has

started a Youth internship program to bring youth and parliament closer. He also said that the parliament of Pakistan has also established the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) to ensure basic rights for women. He also added, "Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights has also been playing a pivotal role in protecting children."

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland expressed gratitude to the Speaker National Assembly for the warm welcome. She also commended the resilience of the Pakistani nation and its people to grapple with the devastating impacts of the 2022 floods.

She also appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the present parliament of Pakistan for the vibrant of parliamentary diplomacy. She also said that Pakistan has been a proactive member of the Commonwealth.

Edu ministry starts new initiatives in FDE schools, colleges to enhance learning

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has announced a range of new innovative programs and upgrades in Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) Schools and Colleges for the upcoming session aimed at enhancing the learning experience and overall well-being of the students.

The education ministry, while welcoming the students back to school after vacations, stated that new academic programs in upcoming sessions will include Coding and AI classes for primary students to develop essential skills for the future, entrepreneurship and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs for high school students to foster innovation and creativity.

The other programs are Character Building Curriculum to focus on values and personality development and financial literacy to be part of the curriculum, empowering students with essential life skills, the ministry added.

Similarly, the infrastructure upgrades include massive expansion of smart classrooms in urban and rural schools to facilitate interactive learning, and newly established Health Infirmary in 125 schools to ensure students' health and wellness.

Furthermore, the ministry has established 400 wash stations in schools for improved hygiene and renovated & revitalized 75 schools with colorful environments. It also established 100 new early childhood education centers in FDE schools.

The education ministry also informed about the Student Welfare Initiatives solid hot meals program to reduce malnutrition for primary students, while free sports uniforms have also been provided for primary students to encourage par-

ticipation in sports. The ministry has allocated 20 Pink Buses for female students and teachers to travel from rural to urban areas.

However, in the initiatives regarding Science and Technology enhancements, the ministry announced to provide High-Tech Telescopes in 100 schools to spark curiosity in astronomy and science, while it has also introduced six months of foreign language courses for 1500 students of federal schools.

It was informed that AI-based formative assessments have been started to provide personalized feedback and improve student outcomes, while the ministry has announced that no examinations will be taken in Grade 5, substituted by formative assessments to reduce stress and promote learning.

The additional initiatives, including 50 schools have been added with evening shift programs to cater to diverse student needs.

BISP disburse over Rs. 86 bln among beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.86 billion among over 82,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June).

"Till July 29 afternoon, over Rs. 86 billion has been disbursed among over 82,00,000 beneficiaries which makes 88 percent 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 payment process has entered into the third phase where the women from the districts including Dera Ismail Khan, South Waziristan, Tank and Upper South Waziristan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are receiving the stipends. The other districts included in the third phase are Jacobabad, Qambar Shahdad Kot, Kashmore, Larkana, Mirpurkhas,

Naushahro Feroze, Benazirabad, Kandhkot, Sanghar, Shikarpur, Tharparkar, Umerkot in Sindh and Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh, Multan, Lodhran, Layyah, Khanewal and Dera Ghazi Khan in South Punjab.

It is pertinent to mention here that the payments of Benazir Education Stipends is also continuing across the country along with Benazir Kafaalat.

The beneficiaries can receive their payment through the nearest centers after receiving the message from 8171. The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program. The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly.

However, the beneficiaries can also contact the officials on WhatsApp numbers including 03018472841 (Hyderabad District), 03018472838 (Karachi Division), 03175370095 (South Punjab), 03202399616 (Central Punjab), 03028238564 (North Punjab), 03492883482 (Balochistan),

03155212820 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), 03155213094 (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan).

The messages from the Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171, and messages from any other number should not be trusted. The officials of BISP have been directed to ensure the smooth disbursement of Kafaalat payments to the women without any deductions.

The staff has been deputed to monitor the process of payment disbursement and take immediate action against the agents responsible for deductions from the beneficiary's payments. The BISP is currently supporting 9.3 million deserving families and acting as a lifeline for those facing economic hardship.

The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) program, also known as the 'Benazir Kafaalat Programme', is the core initiative of BISP and was launched in 2008. Since its inception, the UCT/Kafaalat initiative has grown to the extent that it is now the largest single cash transfer program in Pakistan's history.

Women affected by anemia

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has reported that over forty percent of women in Afghanistan suffer from anemia. UNICEF shared a video on X stating that forty percent of women in Afghanistan are affected by anemia. The organization distributes minerals and vitamin supplements to pregnant women to prevent anemia and nutritional deficiencies, with support from various institutions in different regions of Afghanistan.

IE conducts measures

KABUL (BNA): Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced new measures regarding consular services for Afghan nationals residing in several European countries. The Ministry has reiterated its dedication to defending the rights of Afghans abroad and ensuring they receive accessible consular services. Despite multiple requests for coordination, many of Afghanistan's political and consular missions in Europe have continued to operate independently, often violating established protocols.

