

TikToker brothers released

KHANPUR MAHAR (INP): Three people including two TikTok brothers have returned home after paying ransom in Khanpur Mahar on Friday. A month ago, the two brothers and their cousin were kidnapped by bandits who lured them with promises of increasing their TikTok followers and took them to the Shikarpur forests. The bandits released a video of the victims being tortured and demanding ransom for their release.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a review meeting on Digitization and Reforms of FBR.

Govt priority to prevent evasion of billions of rupees: Shehbaz

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, calling the digitisation of taxation system government's priority to prevent tax evasion worth billions of rupees, on Friday directed the authorities concerned to immediately create a dashboard to monitor the ongoing digitisation and implementation of the reforms.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the reforms process of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), instructed to bring the taxable non-filers into the tax net and revoke the discretionary powers of the customs appraisers, and sought an implementation report from FBR chairman within 24 hours.

During the briefing on FBR's digitisation, the meeting was informed that during the FBR digitisation, 4.5 million taxable individuals have been identified who were not part of the tax net. It was told that consequent to the government's measures, over 300,000 more individuals have filed their tax returns within few weeks.

Besides, the refunds of 4,000 companies have been stopped during last two weeks, following the detection of under-invoicing and forged sales tax refunds. The prime minister said that the tax evaders as well as the officers and staffers facilitating them would

be brought to book and vowed not to spare those plundering the public kitty. Besides, the taxpayers fulfilling their responsibility timely would be acknowledged too, he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that state-of-the-art scanners would be installed at the seaports to ensure transparency and prevent corruption in the system. He also sought a comprehensive report on the magnitude of tax evasion and the measures for its prevention. He vowed to introduce a taxation system of international standard in the country and called for engaging well reputed professionals and experts for formulation of tax policy.

The prime minister sought a comprehensive strategy on FBR's digitisation and reforms and the set targets in the next meeting. Federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb and Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, FBR Chairman, CEO of Pakistan Business Council Ehsan Malik, CEO of KarandazWaqasul Hassan and relevant senior officer attended the meeting. Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Naveed Andrabi, Asif Pir and Ali Malik joined the meeting via video link.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed on his 25th martyrdom anniversary,

lauding his unprecedented valor and patriotism.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that Capt. Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed showed exemplary gallantry and courage on the Kargil front which was even acknowledged by the enemy. He said Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed set an example of patriotism, dutifulness and fighting for the country sacrificing his own life that would be kept alive forever.

"Capt. Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (Nishan-i-Haider) and his family are pride of the whole nation. The armed forces have rendered immense sacrifices for the country's defence. The whole nation, including me, salutes the soldiers of Pakistan Army for their undeterred resolve to safeguard the country," he remarked.

Moreover, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif felicitated Sir Keir Starmer on the landslide victory of his Labour Party in the general elections of the United Kingdom.

The prime minister, in a post on his X account, said he looked forward to working closely with the new UK government. "Looking forward to working closely with the new UK government, under Sir Starmer's wise and able leadership, to further strengthen and broaden the Pakistan-UK partnership," he said.

Cabinet body approves 6 months' extension in Refinery Policy 2023

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Energy, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday, approved the extension of six months in the Refinery Policy 2023 regarding the upgradation of the existing refineries.

The committee directed the Ministry of Petroleum to take into confidence the oil refineries established in the country and prepare a comprehensive plan for their upgradation on a priority basis. The committee was also presented with a detailed report on the circular debt of the power sector from July 2023 to May 2024.

The report stated that the volume of the power sector's circular debt was Rs 2,655 billion till May 2024.

The committee also approved the Standardized Security Package Document under the Power Policy 2015 for small water projects of the private sector. This initiative is aimed at promoting private investment in the electricity sector and quickly resolving the tariff and other issues.

The prime minister decided to resolve complaints regarding the electricity supply of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. He constituted a committee to prepare a plan of action to ensure the uninterrupted supply of electricity in Gilgit Baltistan. The committee also approved setting up a support unit with two-year tenure to increase the efficiency of electricity distribution companies, prevent electricity theft and timely collection of bills.

After the Federal Cabinet's

approval, the first support unit would be established for the Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO). The committee also approved an incentive package for recovery of unpaid and overdue electricity bills. Under the package, rewards would be given to the personnel of law enforcement agencies and officials of DISCOs for the recovery of unpaid and overdue electricity bills.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Dr Musadik Malik, Ahsan Iqbal and Sardar Awaish Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik, Coordinator to the PM Rana Ehsaan Afzal, NEPRA Chairman Waseem Mukhtar, OGRA Chairman Masroor Khan, and other high officials.

PM's visit to Central Asian states achieves a major milestone: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar Friday said that the government had achieved a milestone with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent official visit to Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, especially on diplomatic and economic fronts.

"Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation received a splendid reception during his visits to the Central Asian states," the minister said while addressing a news conference. The Pakistani ports were the mainstay of the discussions of the prime minister with the top officials of the Central Asian states that were landlocked countries and had a keen interest in increasing partnership with Pakistan, he said.

The land and railway routes also came under discussion to promote bilateral trade between them, he added. For giving a boost to Pakistan's bilateral trade with the two Central Asian states, the provision of facilities to the business community was also discussed during the meetings, he noted. Tarar said PM Shehbaz Sharif's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Kazakhstan was held in a welcoming and friendly environment.

With President Putin, he said, the discussion encompassed promoting cooperation and partnership between the two countries' diverse economic sectors including agriculture, mining, petrochemicals and others. The delega-

tions exchange was expected between the two countries which would eventually increase the bilateral trade, he added. He termed the meeting between the two head of states "productive". PM Shehbaz Sharif, the minister said, also held discussion with the presidents of Belarus and Uzbekistan on road and rail links, and stressed on increasing bilateral trade and provision of facilities to the business community. He called the meetings as of the utmost importance where the prime minister represented Pakistan and his vision unequivocally.

Tarar said the meetings would usher in arrival of delegations in Pakistan which would eventually have a greater impact on the economy in coming days. He said an important agreement was signed between Pakistan and Tajikistan for high-level strategic partnership during the visit, thanking the President of Tajikistan who expressed real warmth for the people of Pakistan. "There is a huge potential for solidifying partnership between Pakistan and Tajikistan through trade and investment which will not only benefit the people of both the countries but also further boost their economies."

Highlighting exceptional diplomacy of the prime minister, regional peace and stability and strategic matters were discussed in a tripartite talk between Turkey, Pakistan and Azerbaijan. At the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit, he said, Prime Minister Shehbaz presented Pakistan's clear and unequivocal stance on Palestine "which is so far unprecedented and historical". The prime minister minced no words in

saying that "Israel is not only carrying out genocide of unarmed and innocent Palestinians but also committing war crimes", he added.

Tarar said PM Shehbaz particularly mentioned martyrdom of 37,000 Palestinians, including children and women, and displacement of two millions who were forced to leave Gaza and Rafah due to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Israeli attack on hospitals and other areas. The prime minister categorically said that "Israel must be held accountable" and demanded an immediate ceasefire, he added. PM Shehbaz reiterated Pakistan's support for a two-state solution where Palestine was given its independence with the pre-1967 borders and Al-Quds as its capital. The prime minister had echoed sentiments of all the people of Pakistan for the Palestinians at a such critical forum in an "unambiguous way", the minister stressed. He said Islamophobia and Afghanistan were also discussed at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit. A peaceful Afghanistan was critical for the peace and stability in the region, he cited the prime minister as saying.

He said the prime minister had taken a major initiative to digitizing the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for boosting the revenue. "Without spending the state money, the prime minister took an out of the box solution for digitizing the FBR," he said. PM Shehbaz garnered the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in engaging McKinsey & Co. for the ongoing digitization of the FBR, which was appreciable, he added.

Imran nods PTI's participation in APC

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former premier Imran Khan said on Friday that his party would attend the All Parties Conference (APC) convened by PM Shehbaz Sharif. The PTI founder announced this decision while talking to the reporters inside Adiala Jail. He stated that his party would listen to the government's stance on the Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, adding that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had reservations on it as it would foment chaos in country.

Recognising the exigency of the security situation, Khan said that the Tehreek-Taliban-Pakistan (TTP) couldn't be vanquished without improving relations with Afghanistan. "I am ready to die in jail but I'll never accept slavery," he reiterated. He further said that he would ask the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government to register the FIRs against former premier Nawaz Sharif, Khawaja Asif and Maryam Nawaz for their inflammatory speeches against state institutions in past.

Federal govt challenges IHC verdict

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has challenged the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) verdict in the alleged audio leak case involving Bushra Bibi and the son of former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar in the Supreme Court (SC).

As per details, the appeal has nominated the former Chief Justice's son, PTA, Ministry of Defense, and others as parties. The government argues that the IHC's decision is contrary to facts and that the high court had granted relief that was not even requested. The plea also contends that the IHC has no authority to take suo motu notice under Article 199, hereby the high court's decision should be declared null and void.

The federal government stated that when an alleged audio leak involving the distribution of tickets surfaced, the National Assembly Speaker took notice and formed a committee. The former Chief Justice's son had also challenged the committee's summons in the IHC. The government argues that the IHC's demand for reports from institutions is an overstepping of its authority and that the high court cannot conduct fact-finding.

Earlier, the IHC declared that 'any form of surveillance' on citizens was illegal and unconstitutional, asking Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif to explain who is 'responsible for the mass surveillance'. IHC Justice Babar Sattar issued a written order on the plea of Bushra Bibi, wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, and Najam Saqib, son of former chief justice Saqib Nisar, against the audio leaks.

In the written order, Justice Sattar said that the federal government was responsible for the surveillance of four million citizens and PM Shehbaz and cabinet members are "collectively and individually" responsible for the mass surveillance.

Torrential rains may cause flash floods

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has warned that torrential rains may cause flash floods, urban flooding and landslides in the vulnerable areas during the period of July 5-7.

Torrential rains will cause flash floods in local nullahs/streams of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Murree, Galliat, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Dir, Swat, Kashmir and hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan from July 05-07. Heavy rains may cause urban flooding in Lahore, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Narowal, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad and Peshawar during the period, the PMD said.

Mily leadership rejects criticism on Operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Military leadership expressed concern over the unwarranted criticism on the Operation Azm-e-Istehkam by some quarters, said ISPR.

According to the military's media wing, the top military brass took up the matter during the 265th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir at GHQ on Friday. The forum paid tribute to the sacrifices of martyrs of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and the citizens who have laid their lives for peace and stability in the country.

The forum undertook a comprehensive review of internal and external security situation of the country and had detailed discussion on various aspects of Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, which is aimed at harnessing the national counter terrorism efforts in a synchronised manner to dismantle the nexus of terrorism and illegal spectrum in the country for enduring stability and economic prosperity.

The top military brass also deliberated upon



regional security situation, especially Afghanistan and reaffirmed its commitment to regional peace and security. The forum expressed solidarity with the people of Kashmir and Palestine. It condemned serious human rights violations, war crimes and genocide being perpetrated in Kashmir and Gaza.

The military leadership affirmed its awareness of the full range of challenges and resolved to fulfill its constitutionally mandated responsibilities with the support of the resilient people of Pakistan. The forum underscored that onslaught of politically motivated digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators, duly abetted by their foreign cohorts against state institutions is meant to induce despondency in the nation and sow discord through peddling of blatant lies, fake news and propaganda. However, the armed forces along with the

nation are fully aware of all such machinations and stand united and committed in defeating the notorious designs of the enemies of Pakistan.

The top military officials reiterated to continue full support of ongoing efforts in uplifting the socio-economic growth and wholeheartedly assisting the government in curbing all illegal activities which hamper investors' confidence, economic stability and growth. Expressing full satisfaction on Army's commitment to national security, COAS stressed upon maintaining high standards of professionalism and operational preparedness. Gen Asim Munir remarked that Pakistan Army had always been fully prepared to thwart all internal and external challenges and play its due role in the stability and prosperity of Pakistan, regardless of the challenges posed.

UK PM says Britain must rediscover its identity

LONDON (Reuters): New Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Britain needed to rediscover its identity and undergo a wider reset, in his first words outside his new office at 10 Downing Street, promising to fight to restore trust in politics and serve all voters.

Greeted in Downing Street by a large crowd of cheering aides and supporters after formally accepting the King's invitation to become prime minister, Starmer's first address made the case for a moderate politics to repair voters' broken trust. "It is surely clear to everyone that our country needs a bigger reset, a rediscovery of who we are, because no matter how fierce the storms of history, one of the greatest strengths of this nation has always been our ability to navigate a way to calmer waters," he said.

"This depends upon politicians, particularly those who stand for stability and moderation, as I do." He added: "My government will fight every day until you believe again. From now on, you have a government unburdened by doctrine, guided only by the determination to serve your interest. To defy those qui-

etly those who have written our country off."

"You have given us a clear mandate. And we will



use it to deliver change." Earlier, King Charles III officially appointed Starmer as prime minister at Buckingham Palace. A photograph released by the palace showed the monarch shaking hands with Starmer, whose party won a landslide election victory.

"The king received in Audience The Right Honourable Sir Keir Starmer MP today and requested him to form a new administration," a palace statement read. "Sir Keir accepted his majesty's offer and kissed hands upon his appointment as prime minister and first lord of the Treasury." Starmer vowed to bring change to Britain

as its next prime minister after his Labour Party surged to a comprehensive win in a parliamentary election, ending 14 years of often tumultuous Conservative government.

The centre-left Labour was set to win a massive majority in the 650-seat parliament with Sunak's Conservatives poised to suffer the worst performance in the party's long history as voters punished them for a cost of living crisis, failing public services, and a series of scandals. "Change begins now," Starmer said in a victory speech.

"We said we would end the chaos, and we will, we said we would turn the page, and we have. Today, we start the next chapter, begin the work of change, the mission of national renewal and start to rebuild our country. "Tonight, people here and around the country have spoken and they're ready for change, to end the politics of performance, a return to politics as public service," Starmer said after winning his seat in London. "The change begins right here ... You have voted. It is now time for us to deliver."

Bomb blast kills three, injures seven in Mardan

Anees Takar

MARDAN: A remote control bomb blast killed three persons while injuring seven including two minors and a woman at Jalala Pul (bridge) area of Takhtbhai tehsil, on Friday.

According to eyewitnesses, the blast occurred when an under-training ASP Hamid Hussain was traveling in a police mobile van along with two security guards, Constable Bilal Khan and Gulab Syed, who were also injured in the explosion. The van was targeted with a remote-control bomb which resulted in the instant death of three individuals while injured seven people.

The injured individuals including the two security guards were rushed to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Takht Bhai, where they were provided with initial medical treatment. However, due to their critical condition, they were later shifted to the Mardan Hospital.

The blast also injured several bystanders, including a nine-year-old girl Labiba daughter of Bilal Ahmed and a child, Hasher, son of Sardar Khan, a resident of Hathian, Nooh Jehan wife of Ayub Khan resident of Gadar, Gul Jana resident of Gadar Sawaldher and Yousaf Khan of Jalala.

The police and rescue teams immediately reached the scene and shifted the injured individuals to the hospital. The DPO Mardan, Zahoore Babar Afridi along with a heavy police contingent reached the scene and initiated a search operation and investigation into the incident.

The blast has raised concerns about the security situation in the area and the police have launched an investigation into the incident to determine the perpetrators and their motives. The incident has also sparked widespread condemnation from various quarters with many calling for increased security measures to prevent

such incidents in the future.

The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, has condemned the blast and expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives. He has also expressed his sympathy with the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured individuals.

Awami National Party leader Aimal Wali Khan has expressed on social media his deep shock, grief and sorrow over the devastating bomb blast in Jalala Takht Bhai Mardan which resulted in the loss of precious lives and injured several others.

In a statement, Khan strongly condemned the tragic incident and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, praying for the departed souls to rest in peace. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured individuals and demanded necessary action from the authorities to ensure the safety and security of the people in the region.

TENDER NOTICE

Shyber Pakhtunkhwa, Police Department invite sealed tenders based on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of Goods, Works & Services, Rules 2014 from eligible bidders/firms having previous experience as well as registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax departments for financial year 2024-25. Tenders should be addressed to the Commandant Special Security Unit (SSU) CPEC, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawark. Last date for submission of proposal is **31-07-2024** up to 11:00 hrs. Tender/Financial proposals will be opened on **31-07-2024** at 11:00 hrs. In the presence of Purchase committee and intending bidders in office of the Deputy Commandant SSU (CPEC) at Central Police (CPO) Peshawar. The delivery period will be 30-days or as per contract agreement.

PURCHASE OF OTHER CONTINGENCY/MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS FOR (RWCS) DISTRICT KHYBER

S.No.	Name of items
1.	Washroom & Bathroom items
2.	Sanitary items
3.	Kitchen items
4.	Stationary items
5.	Wash & paint items
6.	Electricity items

The Tender documents pertaining to the above mentioned items can be obtained at a cost of Rs. 500/- (None-Refundable) from office of the Deputy Commandant SSU (CPEC) CPO, Peshawar on the submission of application on the original letter head of the firm on any working day during office hours up to 31.11.07.2024.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

The following terms and conditions shall apply:-

- The bidders may make offers for single, multiple or all items.
- The offers shall be accepted only with original bidding documents. Photocopies will not be accepted.
- Both of the supplier registered with KPRA & non registered suppliers are eligible to supply goods/services to Government departments.
- Each bid shall comprise a single sealed package containing one envelop as under:-

Financial Proposal (Rate of respective item including all taxes/charges whatsoever as per following form on the firm's letter head pad along with 02% earnest money).

S.#	Description	Unit Price (PKR) Including all duties & Taxes	Total Cost

- Envelops should be marked in bold letters as **"FINANCIAL PROPOSAL"** respectively with name of item.
- Financial proposals will be opened on **31.07.2024 at 11:00 hrs** at office of the Deputy Commandant SSU (CPEC) and would be opened in the presence of bidders.
- The bidders shall submit bid security from the account of the firm/bidder/contractor of any scheduled bank with their financial proposals in favor of the Commandant SSU (CPEC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Police Department Peshawar. In case of non-acceptance of tenders, the earnest money will be refunded after finalization of the tender.
- In case of acceptance offenders, the successful bidder shall deposit a security @ 10% of the total value of stores in the form of call Deposit in the name of Commandant (DDO) Special Security Unit (CPEC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Police Department Peshawar and sign the contract agreement with office of the Commandant SSU (CPEC) within 15-days of the issuance of the acceptance letter.
- Rates quoted would be considered only if the same are in Pak Rupees and inclusive of all taxes/duties/charges and inclusive of packing charges/freight till delivery to the Commandant SSU (CPEC) CPO Peshawar. Rates shall be valid up to **30.06.2025**.
- Conditional tender/application will not be entertained.
- All taxes will be deducted as per existing government policy.
- The processing entity shall have right and authority to cancel, reject or reduce/ increase the quantity of any item listed / mentioned in the instant bid / tender notice and any such decision and auction of the procuring entity shall not be challengeable in any forum/court by the bidders / participant contractors.
- The procuring entity will have the right to reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of bidder's proposal as per **KPPRA Rules 47(1)**. The procuring entity shall upon request communicate the grounds for rejection of bid or proposal to any contractor or consultant who submitted a bid or proposal.

Deputy Commandant
Special Security Unit (CPEC)
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government has decided to further strengthen the Excise & Narcotics Control Department in order to protect the new generation, especially children, from the dangers of drugs.

This decision was made during a meeting chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at the CM House. Senior Minister for Information and Excise & Narcotics, Sharjeel Memon, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary of Excise & Taxation Saleem Rajput, DG Narcotics Control Usman Siddiqui, and others attended the meeting.

Minister Excise & Narcotics Sharjeel Memon briefing the CM said that he has controlled drug peddling in Hyderabad and has taken strict measures in Karachi to stop its penetration in educational institutions and even in the slum areas.

At this, the CM said that the penetration of synthetic drugs into educa-

tional institutions was a serious threat to our children. "I want to stop it once and for all for which the police, ANF and Excise & narcotics dept would have to work together," he said.

The senior minister announced the establishment of Excise & Narcotics check posts in the bordering areas of Sindh with other provinces.

He mentioned that the Excise & Narcotics check-post at Hub, which was abolished in 2007, would be revived to control drug smuggling into Sindh.

In response to a question, the CM stated that the Excise & Narcotics Control department has 47 police stations including six in Karachi, 11 in Hyderabad, eight in Sukkur, 10 in Larkana, five in Mirpurkhas, and seven in Shaheed Benazirabad.

It was disclosed the department has also check-posts, three each in Karachi and Larkano, two each in Hyderabad, Sukkur and Shaheed Benazirabad

Narcotics to further vehicles and gadgets so Murad Ali Shah directed strengthen Narcotic police that they work at full the Minister of Excise & with necessary equipment, capacity.

Local Government & Rural Development Department District Swabi

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

Sealed tender based on MRS-/ Non MRS 2022 B-Items of the below mentioned works are hereby invited on the basis of **Single Stage Single Envelope Procedure** from the government contractors registered with PEC and enlisted with C&W Department as per Centralized Enlistment policy of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for current financial year as per following schedule.

No.	Name of Work	E/C (M)	Bid Security @ 2% (Rs)	Last Date/closing Time of submission of HARDCOPY tender form	Date/Time of opening of electronic bid	Time of completion
01	Repair of Damaged Electric TRANSFORMER at approved locations in provincial constituency District Swabi	10.00	200000	24-07-2024 11:15 AM	24-07-2024 12:15 PM	As per Work Order
02	Repair of Damaged Electric TRANSFORMER at approved locations in provincial constituency District Swabi	10.00	200000	24-07-2024 11:15 AM	24-07-2024 12:15 PM	As per Work Order

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- The Financial bidding will be online through E-Bidding system. Tender form and BOQ can be filled online and downloaded (One day Before last day of opening at 12:00 AM midnight) from the official website of LGERDD (www.lgkp.gov.pk) after one day of publishing NIT.
- The bidders are required to fill Electronic bids online and attach online scan copy of Bid security in shape of original call deposit in the name of Procuring Entity along with (Additional Security if any), and submit hard copy of the same printed electronic id form to the procuring Entity/Executing agency.
- Electronic bids and original call deposits received through fax or by hand will not be acceptable. Sealed bids sent through registered mail/Courier service should reach up to the specified time and date as mentioned above. The online bid can be placed on the website till 12 am prior to the closing date and time.
- The eligible bidder must have the relevant codes for the above mentioned works as per Pakistan Engineering Council. The relative codes shall be according to the items mentioned in BOQ while the contractor category shall be as per the estimated cost of the scheme. If the code and category does not match, the bid will be considered non-responsive.
- The contractor or his representative may be present at the time of opening of electronic bids opening.
- The call deposits i.e Bid security along with (additional security if any), for the work/contract must be prepared after publishing of NIT, before closing time of the Electronic bid apply.
- As per KPPRA Notification S.R.O. (14)/Vol: 1-24/2021-22: Dated May 10, 2022, the contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @2% only of Engineer Estimate.
- ii. The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineers' Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- iii. (Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis)1. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- iv. In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.
- v. The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.
- Any electronic bidder who provide false, or materially inaccurate or incomplete information, or does not send information/bidding Documents in hard form will be disqualified as per KPPRA Act Section 29(1) read with KPPRA Rule (43). Furthermore, the procuring entity/Executing Agency will recommend and send cases for debarring / Blacklisting and will initiate / take action in light of approved procedure/mechanism as per KPPRA Act section 29(2) read with KPPRA Rule (44).
- Electronic Bids will remain valid for 100 days from the closing date of bids.
- The contractor shall bear all the expenses of the testing as well as vetting of the structure design from the government laboratories, registered structure / Electrical engineers, as directed by the Engineer LGRDD Swabi and will re execute works in case of failure without any payment.
- Tender will be received till mentioned time on the opening date of tender and the tentative comparative statement downloaded from the website will be announced at the opening time, and final result will be announced after evaluation of bids in all respect in Bid validity time.
- Call deposit of the other bidders will be retained till approval of the tender.
- Note: (The Additional Security must be presented at the Time of Bid opening).
- The PEC and KPRA registration (Active tax payer) must be valid for current financial year.
- The centralized Enlisted contractors with C&W department for the current financial year who wants to participate in tendering process may approach Directorate General LG&RDD Peshawar within two days before closing time of electronic apply for uploading their names on the official website i.e (www.lgkp.gov.pk)
- Standard bidding documents for procurement of small works (less than 45 M) is applicable and can be obtained from this office.
- All applicable taxes will be recoverable as per directives of the government in vogue.
- The contractor will acquire pre-work NOC for repair of transformer from the concerned ESCOS office.
- The condemned / debris of the damaged components will be taken on store by the executing agency otherwise 10-20% deduction will be made from the work bill of the contractor.
- The only firms whose workshop are registered with PESCO are eligible, and all repair work must be conducted within PESCO registered workshops.
- The contractor will submit the work bill after getting it acknowledged / verified from the concerned Wapda/Pesco officials.
- only those Contractor are Eligible must who possesses PEC License in EE004, EE005 and licensed from "ELECTRIC INSPECTORATE ENERGY & POWER DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA. In the field of CONTRACTOR LICENSE (ELECTRICAL) vide Rule 48 of the Electricity Rules 1937 in category, "Class E" or E-License.