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

US State Dept advises Americans against visiting Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): The US State Department on Monday issued an advisory, warning Americans against traveling to Afghanistan – citing security risks as the reason. The State Department issued a Level 4 advisory stating: “Do not travel to Afghanistan due to terrorism, risk of wrongful detention, civil unrest, kidnapping and crime.” The statement went on to note that “multiple terrorist groups are active in country and US citizens are targets of kidnapping and hostage-taking.” The US also accused the Islamic Emirate of harassing and detaining aid and humanitarian workers and said: “The activities of foreigners may be viewed with suspicion, and reasons for detention may be unclear.” According to the statement, detention of US citizens can be “lengthy” and the IEA “do not regularly permit the United States to conduct welfare checks on US citizens in detention, including by phone.” The State Department

also said the IEA might not recognize a person's US citizenship if they are a dual Afghan-American citizen. “Individuals should not travel to Afghanistan for any reason, including to accompany eligible family members for relocation,” the statement read. In conclusion the State Department advised US citizens in Afghanistan “to depart immediately via commercial means if possible.” While the US continues to claim terrorist groups are operational in Afghanistan, the IEA has repeatedly rejected these claims and said Daesh, in particular, has been suppressed in Afghanistan. The IEA has also repeatedly assured foreign visitors, including investors, of their safety. The IEA has also continuously said foreigners in Afghanistan prisons are in custody after breaking the law. But multiple US officials continue to warn of possible Daesh attacks against the United States – the latest being Michael McCaul, Chairman of the Foreign

Affairs Committee. In an interview with CBS' Face the Nation on Sunday night he said Daesh was of particular concern to America and that individuals were using Mexico to enter the country. Asked about border security with Mexico, McCaul said what he worries most about is that following the fall of Afghanistan's former government, “thousands of ISIS-K (Daesh) come out of those prisons at Bagram, ended up in the Khorasan region, which is Afghanistan, Tajikistan; they make their way over, they come through Mexico, and they enter into the United States.” He went on to say: “Now we have ISIS in the homeland (America).” Referring to last month's arrest of eight Daesh members in the country – all from Tajikistan – he said the question now was how many more were in the country. The Islamic Emirate meanwhile has not yet commented on either America's advisory or on McCaul's comments.

Six health centres to be closed

FAIZABAD (Pajhwok): Local sources in northeastern Badakhshan province have expressed concerns over the closure of six health centres funded by the IOM but health officials said that three of these facilities would remain open. Some residents who did not want to be named said after the closure of 60-bed gynecology ward in Faizabad City, six more health centres situated in the 7th Police District, Khirsu village of Warduj district, Danishabad locality of Yafatal District, Dasht Farakh locality of Baharak district, Dahn-i-Ab area of Argu district, and Miyana Dash area of Faizabad would be closed from August 2024. Meanwhile, Qari Atiqullah Faizai, the Public Health Department head, acknowledged that these health centres were funded by the IOM and added due to the efforts it was expected that three of these health centres would remain open. He stated the reason for the closure of these health centers is the lack of financial support and added that the residents of Badakhshan are in serious need of providing health services and in each of these centers about five thousand people were covered by health services. The Public Health Department director said the closure of health centers will increase the mortality of mothers and babies in this province. He adds that efforts were underway to re-open the 60-bed gynecological Faizabad Provincial Hospital, and the International Red Cross Organization is supposed to provide financial coverage for these 60 blocked beds. Yar Mohammad, the resident of Badakhshan Yangan district, said in the past week, two women died during childbirth in Jokhan Valley and Spajmi Valley in Yangan district. He added that one of the dead named Eidaneh was a mother of five children who lived in a poor family near Oni village.

Peace Foundation invites IEA delegation to Japan



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has announced that the Executive Director of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, and Tadamichi Yamamoto, former head of UNAMA. In the meeting, discussions centered on critical issues and comprehensive cooperation. Itsuo Adachi emphasized the importance of international support for Afghanistan and formally extended an invitation to the Islamic Emirate's delegation to visit Japan. He also engaged with Mawlawi Muttuqi's insights on the third Doha meeting. Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttuqi thanked Japan for its continued support and cooperation and confirmed that the Islamic Emirate's delegation would visit Japan. Additionally, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttuqi praised the outcomes of the Doha meeting, highlighting the Islamic Emirate's balanced foreign policy and its commitment to fostering positive relations with countries around the world. He noted that any positive change and political progress in relation to Afghanistan is a significant step forward.