Assistant Engineer, Local Govt. & Rural Dev. Department, District Swabi
Assistant Director, Local Govt. & Rural Dev. Department, District Swabi INF(P) 1563/24

Court Notice

In the Court of Qurat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/ Judge Family Court Swabi, Hamda Sehar VS Abass, Suit Number : 98/FC, Institution Date : 30- 04-2024, Hearing Date : 31-07-2024, Subject: Dissolution of Marriage, Notice to : (1) Abass S/o Farooq R/o Mohallah, Panch Pao, KOTHA, Teh. Topi, Distt, Swabi, presently at UAE. Defendant No.1

The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 31-07-2024 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding

Name Correction

My correct name is Amanullah. Please read & correct it in my SSC documents as Amanullah instead of Amanullah Khan, r/o Teh: & District Bannu.

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA C&W HIGHWAY DIVISION HARIPUR

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System)

- C&W Highway Division Haripur Govt: of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic Bids form the eligible firms / Contractor in accordance with KPPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage single envelop procedure for the following works.

S.No.	Name of Work	Required Category of PEC	E/Cost	2% Bid Security	Tender Fee @ 0.03%	Period of Completion	Last date and time of submission Bid	Date & Time of opening
01.	AOM&R / Emergency nature work to all roads in District Haripur during the year (2024-25)	C-6	12.000	240000	3,600	As per Work Order	23/07/2024 At 12:00 PM	23/07/2024

- Bid documents including instruction to bidders can be downloaded upto one day prior to the opening date from C&W website (www.cwd.gkp.pk)

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS (Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System)

- The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of **10% below** Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @2% only of Engineer Estimate.
- The contractors quoting their bids more than **10% below upto 20% below** on Engineers Estimate shall submit along with their bids **8% Additional Security** of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to **2% bid security**. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than **20% below** shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the **differential amount** of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than **20% below** bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the **detailed rate analysis** and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.
- The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.
- After commencement of work by the successful bidder, the procuring entity may replace the Additional Security with a bank guarantee of the same amount from the scheduled bank; if the already deposited security is not in the form of bank guarantee.
- The Additional Security shall be released to the contractor in four installments i.e. 1st installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 25% of the project, 2nd installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 50% of the project, 3rd installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 75% of the project and the 4th installment of 25% to be released after 100% completion of the project.
- All the bidding will be through E-Bidding system. Technical bid should be in sealed envelopes clearly mark "Technical Bid" Technical bid shall be submitted through courier half an hour before closing date and time.
- All the bidders must submit their valid enlistment of C&W Department / PEC updated at the time of submission of CDR.
- All the bidders submit their CDRs by their own self or his authorized representative.
- All the bidders may be deposited tender form fee Rs. 0.03% on E/Cost by each participating contractor online along with earnest money.
- Electronic bidding shall be done on "Above / Below" system on BOQ / Engineer's estimate, based on the MRS applicable. Only two digits after the decimal point shall be considered for evaluation purpose.
- Any bidder who provides incorrect information shall stand disqualified and will be debarred.
- Electronic bid will valid for Ninety (90) days.
- Call Deposit of Scheduled Banks shall be acceptable.
- Electronic bid will be displayed by Online E-Bidding System after 30 minutes of closing time in the presence of bidders / their representatives who chose the present.
- The employer has the authority to reject any E-bid or all the E-bids assigning valid reason.
- Bid security of 1st, 2nd and 3rd bidders will be retained by the employer till approval of bid.
- All bidders are required to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority establishment under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 other-wise he will not be entitled to participate in tendering process.

INF(P) 1592/24

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
C&W Highway Division Haripur. Ph & Fax # +92-995-920043

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System)

The C&W Building Division Mansehra, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic Bids from eligible firms / contractor in accordance with KPPRA Procurement Rules 2014, amended up-to 10/05/2022 on Single Stage Single Envelop procedure for the following work(s).

S.No.	Name of Work	Required PEC Category	E/Cost Rs. (M)	Bid Security i/c Stamp Duty Rs. (M)	Tender Fee @ 0.03%	Period of Completion	Last date and time of submission E-Bids	Date & Time of opening of Financial Bid
01.	M&R of Residential Building of District & Session Judge Mansehra SH- Residential Quarter in C&W Colony.	Relevant Category	3.536 (M)	0.075 (M)	1061/-	As per Work Order	23/07/2024 At 12:00 PM	23/07/2024 At 12:30 PM

- Bid Solicitation Documents and Instruction to Bidders can be obtained from the office on any working day or downloaded from C&W website (www.cwd.gkp.pk) & KPPRA website (www.kppra.gov.pk) before the submission date / time.
- The bidder should submit their E-bids as per KPPRA Notification No. SOR(14)/Vol: 1-24/2021-22 dated 10/05/2022.
- Complete Detail of Bid Security in shape of CDR i.e. Bank Name, CDR Number(s) and Date(s) must be submitted electronically along-with E-bid on the E-bidding System.
- All Bidders are required to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority under Finance Act, 2023 Act No. XXI of 2023.
- Venue of Bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W Building Division Mansehra.

INF(P) 1619/24

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER | C&W BUILDING DIVISION MANSEHRA

TENDER NOTICE

Syber Pakhtunkhwa, Police Department invite sealed tenders based on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of Goods, Works & Services, Rules 2014 from eligible bidders/firms having previous experience as well as registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax departments for financial year 2024-25. Tenders should be addressed to the Commandant Special Security Unit (SSU) CPEC, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar. Last date for submission of proposal is **31-07-2024** up to 11:00 hrs. Tender/Financial proposals will be opened on **31-07-2024** at 11:00 hrs. In the presence of Purchase committee and intending bidders in office of the Deputy Commandant SSU (CPEC) at Central Police (CPO) Peshawar. The delivery period will be 30-days or as per contract agreement.

PURCHASE OF OTHER CONTINGENCY/MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS FOR (BHPP) DISTRICT MANSEHRA

S.No.	Name of items	S.No.	Name of items
1.	Washroom & Bathroom items	4.	Stationary items
2.	Sanitary items	5.	Wash & paint items
3.	Kitchen items	6.	Electricity items

The Tender documents pertaining to the above mentioned items can be obtained at a cost of Rs. 500/- (None-Refundable) from office of the Deputy Commandant SSU (CPEC) CPO, Peshawar on the submission of application on the original letter head of the firm on any working day during office hours up to 31.11.07.2024.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

The following terms and conditions shall apply:-

- The bidders may make offers for single, multiple or all items.
- The offers shall be accepted only with original bidding documents. Photocopies will not be accepted.
- Both of the supplier registered with KPRA & non registered suppliers are eligible to supply goods/services to Government departments.
- Each bid shall comprise a single sealed package containing one envelop as under:-

Financial Proposal (Rate of respective item including all taxes/charges whatsoever as per following form on the firm's letter head pad along with 02% earnest money).

S.#	Description	Unit Price (PKR) Including all duties & Taxes	Total Cost

- Envelops should be marked in bold letters as **"FINANCIAL PROPOSAL"** respectively with name of item.
- Financial proposals will be opened on **31.07.2024 at 11:00 hrs** at office of the Deputy Commandant SSU (CPEC) and would be opened in the presence of bidders.
- The bidders shall submit bid security from the account of the firm/bidder/contractor of any scheduled bank with their financial proposals in favor of the Commandant SSU (CPEC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Police Department Peshawar. In case of non-acceptance of tenders, the earnest money will be refunded after finalization of the tender.
- In case of acceptance offenders, the successful bidder shall deposit a security @ 10% of the total value of stores in the form of call Deposit in the name of Commandant (DDO) Special Security Unit (CPEC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Police Department Peshawar and sign the contract agreement with office of the Commandant SSU (CPEC) within 15-days of the issuance of the acceptance letter.
- Rates quoted would be considered only if the same are in Pak Rupees and inclusive of all taxes/duties/charges and inclusive of packing charges/freight till delivery to the Commandant SSU (CPEC) CPO Peshawar. Rates shall be valid up to **30.06.2025**.
- Conditional tender/application will not be entertained.
- All taxes will be deducted as per existing government policy.
- The processing entity shall have right and authority to cancel, reject or reduce/ increase the quantity of any item listed / mentioned in the instant bid / tender notice and any such decision and auction of the procuring entity shall not be challengeable in any forum/court by the bidders / participant contractors.
- The procuring entity will have the right to reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of bidder's proposal as per **KPPRA Rules 47(1)**. The procuring entity shall upon request communicate the grounds for rejection of bid or proposal to any contractor or consultant who submitted a bid or proposal.

Deputy Commandant
Special Security Unit (CPEC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar

INF(P) 1606/24



PESHAWAR: Lt.General (Rtd) Mumtaz Gul, faculty of NIM/PARD/PPSA and graduating officers of 40th MCMC on the eve of graduation ceremony of the 40th Mid-Career Management Course at NIM Peshawar.

Info Dept to establish social/digital media directorate

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In recognition of the transformative role of social media in modern governance, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Department has embarked on a proactive initiative to regulate and streamline digital platforms.

This strategic step aims to optimize government communications and bolster public outreach through efficient use of social media channels.

Responding to recent unfounded story aired by a private television channel, Mr. Arshad Khan, Secretary to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Information & PRS

Department, categorically dismissed the story as baseless and devoid of facts.

He underscored the establishment of the Social/Digital Media Directorate as pivotal in managing all social and digital media needs of the government.

"Through this Directorate, we will conduct surveys, polls, and rigorous pre and post-campaign analyses to gauge the impact of digital media initiatives. Insights gleaned from social media will provide valuable inputs for policy formulation," he elaborated.

The newly formed Social/Digital Media Directorate will oversee critical functions such as

verifying government department accounts, raising public awareness via digital platforms, executing targeted campaigns, formulating comprehensive social media policies, and monitoring online discourse in collaboration with agencies like the Federal Investigation Agency and NR3C. Specifically, it will address concerns such as anti-state rhetoric, misinformation, anti-religious content, and emotionally charged online material.

This initiative is expected to standardize and enhance the credibility of all government social media channels, ensuring transparent and effective communication with the public.

TLP leader forcefully switches on electricity

PESHAWAR (APP): The local leader of Tehreek e Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), Dildar Khan on Friday forcefully switched on electricity transmission from Matani Grid Station here.

According to the PESCO Spokesman, in areas where the duration of electricity load shedding was more than other areas due to excessive line losses, local people including the political figures boke-in to power grids and switched on the power transmission to their areas.

He said the incidents of harassment of PESCO employees were on the rise and the staff in a bid avoid public rage accept their unlawful demands.

According to the spokesman, the ratio of line losses on Matani Grid was 85.5 percent.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said forcefully switching on electricity transmission with the consent of local political figures has now

become a trend posing threat to the entire transmission system and PESCO staff security.

A few days back the protestors switched on electricity from Golozai and Muhammad Zai feeders during a protest rally, he said adding the ratio of line losses on Golozai feeder was 80.7% while on Muhammad Zai feeder was facing a line loss of 71.9 percent.