Afghanistan Red Crescent urges OIC support

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan Red Crescent Society has announced that its Acting Head, Shahabuddin Delawar, has emphasized the need for a hospital dedicated to treating heart defects during a meeting with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) ambassador. In a statement released, the Afghanistan Red Crescent reported that Delawar met with Mohammad Saeed Al-Iyash, the OIC ambassador to Afghanistan. During the meeting, he urged the OIC to assist in constructing a hospital for heart defect patients, providing medical equipment, and establishing a tent manufacturing plant. The statement noted that discussions also covered the treatment of heart defect patients and the provision of aid to returnees and those affected by natural disasters in the country. The organization cited the OIC ambassador as having promised support in these areas. Previously, Afghanistan Red Crescent officials reported registering over 3,000 children with heart defects over the past year. The call for support reflects the urgent need for specialized medical facilities in Afghanistan to address critical health issues. The collaboration between the Afghanistan Red Crescent and the OIC could play a significant role in improving healthcare infrastructure and providing much-needed relief to affected families. As Afghanistan continues to face challenges in its healthcare system, international partnerships and support are crucial for addressing the pressing needs of its vulnerable populations. The commitment from the OIC could pave the way for enhanced medical care and support for those suffering from severe health conditions.

Afghanistan exports first animal feed shipment to Tajikistan

BALKH (TOLONews): Officials at the Balkh Industry and Commerce Directorate have announced that the first shipment of domestically produced animal feed has been exported to Tajikistan. This shipment weighs 25 tons and was exported to Tajikistan after undergoing quality assurance checks. According to officials at the Balkh Industry and Commerce Directorate, more than a thousand tons of animal feed are expected to be exported from Balkh to Tajikistan this year. Mohammad Afzal Afzali, the administrative manager of a private company, said: “The current shipment meets international standards, with each truck carrying about 25 tons. This year, we have received a permit for more than a thousand tons, and God willing, it will increase in the coming years.” Amir Mohammad Muttuqi, head of the Balkh Industry and Commerce Directorate, said that Afghanistan has achieved self-sufficiency in animal feed production. He pledged that the Islamic Emirate is making efforts to boost domestic production and create opportunities for exporting local products. Muttuqi said, “The officials of the Islamic Emirate, from the leadership down to all administrative officials, support domestic production and strive to market our domestic products abroad so that they can be exported.” Meanwhile, economic experts consider the increase in export levels crucial for the country's economic growth and urge the Islamic Emirate to create more opportunities for exporting domestic products. Shir Ahmad Sepahee Zada, an economic expert, told TOLONews, “The economic development of a country depends on its exports and imports. The more we export, the more foreign currency we bring in, and the more we import, the more our currency goes out. The focus of the

Daikundi villagers hold protest

KABUL (Khaama Press): Residents from several villages in Daikundi, Central province of Afghanistan, have protested against the proposed location for a school building, clashing with the Taliban's education chief in the province. The protesters gathered to voice their objections to the school project, which is funded by UNICEF's Child Support Fund, being built in the designated site of “Nadak” in Miramor district. According to the local sources, the location chosen for the school, known as “Nadak,” is located in a remote area that poses significant travel challenges for children from other villages. The protesters in the area chanted, “We don't want it, we don't want it” in response to the proposed location. Despite their objections, the Taliban's education chief in Daikundi insists that the school will be built at the selected location. The reports indicate that the Taliban's education chief has informed the protesters that the project's sponsor is unwilling to change the site of the school construction. Previously, protesters had presented their grievances to the Ministry of Education and the governor of the Taliban in Daikundi, but their concerns have not been addressed despite directives from senior Taliban officials.

From addiction to healing: The journey of a Herat doctor



HERAT (TOLONews): An addicted doctor in Herat helps treat other addicts after overcoming his own addiction. Abdul Karim Taraf, who has been undergoing treatment for the past 18 months at a specialized addiction treatment hospital in Herat city, says he has felt the devastating, soul-crushing pain of drugs for six long years. He graduated from Herat Medical Institute 27 years ago and served as a doctor in the provincial hospital of the province for several years, but drugs turned his life upside down. Abdul Karim Taraf said: “In this camp, I both quit drugs and now serve. In the emergency service sec-

drugs.” Some of Abdul Karim's patients at the addiction treatment hospital are educated individuals such as engineers, doctors, religious scholars, and athletes. Drugs have severely affected their lives, just like Abdul Karim. Zamari, an engineer, said: “Drugs brought me to a point where instead of living at home, I would sleep next to animals. Drugs had taken everything from me.” Aref Mohammadi, an athlete, said: “I practiced Kung Fu for twelve years and completed its courses. Due to ignorance and foolishness, I got addicted to drugs and was addicted for eight years.” Hayatullah Rohani, the director of the Herat counter-narcotics department, said: “We have prepared a list of these individuals and shared it with our superiors to include them in work opportunities. We have listed some of them and will continue to try to provide job opportunities for them and make use of their skills.” According to the statistics of the Herat counter-narcotics department, nearly four thousand addicts are being treated at this hospital, and in the past two years, about ten thousand addicts have been treated and returned to normal life. With the activation of this four-thousand-bed addiction treatment hospital, the streets and boulevards of Herat city have been cleared of addicts, there have been incidents where offenders attempted to attack the security forces involved in the fight against poppy cultivation, resulting in tragic events” and said that the committee had been tasked with conducting a comprehensive investigation into the incidents. The UN reported that “no further information on the progress of investigations has been publicly shared.” The UN also reported a number of cross-border incidents, in Paktia, and Khost provinces, on May 17 and 29 respectively, which resulted in civilian casualties. The Embassy of Pakistan in Afghanistan stated that it had no recorded exchanges of fire with Afghanistan security forces on those days that resulted in civilian casualties. On freedom of the media, the UN stated that following a March 31 announcement by the authorities on the prohibition of political parties, numerous media outlets with alleged political affiliations were suspended. The report also noted that the IEA “continued to