Power suspension for Peshawar notified

Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Friday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar City Grid Station on 6th and 8th July from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. resultantly consumers of Sikandarpura, Chughal Pura, Jahgra, Hussain Road, Gulbahar, Phandu Road, City home, Islamabad, Sheikh Abad feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it that power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Cantt Grid Station on 9th and 11th July from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. resultantly consumers of Tehkal, Islamia College, KTH, Commercial, Jahangirabad, University Town, NCR feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Taru Jabba Grid Station on 6th and 8th July from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. resultantly consumers of Scarp, Wapda Colony, PSO, Tarnab, Akbar Pura, Taru Jabba New, Scarp 1, Akbar Pura New, Wazir Garhi feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Haripur Grid Station on 8th July from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. resultantly consumers of KTS 1,2, Swabi Mera, Swabi Mera 2, Town 1,2,3,4,5, SNK, Judicial Complex feeders will face inconvenience.

Inter-Provincial Coordination Muzammil thanks PTI founder, Chief Minister for second portfolio



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Finance and Inter-Provincial Coordination, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muzammil Aslam stated that all necessary and fundamental measures will be taken to secure the province's rights.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Advisor for Finance, Muzammil Aslam, has officially taken over the additional charge of the Department of Inter-Provincial Coordination. Secretary Inter-Provincial Coordination Mahmood Hasan and Deputy Secretary Fazal Subhan, along with several officials, provided him with a

detailed briefing on the department's affairs and functions.

After assuming the charge, Advisor Muzammil Aslam released a statement expressing his gratitude to PTI founder Imran Khan and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur for entrusting him with another important portfolio alongside the Finance Department.

Aslam mentioned that the Finance Department had been in constant communication and correspondence with the federal government, and now he will effectively assist the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in addressing the financial and other

longstanding issues of the Inter-Provincial Coordination Department.

He assured that efforts would be made to resolve these issues promptly.

He highlighted that significant progress and success have been achieved in the financial matters of the current new government, including the allocation of development funds for merged districts, recovery of dues in the oil and gas sector, and recovery of hydropower dues.

Muzammil Aslam emphasized that all legitimate, fundamental, and key steps will be taken to secure the province's rights, ensuring maximum relief for the province.

July 5 termed darkest day

PESHAWAR (APP) The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi, here Friday declared 5th July as a darkest day in Pakistan's history, reflecting on the demise of democratic principles, constitution and the ideologies of its founders.

In his message here, Faisal Karim Kundi stated that July 5, 1977 marked a darkest chapter with the imposition of martial law on the democratic government of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He emphasized that Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's great daughter and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, had prioritized the preservation of the state and embraced martyrdom for democracy and right of people.

Even after Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's martyrdom, he said that President Asif Ali Zardari raised the slogan "Pakistan Khatpe" to ensure supremacy of the democracy, constitution and nation's integrity.

Faisal Karim Kundi highly praised the efforts of Pakistan People's Party's (PPP), highlighting its leadership continuous struggle for democracy, rights of people and the country's progress and development.

He underscored the significance of completing the vision of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for Pakistan's advancement, expressing full support for Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's leadership in this endeavor.

Governor KP reaffirmed his strong commitment to honor PPP workers and martyrs of Pakistan, pledging to play a pivotal role under Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's leadership in fulfilling the mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

KP announce public holiday on 1st Muharram

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has announced a public holiday on 1st Muharram, a notification to this effect said on Friday.

The notification issued from the administrative department said there will be a public holiday in the province on 1st Muharram ul Haram on account of Shahadat of the 2nd Caliph, Hazrat Umar (RA).

Kundi condemns blast

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Friday condemned explosion near Jalala bridge Takhtbhai in Mardan district and expressed sorrow over loss of two lives in the blast.

The Governor expressed sympathy with the families of the bereaved families.

He prayed for highest place of the victims in eternal peace and speedy recovery of the injured.

The Governor said that he equally shared the grief and sorrow through which the victims families were passing through.

KP Governor attends certificate distribution ceremony at NIM

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday attended the certificate distribution ceremony at the National Institute of Management (NIM) Islamabad, where he awarded certificates to the government officials who completed the 40th Mid-Career Management Course.

During the ceremony, the Governor congratulated the officials from various government departments and appreciated their professional skills.

On this occasion, Director General NIM Muhammad Tariq Moj briefed the Governor about the training courses conducted by the institute. In his key note address, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that these training courses not only enhances the professional capabilities of the officials but also prepares them to face future challenges.

He added that government officials engaged in public service hold a very important position in society, and the well-being of the public is linked to their prompt services.

The Governor advised government officials to reduce the gap between themselves and the public and ensure

timely delivery of services to restore public trust.

He emphasized the need for improving the efficiency of government institutions and officials while innovating methods of public service.

The ceremony was also attended by Chief Instructor of the Mid-Career Management Course Samreen Zahra, Chief Instructor of the Senior Management Course Muhammad Masood Ahmed, and officials from various government departments.

The Governor urged government employees to perform their duties with courage and integrity to uphold the dignity and grandeur of the country.

KP Governor visits NVTTC, highlight significance of market oriented training to youth

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi has said that steps would be taken for empowerment of women and youth and to train them according to demands of contemporary market.

He said this during his visit to National Vocational Technical Training Commission (NVTTC) on Friday. On the occasion, KP Governor was also briefed by Chairperson of

NVTTC, Gulmina Bilal and Executive Director, Muhammad Aamir about working of the commission.

KP Governor termed Pakistani workers serving outside the country as ambassadors and said that they played a significant role in sending foreign exchange. He said that majority of laborers working in gulf countries belong to Pakistan and added that they can earn a better livelihood in native areas if provided training modern technologies.

Faisal Karim said that youth and women would also be provided trainings in field of mining, tourism and gemstone sector enabling them to explore opportunities in Central Asian States.

Governor also urged authorities in NVTTC to develop a liaison with universities and educational institutions to train youth in modern and diversified fields. He also assured his cooperation to commission in training youth and women.

He was also informed that training of about 1000 children are underway in the commission under BISP while more than 600,000 youth were provided training in various fields.

Respect to people in service delivery carried paramount importance: Mumtaz

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Service delivery is not just about completing tasks; it's about providing value, care, and respect to those you serve. To excel in public service delivery, a combination of skills and the right kind of attitude is essential.

These views were expressed by Lt. General (Rtd) Mumtaz Gul, HI (M) & Tbt on the eve of the graduation ceremony of the 40th Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) at the National Institute of Management, Peshawar, where he was chief guest on the occasion. He added that public servants must possess good interpersonal and

problem-solving skills, empathy, and a people-centric approach. Patience, continuous learning, resilience, and teamwork are vital necessities of professionalism that will yield the desired dividends in almost all circumstances. The right attitude is the key factor for efficient and effective public service delivery.

A good public servant must have a positive and friendly attitude while dealing with people.

While highlighting the contributions of the National Institute of Management, Peshawar, he said, "I have seen a sea change and transformation in the performance and physical infrastructure of the institution during the

past few years ever since my long association with it."

He said that NIM Peshawar and its dedicated management, hard-working faculty, and staff have been serving a great national cause by providing quality training to our future leaders.

He further said that public servants have to guard their integrity and their reputation through the exhibition of the right kind of attitude and a positive approach to public service delivery.

He urged the graduating participants to capitalize on the newly imbibed skills and knowledge while dealing with their professional assignments. On this occasion, Chief

Instructor MCMC Dr. Muqem-ul-Islam presented the course report.

He said that the 40th MCMC comprised 34 officers, including 05 female officers representing almost all linguistic entities and geographic areas of Pakistan, including AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The nine modules taught to the participants during the 10 weeks of training covered issues of local, national, and international significance.

On the eve, the chief guest awarded course completion certificates to the graduates. At the end, Chief Instructor SMC Tariq Bakhtiar presented NIM's shield to the chief guest.

25th martyrdom anniversary of Captain Karnal Sher Khan A symbol of indomitable courage remembered

PESHAWAR (APP): Many soldiers have died in wars and thousands returns as Ghazis but very few earn respect and appreciation from the opponent army for their indomitable courage and heroic battlefield performance and become immortalized forever.



Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) was one of those celebrated officer of Pakistan Army whose indomitable courage, unmatched valour, patriotism, devotion to duty, leadership qualities and heroic battlefield performance during Kargil War in 1999 had been highly praised by the Indian Army.

"Death was meaningless for the 29-year-old celebrated officer of the 12th Northern Light Infantry (NLI) Regiment, who fought like a lion against both the enemy and harsh weather on an altitude of 17,000 feet on the world's highest battlefield of Line of Control (LoC) at Gultary mountainous region where he inflicted heavy humans and material losses to the enemy," said Brigadier (Retd) Mahmood Shah, Senior Defence Analyst and former Secretary Security e Fata while talking to APP.

He said the courageous feat of Capt Sher Khan by accomplishing the assigned mission of forcing the enemy to withdraw left the Indian commander, Brigadier M.P.S Bajwa impressed by his splendid battlefield performance, indomitable courage and wrote a citation letter, requesting Pakistan that Capt Sher Khan Shaheed had fought bravely and deserve recognition.

Later, Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (1970-1999) and Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed (1967-1999) of the 12th NLI Regiment were decorated with Nishan-e-Haider, the highest military gallantry award of Pakistan posthumously for their matchless sacrifices for defence of

the motherland during the Kargil War.

These celebrated warriors of Pakistan had embraced Shahadat in Gultary region near Target Hills at Kargil on July 5, 1999 and become immortalized forever.

Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed was the first army officer from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who was awarded the prestigious Nishan-e-Haider.

The entire nation has paid homage to Capt Karnal Sher Shaheed on his 25th martyrdom anniversary observed with great respect and admiration at Swabi district on Friday.

Politicians, civil and military officials, traders, businessmen, media men, relatives, colleagues and others visited the residence and gave of Capt Sher Khan Shaheed at Nawan Kallay (now renamed after his name) in Swabi district and paid homage to the "Lion of Kargil".

Floral wreaths were laid on the graves of Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed at Swabi and Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed (NH) at village Hundur, Yasin Vally at Ghazir district in Gilgit Baltistan.

Brigadier Mahmood Shah said that Pakistan was a land of martyrs producing warriors like Capt Sher Khan whose indomitable courage, invincible leadership and battlefield performances was highly praised by the enemy commanders during Kargil conflict.

Born at the residence of

all odds, he led a counter-attack and re-captured the lost portion by inflicting huge losses to the enemy.

True to his name, Capt Sher Khan chased the enemy and conducted many successful raids in the enemy area. During one of such raid, he went inside the enemy camp where he inflicted heavy losses to them.

During the fierce battle, he received burst of machine gun fire in the chest and embraced Shahadat on July 5, 1999.

His epic action in the battlefield true to his name earned him the title of "Loin of Kargil". He emerged as a symbol of great patriotism and valour among the young officers and jawans of the Pakistan Army.

The family of the Shaheed said that Captain Sher Khan had laid down his life for Pakistan and his supreme sacrifice has raised heads of all Pakistani high.

The lion of Kargil had often recited Pashto's two verses, "If whole world become heaven I will not give the mud of my country. If my country need my blood I will shed all my blood for Pakistan."

His body when brought to his native village for burial on July 18, 1999, a sea of people arrived to see his last glimpses and attended his funeral prayer at Swabi.

Later, he was laid to rest in his native village Sher Khan Kallay with full military honors where a mausoleum constructed.

A Cadet College at Ismaila village near his hometown on main Swabi-Mardan Road has been constructed and named after Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed.

The best tribute to the Shaheed was that all of us should work hard with full dedication and professional commitment in their selected professions to make Pakistan more stronger and economically prosperous.



In brief

Three killed in firing Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Three people were killed in firing of armed men at Nowshera mine in Misri Bandha police station jurisdiction on Friday. According to details, the incident took place during mining near Colonel Sher Khan Interchange where armed men opened fire over bilateral dispute. As a result of firing, three people including Luqman, Mursaleen and Arshad were killed on the spot. The deceased hailed from Mardan. The bodies were shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident started raids to arrest the culprits.

Lawyers Forum call on Bilawal F.P. Report

QUETTA: A delegation of Peoples Lawyers Forum Balochistan under the leadership of President, Peoples Lawyers Forum, Behram Tungi, called on PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at Chief Minister's Secretariat on Friday. The delegation apprised the PPP chairman of the problems being faced by the lawyers. Bilawal directed Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti to address the problems of lawyers on priority basis. On the occasion, President Pakistan Peoples Party, Balochistan, Changez Jamali, Secretary Information PPP Balochistan, Sardar Sarbulund Jomezai, General Secretary, Peoples Lawyers Forum, Balochistan, and Ali Asghar, Secretary Information, Abdul Rahim Kakar, Abdul Ababaki, Zainud-Din Kakar, Syed Sultan Shah, Nasir Hussain Jamali, Andleeb Qaisrani, Syed Zahoor Agha, Malik Tanveer Aslam Shahwani, Jamal Shah and Naem Kolachi were also present.

Utility Stores employees held

SUKKUR (INP): Two staff members of Utility Stores in Sukkur were arrested by police for demanding extortion money from their officer. According to details, four people including three Utility Stores staff members demanded Rs4 mln ransom from their Zonal Manager Qaiser Saeed via Katcha dacoits. Moazzam Ali, Izhar Ali and Liaquat Ali, the staff member of Utility Stores, have been booked at the Abad police station in Sukkur on the charges of demanding extortion money from their zonal in-charge through Katcha dacoits. Two employees have been arrested by the police, who are currently on physical remand, while police raiding for the arrest of another staff member of Utility Stores and a dacoit. Katcha dacoits have become a serious issue in Sindh, as kidnapping for ransom, witnessed a surge in the recent past.

Food Authority conducts operation F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority's team on Friday conducted operations at several places and bazaars of the city and checked the quality of food items at various shops. On the direction of Deputy Director Halal Food Authority Dera Wasif Khan, different teams of KP FS&HFA conducted raids on dairy shops, grocery stores, bakeries, milk shops, food and drink points in various bazaars of the city. The Authority's team inspected various food items and checked these items at mobile laboratory on the spot besides sending some samples to the laboratory for further examination.



MANSEHRA: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur addressing public gathering.

Three killed in rain-related incidents

FAISALABAD (INP): Three persons including two minor girls were killed and four others injured in different rain-related incidents, here on Friday.

According to Rescue-1122 officials, the roof of a dilapidated home in Jinnah Colony, Narrwala Road, caved in due to rain. As a result, 9-month-old baby girl, Madiha Fatima, daughter of Shahzad, was killed under the debris. The body was recovered and handed over to the family later on.

In the second incident, a wall of a home collapsed due to rain in Sitara Park City, Jaranwala Road. Consequently, three-year-old girl Swera, daughter of Imran, died on-the-spot. Iqra (29), wife of Imran, suffered injuries in the incident.

A rescue team shifted the injured to hospital and handed over the body of the minor to the family. A shopkeeper was electrocuted in

Madanpura Chowk, Narwala Road. Ayub (40) touched the shutter of his shop to open locks, but he suffered fatal electric shock and died instantly. The deceased was a resident of Street No. 21, Razaabad.

In another mishap, the roof of a home in Street No. 1, Mohalla Haiderabad, Kashmir Road, Ghulam Muhammad Abad collapsed in rain. Three children -- Marya (10), Eman Fatima (13) and Talha (17) were injured in the incident. They were rushed to the General Hospital.

FDA DG orders redressing public complaints: Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Director General (DG) Muhammad Asif Chaudhry has directed the officers to redress public complaints on top priority basis.

Taking serious notice of pendency of public complaints received through various forums or directly,

he directed the officers in-charge of various departments of the FDA to fully monitor the process of expeditious redress of public complaints. In this regard, no unnecessary delay would be tolerated at any cost, he warned.

He said disciplinary action would be taken against the staff who did not pay attention to solving on the public problems. He also ordered to keep the enforcement teams ready round-the-clock to deal with the complaints related to encroachments, illegal constructions, unauthorised commercialisation and unapproved housing schemes.

He also emphasised making performance of One Window Countre in line with public expectations. The FDA services would be transformed as complaint-free so that public trust in the institution could be further strengthened, he added.

KP Police role against terrorism hailed F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: Inspector General Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur has said that the provincial police stand firm and playing key role in the ongoing war on terror.

This was stated by him while talking to media persons after attending the passing out ceremony in Mansehra Training Institute on Friday. IG Hazara Tahir Ayub, DPO Mansehra Shafiullah Khan Gandapur, Additional IG Ikramullah and other police officers also attended the ceremony.

IG Police Akhtar Hayat said that 71 personnel embraced martyrdom in 2024 and the police have also achieved considerable success against terrorism as around 130 terrorists were killed while around 400 are arrested. He said that the police have ability to face difficult situation if provided better training and coaching. Good training of police will also strengthen writ of the government, he added. The IGP said that most of the terror incidents took place in South Waziristan and operations were also being conducted there. He said that providing a peaceful atmosphere to people of Waziristan was top priority of the government for which police force was playing a leading role.

Three dead bodies found F.P. Report

SWABI: The bodies of three unidentified men were found near Karnal Sher Khan Interchange in Nowshera district on Friday. Police said three dead bodies having bullet marks were found near Karnal Sher Khan Interchange adding that the deceased were killed somewhere else and later their bodies were thrown near the interchange. Police said initial investigation confirmed that those killed belonged to Mardan district adding that the bodies have been shifted to hospital for medico legal procedure and identification.

Iodize salt necessary for mental heal in childhood

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Speakers at a meeting have asked consumers to use iodized salt as it improves the educational performance in children. The Universal Salt Iodization Programme (USIP) arranged the meeting at Timergara. The additional assistant commissioner Hazrat Bilal, USI zonal manager Syed Hameed, health professional Dr Wali Khan, social activist Akbar Khan and others spoke on the occasion.

The meeting was also attended by officials of different government departments including police, education, health etc. The USIP programme zonal manager Syed Hameed briefed the participants about the programme and said the World Health Organization (WHO) was promoting the implementation of programmes to reduce population dietary. He said the USI intended that all salt was iodized.

Other speakers highlighted the importance of iodized salt and said that iodine deficiency caused mental and physical disor-

ders. The USIP manager was of the view that iodine deficiency always caused premature abortion in pregnant ladies, reduced growth in neonatal, by birth disorders in children, mental and physical weaknesses and birth of dead children. He said that the population could overcome iodine deficiency by consuming iodized salt.

Dr Wali Khan said that iodized salt helped create hormones regulating heart rate and blood pressure. He said that it also burns extra fats leading to heart disease. He said that iodine helped the thyroid gland in the neck, the hormones of which controlled many of the body works. He said that thyroxine was important for the growth of bones and nerves. The additional assistant commissioner Hazrat Bilal asked salt factories' owners to use iodine in all salt so that the consumers could intake it in their food.

Meanwhile, district food controller Kashif Ihsan along with assistant food controller Riaz Ahmad, food inspector Azam Khan and assistant Sultani Room raided different markets in

Ouch bazaar and checked quality, weight and prices of various items at general stores, wheat flour, vegetable, fruits and hotels. The raiding team fined six of the shopkeepers for overcharging commuters and collected Rs 26000 as fine from them.

Filling stations observed strike: The Filling Stations Association Malakand division announced a complete strike against the government for imposing extra tax on petroleum products for an indefinite period on Friday.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara the association divisional president Mian Ali Jan, Malik Imtiaz Khan, Malik Anwar Zeb and others said that the government had imposed Rs 2.36 on petroleum per litre which was unjustified. They said the filling stations owners had rejected the increase in tax as only the owners were affected by it. They said that all filling stations in Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Swat, Bajaur, Chitral, Shangla and Bunir would remain closed on Friday (today) against the government decision.

District council presents Rs1.274b budget

F.P. Report

LARKANA: District Council Larkana held budget meeting under the chairmanship of chairman Ijaz Ahmed Laghari, in which he presented the budget for the next fiscal year 2024-25, on Friday.

According to the budget documents, the proposed income for the new financial year is estimated to be 01 billion 20 crore 74 lakh 78 thousand 482 rupees. While the total expenditure is likely to be 01 billion 20 crore 24 lakh 71 thousand 198 rupees, similarly, the budget has shown a

budget of 50 lakh 07 thousand 284 rupees. In the budget of the new financial year, 59 crore 24 lakh 71 thousand 198 rupees have been reserved for non-developmental expenses.

While 61 crore rupees have been earmarked for development expenditure, 40 crore 44 lakh 41 thousand 198 rupees have been reserved for salaries and pension, while 52 crore 47 lakh 12 thousand rupees have been reserved for the share of octroi district tax. While last year, 26 crore 90 lakh 80 thousand

rupees were kept for office stationery, payment of bills, repair of vehicles and other expenses. 2 lakhs for taxation branch and 3 lakhs for engineering branch expenses.

As many as 15 lakh rupees have been earmarked for the welfare of the poor, dowry for girls, students, minorities, youth, transgender, disabled and 7 lakh 50 thousand rupees have been earmarked for government payments, pension gratuity of employees, electricity and telephone bills and other things.



MANSEHRA: Youngsters bathing in water to get relief from scorching hot weather.

Pollution in Pakistan, causes and remedies

Ghazala Anbreen

PAKISTAN is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. It faces significant environmental challenges as solid waste management and deforestation due to problem of pollution. Unfortunately, it is the biggest country for producing plastic waste in South Asia, producing more than 3.3 million tons of plastic waste each year. Islamabad alone produces approximately 1,535 tons of solid waste daily.

Due to Unplanned urbanization population densities are higher in main cities and this leads to many environmental issues as air and water pollution due to unplanned housing and lack of waste management infrastructure. It leads to a struggle between environmental sustainability and modernization. Structural inequalities may cause biodiversity loss. This vulnerability also reflects socioeconomic disparity as those with less resources have a less capacity to adapt.

In our surroundings we find most of the things are made of plastic as it is easily accessible and durable. But studies reveal that the plastic products may take 500 to 600 years for decomposing. Experts also say that the plastic waste which we generate per year if we pile it up then it can raise a mountain worth two Mount Everests.

Water pollution refers to any kind of contamination present in water which is not there naturally but it affects the human life and every kind of living thing. The environmental campaign organization WWF indicates that pollution from toxic chemicals threaten life gravely on this planet. Changing climate patterns are threatening human and marine life both.

In Pakistan there are high levels of water pollution in urban areas coupled with a severe shortage of safe drinking water. In 2019 the Federal government banned the use of plastic bags in Islamabad. After few years these bags again came in use by the general public across the country. We should be watchful of the reality that the micro plastic is harming the aquatic life in dire proportions.

Clean water provides the basis for survival but in Pakistan less than 1 percent of waste water is treated by industries before being discharged directly in the rivers and drains. In 2022 UNICEF had pointed out that only 36 percent population of Pakistan had access to clean drinking water. Due to untreated water there occurs contamination of water bodies and soil. Another study conducted by UNICEF found out that 20 to 40 percent of the hospital beds in Pakistan are occupied by patients suffering from water related diseases like cholera, dysentery, hepatitis, typhoid,

diarrhea.

Water is being polluted due to different human activities. Plastic is a kind of by product we generate from fossil fuel and petroleum products. Throwing of untreated waste plastic in the water bodies makes it get mixed with soil nutrients. This is passed on to the food nutrients and thus whole Eco system gets disrupted.

Sewage is the primary source of contamination of water and its extensive discharge in the drinking water supply makes water highly toxic. Disposal of toxic chemicals from industrial effluents, pesticides and fertilizers from agriculture sources and their discharge in the water bodies aggravates the problem further. Aquatic life is threatened which, in turn, affects the food chain. In Karachi tons of syringes and other medical wastes are found on the Clifton beach which pose a serious threat to marine life. Illegal logging, clearing of land for construction and emissions from vehicles are still other significant causes for environmental pollution.

Plastic bags choke the sewage lines and nullahs and stagnating rain water for many days caused by urban flooding becomes a reason for spreading viral diseases and all this is extremely dangerous for human life. Facts reveal dengue is on the rise every year. In 2022 NIH Islamabad reported there were

more than 79,000 confirmed dengue cases while in 2021 there were 52, 929 cases and 224 deaths owing to this.

Bangladesh tried to overcome the plastic bag problem and banned import, manufacturing and supply of plastic with a thickness below 50 microns and introduced a local substitute jute bag in the market. In Pakistan there is a strong need to sensitize the people to stop using plastic bags for creating a conducive sustainable environment.