Hanafi highlights IE's commitment

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, met with journalists and cultural figures from various provinces to discuss the enhancement of print and visual media. Hanafi emphasized the Islamic Emirate's commitment to bolstering media and cultural initiatives across the country. In the meeting, journalists and cultural representatives expressed their satisfaction with the current security and the support for media and cultural activities under the Islamic Emirate. They further highlighted the increased opportunities for journalistic work, cultural preservation, protection of historical sites, and promotion of languages within Islamic principles. They also requested greater support for the publication of works by Afghan poets and writers. For his part, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi acknowledged the journalists and cultural figures as valuable assets to the nation.

Officials meet with IEA leader

KABUL (TOLONews): Some local officials from Ghor province met with Sheikh Hibatullah Akhundzada, the leader of Islamic Emirate, in Kandahar and shared their challenges. Hamdullah Fetrat, the deputy spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said that during this meeting, the leader of the Islamic Emirate advised the Ghor local officials to strengthen the Islamic system, implement Sharia, educate and train children, and avoid disputes. According to Hamdullah Fetrat, the governor, court officials, district governors, and military officials of Ghor province were present at the meeting. Regarding this meeting, the deputy spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate said: “They were given necessary instructions and recommendations regarding the strengthening of the Islamic system, the implementation of Sharia, education among the children of Muslims, complete obedience to their leaders, kindness to subordinates, protection against conflicts, and efforts for better service to Muslims.” Several political analysts consider the meeting between officials of the interim government and the leader of the Islamic Emirate important for resolving challenges and listening to the people's demands. “The more meetings are held in the current situation, the more public mobilization, a greater framework of national coherence, unity, and solidarity will emerge,” said Janat Faheem Chakari, a political analyst. “Education, training, and unemployment of youth are issues that need to be conveyed to the leader of the Islamic Emirate so that these challenges can be addressed,” said Edris Mohammadi Zazai, a political analyst. Before this meeting, the leader of the Islamic Emirate met with the acting heads of the Ministry of Defense, Interior, and the General Directorate of Intelligence and discussed the security situation and resolving some challenges faced by these security agencies.

UN says in report restrictions against women in Afghanistan continue

KABUL (Ariana News): The UN has stated in its latest update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan that restrictions on women's rights to work and freedom of movement continue to be implemented and that a number of incidents claimed by Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKPDaesh) resulted in civilian casualties. According to the report, based on monitoring undertaken by UNAMA's Human Rights Service, for the period May to June 2024, the Islamic Emirate's General Directorate of Intelligence officials forcibly closed the office of a women-led NGO for allowing some of its female employees to physically report to work. The UN stated that the NGO, which was not named, was allowed to reopen days later after signing a commitment letter that it would not allow women employees to come to the office. The UN also stated that between April and June, a number of incidents claimed by Daesh resulted in civilian casualties. “According to the claims issued by ISKP, the inci-

dents targeted Shi'a Muslims and the de facto authorities (IEA),” the report read. Among the incidents reported was that of an IED on April 20 in Kabul city that wounded four adult men; a shooting in Herat province on April 29, which left six worshippers dead inside a mosque; and the May 17 attack in Bamiyan city, which saw gunmen shoot and kill five adults, including three Spanish tourists. The UN also reported that in May and June, IEA security forces conducted a series of operations to clear poppy fields in Badakhshan province. “On numerous occasions de facto security forces fired into crowds of local residents protesting the destruction of their crops, killing and wounding at least 17 people in total,” the report read. On May 4, IEA spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, announced in a post on X that a committee had been formed to investigate the “poppy eradication process, and problems encountered in Badakhshan.” He said: “Regrettably,

there have been incidents where offenders attempted to attack the security forces involved in the fight against poppy cultivation, resulting in tragic events” and said that the committee had been tasked with conducting a comprehensive investigation into the incidents. The UN reported that “no further information on the progress of investigations has been publicly shared.” The UN also reported a number of cross-border incidents, in Paktia, and Khost provinces, on May 17 and 29 respectively, which resulted in civilian casualties. The Embassy of Pakistan in Afghanistan stated that it had no recorded exchanges of fire with Afghanistan security forces on those days that resulted in civilian casualties. On freedom of the media, the UN stated that following a March 31 announcement by the authorities on the prohibition of political parties, numerous media outlets with alleged political affiliations were suspended. The report also noted that the IEA “continued to