The major challenge with plastic recycling is that in Pakistan there are not many proper recycling facilities. At consumer level plastic is being produced and many products are made of plastic. There are so many different types and every type of different plastic needs to be recycled properly.

Globally only 9 percent of plastic waste is recycled. Providing formal waste management solutions to people is the need of the hour. In our country important steps must be taken now on individual and collective levels to curtail this plastic pollution. Local communities, NGOs, NPOs can identify high risk areas and may work in collaboration with Government. The patronage of the government is necessary and it can lead to more allocation of budget on the areas which require more attention.

There must be an educational campaign about environment in

Pakistan about potable water and sanitation. Sociologically it can be argued that education system must instill a sense of environmental protection among the students. We need to educate the people about environmental issues and importance of switching to cleaner energy sources like solar and wind power. Unethical social and environmental practices must be under strict rules and penalized so that the harm to environment may be minimized.

If we try collectively, combating plastic problem in Pakistan is possible. Technological advancements are required for this purpose. Introduction of more incinerators to effectively dispose of the dangerous waste can be helpful in mitigating the harm. There is also a need of bringing the waste collectors in some proper social safety nets. They can be employed on daily wages. A rethink is the demand for encouraging people to reduce pollution by employing the techniques of reuse and recycle. Some international models can be studied in this respect. In Russia there are reverse vending machines. Through these the users are rewarded for the Eco friendly recycling action. The money earned can be donated to some charity organization then and there through the same machine. In Finland these machines offer discounts to users for every return of drinking container.

Likewise, promoting a culture of cleaning the environment is also crucial. We may note that in Japan it is mandatory for the kids to clean their class rooms and school lawns themselves on regular basis. The practice is not only confined to the schools only, the Japanese people are meticulous about taking due care of cleaning their surroundings and roads as well.

Some other measures include use of electric vehicles, promoting a culture of walking by foot and creating increased dependence on using the public transport. In Luxembourg the public transport is entirely free. In Pakistan a modified version of this practice can be adopted reducing the fares for ease of poor who commute through vans and secondly making public transport zones on the example of Australia can be a good step to discourage the use of private vehicles thereby reducing vehicular emissions. Evoking an environmental consciousness for proper disposal of waste is awfully required and solutions to handle Pakistan's waste problem must be pondered upon seriously. Encouraging the people to go for a shift from polyethylene bags to polypropylene bags can also be helpful in abatement of pollution to some extent. With collective efforts we can make Pakistan prosper progress and move ahead.



CALIFORNIA: A car burns as flames engulf a home in Oroville.

World leaders congratulate Starmer after election win

LONDON: Keir Starmer has become the United Kingdom's new prime minister after his centre-left opposition Labour Party swept to a landslide victory, ending 14 years of Conservative rule. "The work for change begins immediately," Starmer said in a speech outside 10 Downing Street, the prime minister's official residence. "We will rebuild Britain. ... Brick by brick, we will rebuild the infrastructure of opportunity."

"Pleased with our first discussion. We will continue the work begun with the UK for our bilateral cooperation, for peace and security in Europe, for the climate and for AI," Macron posted on X. "Keir Starmer has brought the Labour Party a comprehensive victory. ... The relationship between Ireland and the UK is deeply consequential for all people across these islands," Harris said in a statement. "I look forward to early engagement with the incoming Prime Minister."

"Ukraine and the United Kingdom have been and will continue to be reliable allies through thick and thin. We will continue to defend and advance our common values of life, freedom, and a rules-based international order. I wish the incoming government every success both in domestic affairs and in solidifying the UK's leadership on the world stage. I look forward to working closely together on strengthening the Ukraine-UK partnership and restoring international peace and security,"

Zelenskyy posted on X. He also thanked outgoing Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for his government's "steadfast support". "He's a strong supporter of NATO, of the transatlantic alliance," Stoltenberg said, congratulating Starmer.

"I look forward to working with you in a constructive partnership to address common challenges and strengthen European security," von der Leyen posted on X. "The European Union and the UK are crucial partners, cooperating in all areas of mutual interest for our citizens. I look forward to working with you and your government in this new cycle for the UK," Michel said. "We have a strong relationship between our two countries, but in Sir Keir Starmer and Angela Rayner and so many others who I am very familiar with in the British Labour Party, I look forward very much to working with them," Albanese told reporters.

"They have very similar views to us on a range of issues. I'm sure we'll work closely on AUKUS, where we worked very closely as well with the former government," he said, referring to Australia's security alliance with the UK and the United States. "Lots of work ahead to build a more progressive, fair future for people on both sides of the Atlantic. Let's get to it, my friend," Trudeau posted on X. "New Zealand and the UK are great friends and can do so much more together. I look forward to working on every opportunity together as

prime ministers. Thank you @RishiSunak for your service to your nation and friendship to New Zealand," he posted on X.

"Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to @Keir_Starmer on the remarkable victory," Modi wrote on X. "I look forward to our positive and constructive collaboration ... fostering mutual growth and prosperity." "I look forward to working together with him [Starmer] and his new government to bring our hostages home, to build a better future for the region, and to deepen the close friendship between Israel and the United Kingdom," Herzog said on X.

Herzog also expressed "deepest appreciation and gratitude" to Sunak "for standing with the Israeli people especially during this most difficult period". "Voters have given the British Labour Party a historically strong mandate to change its course, give people in Great Britain more money in their pockets and strengthen state schools and the National Health Service. I wish Starmer the very best and good luck with a very important job," he told the NTB news agency. "The UK is amongst Finland's most important security and economic partners. I look forward to continuing our close cooperation and deepening the excellent relations between our countries," Orpo posted on X. "As close friends and Allies, I am looking forward to working with you to enhance our common security and prosperity," Kristersson posted on X. — Agencies

Bodies of 89 migrants retrieved from Atlantic

LONDON (BBC): Coastguards in Mauritania have recovered 89 bodies of migrants from a boat that capsized in the Atlantic Ocean. Nine people - including a five-year-old girl - were rescued, but dozens more are missing. Survivors say the vessel - a traditional fishing boat - set sail last week from the Senegalese-Gambian border area with 170 people on board. It capsized off Mauritania's south-western coast.

Mauritania is a key transit point for migrants trying to reach Europe from West Africa, with thousands of boats departing from the country last year. The most common destination on the perilous route is Spain's Canary Islands. The Spanish government says nearly 40,000 people arrived there last year - double the number from the previous year. Desperate to get to Europe, migrants often travel in overloaded boats.

More than 5,000 migrants died while trying to reach Spain by sea in the first five months of 2024, the Ca-minando Fronteras charity estimates. In April, the EU granted Mauritania 210m (£177m; \$225m) in aid - almost 60m of which will be invested in the fight against undocumented migration to Europe.

Tunisia Opp leader Lotfi arrested

TUNIS: The head of Tunisia's Republican Union Party, Lotfi Mraih, who has announced his intention to run in a presidential election set for October, has been arrested on suspicion of money laundering. According to politicians and local media reports, the arrest took place in Nabeul province in northeastern Tunisia.

A Tunis court spokesman said earlier this week that Mraih, one of President Kais Saied's most prominent critics, faces charges of money laundering and opening bank accounts abroad without a licence from the central bank. Mraih's arrest comes as opposition parties, many of whose leaders are in prison, accused Saied's government of exerting pressure on the judiciary to track down Saied's rivals in the upcoming election and pave the way for him to win a second term.

Elected president in 2019, Saied has not officially announced his candidacy for the election, which is set for October 6, but he is widely expected to seek a second term. He said last year that he would not hand power to what he called nonpatriots. Abir Moussi, the leader of the Free Constitutional Party and a prominent candidate, has been in prison since last year on charges of harming public security.

Moussi's party said she was imprisoned to remove her from the presidential race, a claim denied by the authorities. Other candidates - including Safi Saied, Nizar Chaari and Abd Ellatif Mekki - are facing prosecution on charges such as fraud and money laundering. Mondher Znaidi, a prominent potential candidate who is living in France, is also facing prosecution on suspicion of corruption.

The opposition says fair and credible elections cannot be held unless imprisoned politicians are released and the media are allowed to work without pressure from the government. In 2021, Saied seized almost all powers, dissolved parliament and began ruling by decree, a move that the opposition describes as a coup. He oversaw the writing of a new constitution, approved by referendum in 2022, which established a presidential system and weakened parliament.

Saied said his steps were legal and necessary to end years of rampant corruption among the political elite. Prominent opponents of the president have been detained since last year on charges of conspiring against state security in a crackdown that included businessmen, media figures and politicians. — Aljazeera

Fierce fighting breaks out in Myanmar

BANGKOK (AP): New fighting has broken out in northeastern Myanmar, bringing an end to a Chinese-brokered cease-fire and putting pressure on the military regime as it faces attacks from resistance forces on multiple fronts in the country's civil war.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army, one of three powerful militias that launched a surprise joint offensive last October, renewed its attacks on regime positions last week in northeastern Shan state, which borders China, Laos and Thailand, and the neighboring Mandalay region with the support of local forces there. Since then, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army has joined in, and by Friday, combined forces from the two allied militias had reportedly encircled the strategically important city of Lashio, headquarters of the regime's northeastern military command.

This is the next phase of October's "1027" offensive, said Lway Yay Oo, spokesperson for the TNLA, which last week said the military provoked retaliation with artillery and airstrikes despite the cease-fire. "In phase two, our number one aim is the eradication of the military dictatorship, and number two is the protection and safety of local people," she said.

Thet Swe, a spokesperson for the military regime, which seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, accused the militias of putting civilians in jeopardy by restarting the fighting. "As the TNLA are starting to violate the cease-fire, the Tatmadaw is protecting the lives and the property of the ethnic people," he said in an email to the AP, referring to the mili-

tary by its Burmese name.

There was no indication that the third ethnic armed organization that makes up the Three Brotherhood Alliance, the powerful Arakan Army, has joined in the renewed fighting in Shan state, but its troops have never stopped fighting in its home Rakhine state, which was not covered by the Jan. 11 cease-fire. The TNLA claims to have already captured more than 30 army outposts, and to now control the western part of Mogoke, whose ruby mines make it a lucrative target. There is also fighting for the town of Kyaukse, which sits at a highway crossroads, and Nawnghkio to the southwest, which leads toward the major military garrison town of Pyin Oo Lwin along the same highway.

"That's where you need to cut it off to prevent the military from sending reinforcements," said Morgan Michaels, a Singapore-based analyst with the International Institute of Strategic Studies who runs its Myanmar Conflict Map project. In Mandalay, the region west of Shan, a local People's Defense Force — one of many armed resistance groups that have sprung up in support of the underground National Unity Government, which views itself as Myanmar's legitimate administration — joined the TNLA's offensive.

Osmond, a spokesperson for the Mandalay People's Defense Force who would only give his nom de guerre because of safety concerns, said his and other local resistance groups have seized nearly 20 military outposts. The October offensive by the Three Brotherhood Alliance made rapid advances as the militias took large expanses of

territory in the north and northeast, including multiple important border crossings with China and several major military bases.

The alliance militias have close ties to China, and it's widely believed that the offensive had Beijing's tacit approval because of its growing dissatisfaction with the military regime's seeming indifference to the burgeoning drug trade along its border and the proliferation of centers in Myanmar at which cyberscams are run, with workers trafficked from China and elsewhere in the region. China then helped broker the cease-fire in January, bringing the major fighting in the northeast to an end, even as other ethnic armed organizations and PDF groups launched their own attacks on regime positions elsewhere around the country.

With the renewed violence in the northeast, China's Foreign Ministry told the AP it stood ready to again provide support for peace talks, but would not say whether it had been in direct contact with the Three Brotherhood Alliance or the military State Administration Council. "China urges all parties in Myanmar to earnestly abide by the cease-fire agreement, exercise maximum restraint, disengage on the ground as soon as possible, and take practical and effective measures to ensure the tranquility of the China-Myanmar border and the safety of Chinese personnel and projects," the ministry said in a faxed reply to questions.

The Myanmar army doesn't appear to have been surprised by the TNLA attacks, with evidence that it mobilized forces and prepared defenses as well as security checkpoints and patrols ahead of the renewed offensive, Michaels said.

Hungary's PM meets Putin for talks on Ukraine

ASTANA (BBC): Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban has arrived in Moscow to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin for talks on the war in Ukraine. The visit has been criticised by EU leaders, who have emphasised that Mr Orban is not acting on behalf of the bloc.

Mr Orban is the EU's only head of national government to have kept close ties to the Kremlin following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. He described the trip as a "peace mission" in a post on X. It comes days after he visited Kyiv. In footage of the meeting, Mr Putin said the Hungarian prime minister was visiting "not just as a long-time partner" but as a European Union representative. Hungary has just taken over the EU's rotating presidency, and will hold it to the end of the year.

Viktor Orban, speaking in the meeting, said: "Hungary will slowly become the last European country that can talk to everyone." Some European leaders openly condemned the Moscow trip. Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo called it "disturbing news", while Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk tweeted: "The European

Council is clear: Russia is the aggressor, Ukraine is the victim. No discussions about Ukraine can take place without Ukraine." He went on: "The rumours about your visit to Moscow cannot be true, @PM_ViktorOrban, or can they?" "Appeasement will not stop Putin," European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen wrote on X.

"Only unity and determination will pave the path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine." In a statement, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell said the trip "takes place, exclusively, in the framework of the bilateral relations between Hungary and Russia".

Russia's president told Mr Orban he would be happy to discuss "the nuances" of his recent Ukraine settlement plan, in which he offered talks if Ukraine pulled out of Russian-occupied regions. The Kremlin leader voiced a number of tough pre-conditions for negotiations, but Kyiv and its Western allies say these would be tantamount to Ukraine's capitulation. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy - who has had frosty relations with Mr Orban - did not

publicly respond to the proposal.

Many Ukrainians believe any ceasefire would simply cement Russia's hold over territory it has seized from Ukraine and, if negotiations were to take place, they would prefer them to be conducted from a position of strength rather than on the back foot. Mr Orban has been a vocal critic of Western support for Ukraine. He previously slowed agreement on a 50bn (\$54bn; £42bn) EU aid package designed to support Ukraine in its defence against Russia.

Tuesday's visit to Kyiv was his first in 12 years, while he met Mr Putin repeatedly during that time. During Mr Orban's joint appearance with Mr Zelenskyy, the body language between them was not warm, and neither took questions from the media after they gave their statements. But for the next six months Mr Orban's position as head of the Council of the European Union means he has an influential role as a figurehead for Europe. He came to Ukraine on his second day in that role for discussions, saying there was a need to solve previous disagreements and focus on the future.

Land routes across Africa are twice as deadly for migrants

GENEVA (AP): The United Nations and partners say more migrants and refugees in Africa are heading northward toward the Mediterranean and Europe, crossing perilous routes in the Sahara where criminal gangs subject them to enslavement, organ removal, rape, kidnapping for ransom and other abuses.

A report released Friday by the U.N. refugee and migration agencies and the Mixed Migration Centre research group estimated that land routes in Africa are twice as deadly as the sea lanes across the Mediterranean — which is the deadliest maritime route for migrants in the world. The report said new conflict and instability in countries including Mali, Burkina Faso and Sudan have been behind a rise in the number of journeys toward the Mediterranean. But Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Guinea were the top countries of origin of migrants.

It comes as many politicians in Europe and beyond, in an important election year, have fanned or drawn support from anti-immigrant sentiment. But conflict, economic strife, repression and the impact of climate change in many countries in the developing world has fanned the flow of migrants across borders nonetheless — at the risk of physical abuse and death. "Refugees and migrants are increasingly traversing areas where insurgent groups, militias and other criminal actors operate, and where human trafficking, kidnapping for ransom, forced labor and sexual exploitation are rife," according to a summary of the report, which follows up on a similar study four years ago.

The authors admit there are no comprehensive statistics on deaths on the land routes in Africa. But refugee agency UNHCR has cited a more-than-tripling of the number of

refugees and asylum-seekers in Tunisia — a key transit country for migrants aiming to get to Europe — between 2020 and 2023. The report aimed to spotlight the dangers of land routes that lead to the Mediterranean, which was crossed by over 72,000 migrants and refugees in the first half of this year, and where 785 people have died or gone missing over those six months, according to UNHCR figures.

UNHCR special envoy Vincent Cochetel, citing accounts from some migrants and refugees who survived, said some smugglers dump sick people off pickup trucks ferrying them across the desert, or don't go back to retrieve others who fall off. "Everyone that has crossed the Sahara can tell you of people they know who died in the desert, whereas you interview people in Lampedusa: Not that many people will tell you about people they know who ... died at sea," he said,

disarray within its ranks. The army is seen as unprofessional and badly disciplined. Soldiers complain of poor pay and a lack of equipment. Both the UN and regional states have troops in DR Congo to support the army, but they have failed to stem the violence.

M23 fighters are said to be well-armed and disciplined. The rebel group began operating in 2012 ostensibly to protect the Tutsi population in the east of DR Congo, which had long complained of persecution and discrimination. Despite Rwanda's denials, UN experts - along with France and the US - say the M23 is supported by President Paul Kagame's government.

alluding to an Italian island in the Mediterranean.

The U.N.'s International Organization for Migration reported earlier this year that more than 3,100 people died on the Mediterranean crossing last year. The authors of the report, which drew on testimonies from over 31,000 people, said international action has been inadequate and pointed to "huge gaps" in protection and help for people making the perilous journey.

"In total, 1,180 persons are known to have died while crossing the Sahara Desert for the period January 2020 to May 2024, but the number is believed to be much higher," it said. The risk of sexual violence, kidnapping and death was reported by higher percentages of migrants questioned for the report compared to the previous one in 2020, and Algeria, Libya and Ethiopia were considered by respondents as the most dangerous.

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Heads of state guidance lifts friendly relations to fresh heights

UNDER the guidance of successful heads of state diplomacy, China-Tajikistan relations have maintained sound momentum featuring mutual political trust, fruitful Belt and Road cooperation, healthy cultural exchanges, and close coordination in regional and world affairs. President Xi Jinping's visit to Tajikistan that started on Thursday, his first visit to the country in five years and the last leg of his Central Asia tour that brought him to Kazakhstan earlier this week, enriches the China-Tajikistan community with a shared future, which the two sides agreed to jointly build in May last year, and injects new impetus into the two countries' traditional friendship. The talks between President Xi and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon on cooperation in key areas, and the regional and international situations, will consolidate the solidarity between the two countries and expand their common interests.

Drawing a blueprint for the growth of China-Tajikistan relations in the foreseeable future, the two leaders will raise the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries that they formed in 2017 to a new level. China has long been Tajikistan's largest source of investment and its major trading partner. The two-way trade was close to \$4 billion in 2023, reaching another record high. Such strong momentum has continued in the first four months of this year.

By aligning the Belt and Road Initiative with Tajikistan's National Development Strategy for the period through 2030, both sides aim to enhance their result-oriented cooperation in trade, finance, tourism, transportation, communication, ecology, culture and artificial intelligence. The two sides are set to make greater efforts to tap the structural complementarity of the two economies. To this end, China is willing to import more premium produce from Tajikistan, and encourage strong Chinese companies to make more investments in Tajikistan to help modernize its industrial system.

By diversifying their trade beyond the traditional areas such as infrastructure, metallurgy and energy, and strengthening their cooperation under the Silk Road e-commerce framework, the two countries can realize more mutual benefits. Cooperation in new fields such as new energy vehicles, solar panels and satellite communications has bright prospects. In the security field, in the face of an increasingly volatile world, Xi has proposed that the two countries jointly act on the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, enhance exchange between their law enforcement and security agencies, crack down on terrorist, extremist and separatist forces such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, and prevent and combat infiltration and sabotage by terrorists and extremists. As indicated by the strong consensus the two sides have demonstrated on maintaining regional stability and promoting common development during President Xi's visit, successful heads of state diplomacy continues to guide and ensure the healthy development of bilateral ties.

US tariffs a sign of weakness

THE United States has imposed tariffs of up to 100 percent on imports from China, encompassing electric vehicles (EVs), EV batteries, and battery parts. This move has spurred a chain reaction among its allies, leading to the European Union's recent imposition of preliminary additional tariffs of up to 38.1 percent on Chinese EVs, with Canada now also deliberating on potential actions.

But the aggressive stance does not reflect the United States' strength; instead, it highlights its relative decline and waning confidence. The tariffs will burden US consumers and businesses with higher costs, weakening the US' economic outlook. Trade protectionism is a chronic disease the US is afflicted by, particularly during election years. Politicians seeking re-election often resort to protectionist measures to appease key voter blocs and industries. This strategy is well-documented, notably by economist Mancur Olson in his book, *The Logic of Collective Action*. According to Olson, industries that derive benefits from protectionist measures, such as tariffs, have a stronger incentive to lobby for these measures than the dispersed consumers who actually bear the costs.

Historical patterns show the political nature of the US' trade protectionism. For example, in late 2000, the Bill Clinton administration targeted steel imports from China, India and Ukraine amid a contentious election battle between Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush, both of whom aimed to win the votes of steelworkers and other labor groups in crucial swing states. And in 2002, former US president George W. Bush imposed steel tariffs to gain the favor of the steel industry ahead of the midterm elections. Biden, despite his economic advisers understanding the irrationality of additional tariffs, has been succumbing to the same political pressure. During his last campaign, Biden criticized the then US president Donald Trump's tariffs, arguing that they were ultimately paid by US consumers, not China. Yet given his falling ratings in key battleground states, Biden has resorted to trade protectionism. China's production scale ensures that its industries will maintain their competitive edge through economies of scale, even without access to the US market. Since this advantage will only increase over time, it's unlikely that the US' protectionist measures will significantly hinder China's industrial progress. The US, once a champion of global free trade, has increasingly adopted protectionist and politically-motivated trade policies, which have undermined the global economic system and hindered innovation by prioritizing domestic political gains over broader economic benefits. China, as a leading advocate for free trade, must offer a more compelling vision for the global economic order. By championing development-oriented trade rules and opposing the protectionist policies of the West, China can lead the world toward a more prosperous and equitable future. Therefore, China's response to US tariffs should be measured and strategic, targeting the protectionist factions without antagonizing the US people or trade partners, while Chinese enterprises should navigate these challenges by mitigating risks and finding alternative channels to the US market. Simultaneously, China should continue to promote global economic cooperation and development, countering the regressive trends of protectionism and excessive regulation.

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SCO helps maintain stability, promotes prosperity

Gulnar Shaimergeranova

THE Belt and Road Initiative has yielded fruitful results for both China and Kazakhstan, and become not only a brand of Chinese diplomacy but also an effective tool for strengthening international cooperation, promoting global growth and helping build a community with a shared future for mankind.

At the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing last year, which was attended by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, many important agreements were signed between China and Kazakhstan, including the "Agreement on the Joint Development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route" and the "Memorandum on the Joint Construction of a Third Cross-Border Railway (Ayagoz-Tacheng)". These agreements will boost the development of the transport and logistics networks linking Belt and Road countries.

The expanding cooperation, new projects and people's rising incomes are the hallmarks of development in the East. As President Tokayev noted, the Belt and Road Initiative is a project of grand scale. And the further development of the comprehensive strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and China is very important for both countries, as Tokayev said. Understanding well the global trends and having considered the prospects of the Belt and Road Initiative, Kazakhstan put forward "Nurly Zhol", an economic stimulus plan to develop and modernize its roads, railways, land ports and IT infrastructure in 2014, the year after the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed.

Kazakhstan's participation in regional development programs has become one of the important elements of the new architecture of multilateral cooperation in Eurasia. The country supports the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and thus contributes to overall development in the region. The initiative's conceptual origins reflect not only the rich history and culture of China, but also the development philosophy of the

Chinese people in the context of cooperation with neighbors.

As a Chinese saying goes, "if you want to become rich, build roads". The ancient Silk Road is an apt example of this. About 2,000 years ago, thanks to the courage and entrepreneurship of the people, Eurasia was already united by a network of roads, which was the first prototype of economic globalization.

Today, Kazakhstan is crisscrossed by 11 transcontinental routes — five railways and six expressways. Over the past 10 years, Kazakhstan has spent about \$30 billion on developing of infrastructure, including transport and logistics networks. Under the plan, about 2,500 kilometers of railways and 12,500 km of highways have either been modernized or put into operation.