limit the activities of ‘diaspora media’ outlets which relocated their operations outside of Afghanistan after the Taliban (IEA) takeover and continued to produce media content for an Afghan audience.” One journalist in Parwan province was arbitrarily detained on allegations of sharing information with a diaspora media outlet. He was released after three days, the UN report read. Journalists have also been urged not to cooperate with “diaspora media”. In addition, on 22 April, in Khost province, three

employees of three different radio stations were interrogated and detained by the authorities for playing music and receiving phone calls from women during live radio programs. They were released after six days, the report read. The UN also reported human rights violations as having been committed against former government officials and former security force members. The report also noted incidents of corporal punishment, mostly floggings, being carried out on a regular basis in public.



KHAR: Rescue 1122 workers trying to rescue people in rain hit areas of Bajaur District after heavy downpour.

KP CM hands over specialized machinery to Rescue 1122

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As an important step towards strengthening rescue services in the province, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government handed over newly procured specialized machinery and emergency vehicles to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rescue Service (Rescue-1122). A handing-taking over ceremony to this effect was held here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Tuesday with Chief Minister as a chief guest. Provincial Minister Mian Khaliq-ul-Rehman, Advisor to Chief Minister Zahid Chan Zeb, other relevant authorities and Rescue Officials attended the ceremony.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally handed over the newly procured specialized rescue machineries, equipment, and emergency vehicles to the authorities of

Rescue Service 1122. The newly procured items included; 7 Nos. of 4x4 Ambulances, 2 Nos. of 4x4 Fire Truck, 3 Snow Removal Vehicle, 1 Heavy Duty Crane with 25 tons capacity, 5 Rescue Boats, 7 Oxygen Refilling Plant, 3 Site Scan Sonar, 11 Lifting Bags with the capacity of 30 to 150 tons, 9 Hydraulic Jacks having capacity of 50 to 150 Tons, 09 Combi-tool/Spreader and 07 Nos. of Life and Motion Tracer.

It is pertinent to mention here that aforementioned items have been procured in collaboration with National Disaster Risk Management Fund aimed at strengthening the existing capacity of Rescue-1122 in 07 divisions of the province.

Addressing on this occasion, the chief minister lauded the role of Rescue-1122 in dealing with emergency situations in the province, and said that newly provided equipment and machinery would further

improve the rescue services in the province. It was the priority of his government to further strengthen Rescue-1122 throughout the province, enabling it to respond to any kind of emergency in a more efficient and organized manner, he said and added that the provincial government would utilize all available resources for this purpose.

The Chief Minister on this occasion, approved extension of Motorbikes Ambulance Service to all districts of the province. He also directed the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for providing Fire Brigade Vehicles to all Tehsils across the province. The Chief Minister further accorded in principle approval to grant risk allowance to employees and to increase the retirement age of Rescue employees from 50 years to 60 years, directing that the matter be presented before the provincial cabinet for final approval.

KP PA passes bill to decrease tobacco tax

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly on Tuesday passed the amended Finance Bill to withdraw the increase in tobacco tax, which was announced in the provincial budget 2024-25.

The provincial government presented an amended Finance Bill in the provincial assembly to decrease the tax ratio which was passed. Initially, the provincial government imposed a tax of up to Rs 50 per kilogram on tobacco.

Through the amended Finance Bill, the tobacco tax has been decreased to Rs 25 per kilogram for o. The tax on white patta tobacco has also been decreased Rs 15 per kilogram from Rs 30. The Pakhtunkhwa Assembly government also decided to maintain the existing tax of Rs 7.50 per kilogram on Naswar.

Bushra Bibi named in more 11 cases

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Imran Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, has been implicated in 11 cases stemming from the May 9 incidents, according to court reports.

During a recent Islamabad High Court hearing, the Rawalpindi and Islamabad Police presented details revealing that Bushra Bibi was arrested on May 9. The police outlined the charges against her in 11 cases filed in Rawalpindi. The report, submitted by the Rawalpindi Police, was reviewed by the court.

NAB Prosecutor Rafi Maqsood disclosed that Bushra Bibi faces four cases with the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), three registered in Rawalpindi and one in Lahore. The FIA and Balochistan Police have yet to submit their responses, prompting the court to issue further notices to these agencies.

Simultaneously, the Accountability Court in Islamabad extended the physical remand of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi for another 10 days in a new Toshha Khana reference. Judge Muhammad Ali Waraich presided over the hearing at Adiala Jail Rawalpindi, where NAB requested an additional 14-day remand.

Deadlock persists between govt, JI as sit-in continue

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Jamat-e-Islami's (JI) sit-in against exorbitant electricity bills and inflation has entered its fifth day, with talks between the government and the party at a stalemate.

Hafiz Naeem-led party had put forth a list of ten demands aimed at alleviating public grievances, while the government announced the formation of a technical committee to find a way forward. The party has emphasised that it will not back down on its demands.

Sources within JI claimed that the government team had requested time for consultation, but no response has been forthcoming. The party has also demanded that any agreement reached should be signed by the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, to ensure its implementation.

With no progress made in the talks, the next round of negotiations is expected to begin today. Meanwhile,

the sit-in entered fifth day, with party workers and supporters gathered in large numbers, demanding action from the government to address their grievances.

Meanwhile, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem has said the rulers are piling all burden over the people but avoiding slashing their luxuries. Talking to media JI chief called it a big joke with the people, adding that "the government have to accept our demands, the matter will not be resolved without it".

JI leader announced the next sit-in in Karachi from today. "The protest will spread to the whole country after it," he said. "We will sit first in front of the Governor House and the Chief Minister House and in the next phase, we will stage sit-ins at highways," he added. The sit-in against electricity bills organized by Jamaat-e-Islami has entered in its fifth day, with participants remaining steadfast in their demands despite the ongoing mon-

soon rains.

The party has sought PM Shehbaz Sharif's guarantee on the ongoing talks as the response from the government has been 'delayed', sources said. A three-member government delegation that included Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, Minister for Energy Awais Leghari, and MNA Tariq Fazal Chaudhry called on the JI leadership late on Saturday night at the site of the sit-in on Murree Road, Liaquat Bagh.

According to party sources, they remain firm on their demands and had been promised consultation time by a government delegation. However, despite being given time in the evening and later at night, no response had been received from the government. Jamaat-e-Islami has now demanded a guarantee from the premier for any negotiations, insisting that any agreement reached must bear the PM Sharif's signature.

Turkish Navy Ship arrives in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Turkish Navy Ship TCG KINALIADA (F-514) arrived Karachi for a good will visit. The ship was received by Pakistan Navy Ship at sea and later welcomed at Karachi port by senior Pakistan Navy officials along with diplomatic staff of Turkish Consulate.

During stay at the port, the Commanding Officer of Turkish Ship will call on Pakistan Navy Field Commanders and other dignitaries to discuss matters of mutual interest. With an aim to strengthen mutual cooperation and integration between the two navies,



joint interactions including planning of coordinated sea patrol and discussions on other professional topics will also be conducted. In order to pay homage to the Founder of Pakistan, the Turkish Navy delegation will also lay floral wreath at

Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam.

The visit of Turkish Navy ship to Pakistan is a manifestation of historic bilateral ties between both countries and strong collaboration between Pakistan Navy and the Turkish Navy.

CTD arrests two terrorists in operation in Hyderabad

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), in an operation in Hyderabad arrested two alleged terrorists, while the third one fled taking advantage of the darkness.

According to the CTD, those arrested were the members of the Sindh

Revolution Army and explosives were also recovered from their possession in large quantities. DIG CTD Asif Ijaz Sheikh said that the bomb disposal squad had been called in and explosives were being examined.

In an incident reported from Jamshoro, CTD Police Hyderabad In-

charge Asif Hayat remained unhurt when terrorists attacked the mobile van he was travelling in. The CTD team came under attack when it was on its way to Kotri for an operation against terrorists. Hayat received two bullets; however, he remained safe as he was wearing a bullet-proof jacket.

Bilawal pays tribute to Fatima Jinnah

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday paid rich tribute to Madar-e-Millat Fatima Jinnah on her birth anniversary.

The chairman PPP hailed Madar-e-Millat for her unwavering commitment to democracy and tireless struggle for Pakistan. He lauded her as a beacon of hope and a role model for all Pakistanis.

Bilawal Bhutto stated, "Fatima Jinnah's dedication to the principles of freedom, equality, and justice remains an inspiration to us all. Her contributions to our nation, especially her steadfast support for her brother, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, during the formative years of Pakistan, and battles against dictatorial forces are invaluable."

"In honoring her memory, we are reminded of the importance of her dedication to justice and equality. Let us strive to continue her work towards a more progressive and democratic Pakistan," he added. Bilawal reaffirmed PPP's commitment to following the footprints of Fatima Jinnah, striving for a just and prosperous nation where every citizen's rights are protected and respected.

Govt taking steps to curb inflation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Petroleum Musadik Malik has said the government is taking steps to reduce inflation. Last year inflation was 38 percent and it has come down to 12 percent, he added.

Giving a press briefing, Malik said the country's growth rate was increasing by 2.4 percent. He said people got most of employment through agriculture in the country and the employment provision was the government's first priority.

He said Rs600 billion had been earmarked for Banazir Income Support Programme (BISP) this year. He said 86 percent of the people were using 200 units of electricity and the government had made a scheme in this regard. He said Omer Ayub was talking about 2013 policies of the government when he was a part of the government and he should have done in this regard instead of saying that the initiating blame game.

Former Lt-Col Akbar court martialled

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant Colonel Akbar Hussain, a retired officer of Pakistan Army, was convicted and sentenced through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act, 1952 for the charges of inciting sedition among army personnel from discharge of duties.

The court of competent jurisdiction adjudged him 'guilty' of the offence charged, through due judicial process and awarded the punishment of 14 years rigorous imprisonment on 10th May 2024. Pursuant to the awarded sentence, the Rank of the officer has been forfeited on 26 July 2024.

Earlier, Ex Major (Retired) Adil Farooq Raja and Ex Captain (Retired) Haider Raza Mehdi were also convicted and sentenced through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act, 1952 for the charges of inciting sedition among army personnel from discharge of duties and violation of the provisions of Official Secrets Act, 1923 related to espionage and acts prejudicial to the safety and interest of the State.

The court of competent jurisdiction had convicted and adjudged both Adil Farooq Raja and Haider Raza Mehdi on the date of 7th and 9th October 2023, through due judicial process, with the punishments awarded as 14 and 12 years of rigorous imprisonment respectively and forfeiture of rank of both individuals with effect from 21 November 2023.

Israeli strike on Beirut targets Hezbollah leader

CAIRO (Reuters): An Israeli strike targeted a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut's southern suburbs at dusk on Tuesday, a senior Lebanese security source said, adding that the commander's fate remained unclear.

The Israeli army said the Beirut strike targeted a commander responsible for the recent attack in the Golan Heights. A loud blast was heard and a plume of smoke could be seen rising above the southern suburbs — a stronghold of Lebanese armed group Hezbollah — at around 7:40 p.m. (1640 GMT), a Reuters witness said.

Lebanon's state-run national news agency said an Israeli strike had targeted the area around Hezbollah's Shoura Council in the Haret Hreik neighborhood of the capital. Beirut has been on edge for days ahead of an anticipated Israeli attack in retaliation for a strike on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights that killed a dozen youngsters.

Israel and the United States have blamed Hezbollah for the attack. Hezbollah has denied responsibility. Meanwhile, rocket fire from Lebanon killed an Israeli civilian on Tuesday, medics said, adding to tensions at the frontier as Lebanon braced for Israeli retaliation against Hezbollah after a deadly missile strike in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Tensions have spiked since Saturday when the rocket killed 12 children and teenagers at a football pitch in a Druze village. Israel accused the Iran-backed Hezbollah and vowed a harsh response. Hezbollah has denied involvement. As diplomats sought to contain the fallout, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said he did not believe a fight was inevitable between Hezbollah and Israel, though he remained concerned about the potential for escalation.

Hezbollah and Israel, which last fought each other in a major war in 2006, have been trading fire since the eruption of the Gaza war in October, after Hezbollah began attacking Israeli territory in what it says is solidarity with the Palestinians. The hostilities have mostly been contained to the frontier region and both sides have previously indicated they do not seek a wider confrontation even as the conflict has prompted worry about the risk of a slide toward war. In the latest exchanges of fire on Tuesday, the Israeli military said 10 rockets had been fired from Lebanon and one hit Kibbutz Hagoshrim, causing one casualty. Israel's ambulance service said the 30-year-old male died of shrapnel wounds.

Israel said it hit some 10 Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon overnight and killed one Hezbollah fighter — attacks which appeared to be in keeping with the pattern of the last nine months. Hezbollah con-

firmed one of its fighters was killed. Hezbollah, one of the world's most heavily armed non-state groups, said its air defense unit had fired at Israeli warplanes which broke the sound barrier over Lebanon, forcing them to retreat.

A spokesperson for the Israeli military said it was unfamiliar with any such incident. The United States has been leading a diplomatic effort to deter Israel from striking Lebanon's capital Beirut or major civil infrastructure in response to Saturday's attack, five people with knowledge of the drive told Reuters on Monday.

"While we've seen a lot of activity on Israel's northern border, we remain concerned about the potential of this escalating into a full-blown fight. And I don't believe that a fight is inevitable," US Defense Secretary Austin said during a visit to Manila. "We'd like to see things resolved in a diplomatic fashion," he added in a joint news conference following security talks between himself, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and their respective Philippine counterparts.

Two Israeli officials said on Monday that Israel wanted to hurt Hezbollah but not drag the Middle East into all-out war. Some flights at Beirut's international airport have been canceled or delayed this week due to the heightened tensions.

Hezbollah has denied firing the rocket that hit the village of Majdal Shams on Saturday. It said it had fired a missile against a military target on the Golan, a border region Israel seized from Syria in 1967. Tens of thousands of people have fled or been evacuated from towns and villages on both sides of the frontier since the cross border firing began in October.

Israeli strikes have killed around 350 Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon and more than 100 civilians, according to security and medical sources and a Reuters tally of Hezbollah death notifications. Twenty-four civilians, including one on Tuesday and 12 on Saturday, have been killed in Hezbollah attacks since October, along with at least 17 soldiers, according to Israeli tallies.

Meanwhile, Egypt has warned of the dangers of opening a new war front in Lebanon. In a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates, Cairo warned of the dangers of expanding the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, in light of the recent events in Majdal Shams village in the occupied Golan Heights. Egypt emphasized the importance of supporting Lebanon, its people, and its institutions, and sparing it from the ravages of war. It also called on international actors to intervene immediately to prevent the people of the region from facing the catastrophic consequences of expanding the conflict, which could pose a threat to international peace and security.

300 killed in Khan Yunis as army ends assault

GAZA STRIP (AFP):

Gaza's civil defense agency said Tuesday that an Israeli operation in and around the territory's second city of Khan Yunis killed about 300 people since it began last week, while the army said it had "eliminated 150 terrorists."

"Since the beginning of the Israeli ground invasion of the eastern part of Khan Yunis province, the civil defense and medical teams have recovered approximately 300 bodies of martyrs, many of them decomposed," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP. The Israeli military launched the assault on July 22 to halt rocket fire from the area, which already saw heavy fighting earlier this year. Last week, it said troops had retrieved the bodies of five Israelis from the area. They had been killed during the Hamas attacks of October 7 and their bodies taken back to Gaza, the military said.

On Tuesday, the military said it had completed the operation in the area of Khan Yunis and had killed "over 150 terrorists." It said troops also "dismantled terror tunnels, weapons storage facilities, and terrorist infrastructure and located

weapons." Palestinian Territories: More than 180,000 Palestinians have fled fierce fighting around the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis in four days, the United Nations said Friday, after an Israeli operation to extract captives' bodies from the area.

Recent "intensified hostilities" in the Khan Yunis area, more than nine months into the Israel-Hamas war, have fueled "new waves of internal displacement across Gaza," said the UN humanitarian agency, OCHA. It said "about 182,000 people" have been displaced from central and eastern Khan Yunis between Monday and Thursday, and hundreds are "stranded in eastern Khan Yunis." The Israeli military on Monday ordered the evacuation of parts of the southern city, announcing its forces would "forcefully operate" there, including in an area previously declared a safe humanitarian zone.

On Wednesday, Israel said five bodies of captives seized during Hamas's October 7 attack that triggered the war had been recovered from the area. Israel's military said on Friday that its forces had "eliminated approximately

100 terrorists" in the city this week.

Israel's military chief, Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi said the captives' bodies were pulled from underground tunnels and walls in "a hidden place." Troops "were near those fallen bodies in the past, we did not know how to reach them" until this week, Halevi said in a statement.

Witnesses and rescuers said heavy battles continued around eastern Khan Yunis on Friday. The Nasser Hospital said 26 bodies were brought to the medical site. The October 7 attack on southern Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,197 people, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

Out of 251 people taken hostage that day, 111 are still held in the Gaza Strip, including 39 the military says are dead. Israel's retaliatory offensive against Hamas has killed at least 39,175 Palestinians in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. According to UN figures, the vast majority of Gaza's 2.4 million people have been displaced at least once by the fighting.

93 killed after landslides strike India tea estates

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, India (Reuters):

Landslides in southern India killed at least 93 people on Tuesday, the office of Kerala state revenue minister K. Rajan told reporters. Rajan's office added that another 250 people had been injured in the landslides, which struck Wayanad district early Tuesday morning.

Images published by the National Disaster Response Force show rescue crews trudging through mud to search for survivors and carry bodies on stretchers out of the area. Homes were caked with brown sludge as the force of the landslide's impact scattered cars, corrugated iron and other debris around the disaster

site. India's army said it had deployed more than 200 soldiers to the area to assist state security forces and fire crews in search and rescue efforts. "Hundreds of people are suspected to have been trapped," it said in a statement. "The situation is serious. The government has pressed all agencies into rescue," state Forest Minister A K Saseendran told Reuters after the landslides in the Wayanad district of the state. More rain was predicted through the day.

The army was roped in to build a temporary bridge after a bridge in the district that linked the affected area, mostly tea and cardamom estates, to the near-

est town of Chooralmala was destroyed, Saseendran added. Television visuals showed relief personnel making their way through rocks and uprooted trees as muddy water gushed through, with many houses destroyed.

One man was seen struggling to free himself after being stuck in chest-high mud for hours, as rescue workers were not able to reach him despite multiple efforts. Rashid Padikkalpamban, a resident involved in the relief efforts, said there were at least three landslides in the area starting around midnight, which washed away the bridge connecting the affected area, the Mundakkai estates, to Chooralmala.