Over the past 10 years, the efforts of the two countries have shaped a grandiose transit plan linking two continents and three oceans. Thanks to its cooperation with China, Kazakhstan has gained access to the sea and become one of the most important logistics hubs in Eurasia, facilitating the development of fast continental supply chains and trade between the East and the West. Thus, the two countries are implementing new large-scale projects that go far beyond the framework of Kazakh-Chinese relations.

The Belt and Road Initiative has completed trade and infrastructure projects, which in the past took decades to complete, within years. The initiative has not only facilitated reforms in the participating countries but also given them easier access to global free trade which they have benefited from. In fact, the Belt and Road Initiative, as the modern version of the ancient Silk Road, has become the most outstanding global development project of the current century and reflects the rise and grandeur of modern Asia.

Cooperation among the Belt and Road countries has played a key role in the prosperity and progressive development of billions of people around the world. As such, the initia-

tive will become a good basis for taking forward the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's plans.

The SCO has emerged as a pivotal force in maintaining regional stability and promoting global cooperation, with China playing a central role in fostering its development and goals. The SCO's evolution underscores a commitment to maintaining peace, safeguarding security and promoting mutual prosperity among its member states and beyond.

Established in 2001, the group has grown from six members into a robust platform involving nine member states, three observer states and 14 dialogue partners. Its primary objectives focus on bolstering security cooperation, combating extremism, enhancing economic ties and promoting cultural exchanges. Over the years, the SCO has become instrumental in addressing common challenges faced by its members, ranging from terrorism to economic development.

Central to the SCO's evolution is China's steadfast commitment to promoting the building of a community with a shared future. China, as the second-largest economy in the world and a staunch advocate for multilateralism, has played a leading role in shaping the SCO's agenda and fostering cooperation among its member states. China's vision emphasizes mutual respect, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation — a departure from traditional power politics — and prioritizes collective prosperity over individual gains.

Beyond security, the SCO has become a driving force for economic integration and development. Its member states have leveraged the organization's strengths to deepen trade ties, enhance connectivity and unlock new investment opportunities. The SCO's support for development programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative has catalyzed infrastructure development and economic growth across Eurasia, benefiting not only its members but also neighboring countries and regions.

In the past 23 years since its establishment, the

SCO, as an international organization, has established a model for maintaining and strengthening regional security. Kazakhstan assumes the chair of the SCO against the backdrop of rising geopolitical tensions, increasing challenges, and exacerbation of ongoing conflicts and emergence of new ones. In such conditions, Kazakhstan's proposal for the leaders of our countries to accept the initiative on world unity for peace and harmony seems very timely.

A number of important events have been held this year, in particular, the SCO Energy, Digital and Tourism Forum, meetings of foreign, health and IT ministers of SCO member states, and the meeting of the "Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure". Under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan, about 180 different events were held, and more than 30 documents on cooperation are being prepared under the SCO's framework.

Last year, President Tokayev said Kazakhstan will make every possible effort to modernize the SCO and turn it into a more effective multilateral platform in order to further strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation and traditional friendship between SCO member states. By working together, the SCO member states can produce more tangible results, and the decisions made at the SCO Summit in Astana will contribute to the further development of the organization, and help maintain long-term peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Kazakh-Chinese relations under the Belt and Road framework have demonstrated to other SCO members countries how to derive mutual benefit from economic cooperation. Thanks to the successful implementation of joint projects, other countries in the region also became more actively involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, contributing to the strengthening of economic ties within the SCO. Just before the SCO Summit, it is worth noting the importance of continuing and deepening these relations to achieve common goals and maintain stability and promote prosperity in the region.

The China Daily

Sunak axed, the cast eviscerated

Marina Hyde

WELL, if you're just joining us, the nation has delivered an all-night victim impact statement. Labour has won a landslide and the Conservatives have suffered their worst ever general election result. Keir Starmer — the prime minister — has promised "national renewal ... to fight until you believe again". Liz Truss has failed to save South West Norfolk, let alone "the west". That is the big picture (if not the whole picture, with turnout and Labour's vote share notably low). Meanwhile, it's incredible to think that only a short while ago we thought we'd eradicated measles and Nigel Farage. Both have now been brought back, largely by the same people.

But look, after the 3am to 7am shift, no one will be able to say the right doesn't do comedy. There were moments worthy of entire Netflix specials as in sports halls and community centres various Dickensian grotesques were ushered into their Christmas future, live on stage. Alas, it was going to take more than buying the Cratchits a turkey to get out of this one. Jacob Rees-Mogg heard his fate standing next to a candidate wearing a baked bean balaclava. He'll be crying into Nanny's starched bosom today. Committed sewage apologist Therese Coffey was pumped into the sea in Suffolk Coastal. Andrea Jenkyns had the middle finger given to her by the voters of Morley and Outwood. In Welwyn Hatfield, Grant Shapps chanted "supermajority" five times into the mirror, and then it came for him.

Then again, Michael Portillo losing his seat was supposedly 1997's big moment. So perhaps the question is: in two years' time, which current hate figure will be presenting a costly travelogue on Europe's most picturesque illegal migration routes? Alternatively, do remember that one person's onstage humiliation is another person's milk round for directorships in the arms trade.

Speaking of absolute weapons, hat twat George Galloway wimped out of his own count in Rochdale, presumably out of fatigability. He lost to Labour. There was jubilation for the Lib Dems, who finished not a million miles behind "the natural party of government", and for the Greens, who won all four of their target seats. The SNP can now squeeze its MPs round the flip-down dining table of a motorhome. Referendum arguments may move to Northern Ireland, with Sinn Féin now that nation's largest Westminster party.

As for Reform ... Farage won in Clacton, a constituency for which he will now have to hold surgeries, presumably by Zoom link from his hot desk in the US presidential colon. Or as he put it in his victory speech: "This is the first steps of something that is going to stun all of you" — at least confirming his political abattoir will be bolt-gunning its victims unconscious first. Farage is the horror version of Inside Out, where Mendacity is only just holding off Racism at the control console. His cultural hinterland extends to a single Goodbye, Mr Chips DVD he got free with the Sunday Times in 2008, and the idea that this hollow chancer should still be one of the most significant politicians of the age says everything about the age.

Anyway, back to the Conservatives' four-hour in-memoriam reel. Penny Mordaunt, Jonathan Gullis, Michael Fabricant, Gillian Keegan, Steve Baker, Alex Chalk, Johnny Mercer, Michelle Donelan, Victoria Prentis, Liam Fox, Mark Harper ... all out, along with many more. So many cabinet ministers fell that the ones who live may actually develop survivor guilt. It's currently unclear how gruesome things will be among the extant Conservatives in this post-apocalyptic world. As a fictional president once wondered of Dr Strangelove, will the living not end up envying the dead? Far from it, Strangelove reassures him, forcing down an involuntary Nazi salute. What will abound is a spirit of bold curiosity for the adventure ahead!

Speaking of which, 13th fairy Suella Braverman finally turned up, holding on in Fareham and cooing: "I am sorry that my party didn't listen to you. The Conservative party has let you down." Expect to see her humbly attempting to disembowel fellow survivors Jeremy Hunt and James Cleverly in the forthcoming trial-by-combat for what convention demands we style as "the soul of the Conservative party".

At his count, Rishi Sunak explained he'd already conceded the election in a congratulatory call to Keir Starmer, adding, "I take responsibility for the loss." In Downing Street, he confirmed he would be standing down as Tory leader in some sort of due course, stressing, "I have heard your anger." Then, instead of yet another speech straight from the Tortured Prime Minister's Department, this one offered humility and magnanimity, as well as a pointed reminder of the positive (and fragile?) progress that saw him become the UK's first British-Asian prime minister. What a contrast to the relentless negativity of his past six weeks. Sunak's campaign was conducted like a gender-reveal party where the device that's meant to release the puff of blue smoke accidentally functions as a pipe bomb and burns the house down.

It also closed out several years of mindboggling chaos, dysfunction and national decline. They won't be playing anything from this album on the Conservative party's Eras tour. The Tories have cycled through five prime ministers over the past eight years, to the point where they were recently found going through the rubbish, pulling the first guy back out, thinking, "Actually, he doesn't look half bad now," and making him foreign secretary. This is the behaviour of addicts.

Yet in the wider global context, what a win. One summer evening in 1914, the foreign secretary, Edward Grey, famously remarked: "The lamps are going out all over Europe." In our own times, a darkening has recently felt at hand, as hard- or extreme-right parties have gained ground across the continent, to say nothing of the US. But here — in this country, in this moment — a different direction has been taken. That matters today, and anyone not on the wingnut fringes, who hopes to avoid those gathering shadows, should wish Keir Starmer good luck with his task. For plenty who would snuff out the lamps are also rising — increasingly, they walk among us.

The Guardian

The SNP has been defeated by its own visceral hatred

Tom Harris

devolved chamber at Holyrood.

For a party that, five years previously, had won a total of six Westminster constituencies, it was a startling transformation. The SNP had always preened itself as "the voice of Scotland" even when, in the 1980s, it was coming a poor third place to Labour and Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives. That's what nationalism does: it assumes a prominence in public life that is frequently unjustified by its popular support. But 2011 and then 2015 changed all that, and in a remarkably short period of time, the SNP were behaving like Kings of the World with barely a thought as to how they would deliver on their promise of independence, or

how they would appear to that majority of Scots who still reviled them and whose support they would need if they were ever to succeed in selling their prospectus on independence.

Public office seemed to be theirs by right rather than merit. Difficulties in delivering at a Holyrood level were compounded by internal political machinations, difficult relations with their parliamentary partners, the Scottish Greens, and a bewildering succession of first ministers following Nicola Sturgeon's unexpected resignation last year. Genuine hatred plays a big part in the SNP's political outlook. There is the performative kind — the evil Tories who hate Scotland and want to send your children up

chimneys — and then there is the real, visceral hatred, reserved for Labour, for the single reason that it has dominated Scottish politics for so long and has therefore prevented independence from achieving its rightful prominence for generations.

That hatred, coupled with a genuine delusion that it and it alone can speak for Scotland, has shaped the party and its leadership across all recent iterations. And when the divisions over the independence referendum resulted in SNP dominance of Westminster seats in Scotland, and when that victory was repeated twice more, the party started to believe its own propaganda, that the Scottish people had changed their minds for the last time, that nationalist dominance would continue until the inevitable day

when Scotland became independent. Last night was a rude awakening, and a long-deserved one.

Hubris never fails to have its consequences. One is a tendency to blind oneself to the realities of life, and in the SNP's case, their singular obsession with independence and hatred of Labour blinded it to the changing priorities of Scottish voters, who had started to realise that independence, while still attractive to many, was no longer at the top of their political wish list. The SNP reaped what it sowed. Its arrogance, its entitlement and its short-sightedness have been exposed and the very people who raised them up have thrown them down again. And with it, the very project they hold so dear to their hearts.

Belarus full membership will boost cooperation and trade

Andrei Pilutic

THE Republic of Belarus has been participating in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization since 2010 as a dialogue partner and since 2015 as an observer. On Sept 16, 2022, within the framework of a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, a decision was made to initiate the procedure for Belarus to join the SCO. And in July, 2023, a memorandum of obligations for Belarus was signed to enable it to become a full member state of the SCO.

The Chambers of the National Assembly of Belarus adopted Law No 275 in July 2023" on the accession of the Republic of Belarus to international treaties within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization". The admission of Belarus as a full member of the SCO is scheduled at the 2024 SCO Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The accession to the SCO would be an important act of foreign policy self-determination for Belarus. In his speeches at the SCO summits, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has focused on the potential of the SCO, in particular, to stimulate trade and economic cooperation through industrial and technological cooperation, digital transformation, the green economy and other fields.

Belarus considers the SCO to be an important international platform for establishing specific mechanisms for promoting cooperation in the field of regional security and countering terrorism, extremism, organized crime, and advocates for strengthening the economic dimension of the SCO as the most important factor of stability in the Eurasian region.

First, the activation and expansion of the dialogue of cultures is

one of the most effective ways of eradicating terrorism and violent extremism, separatism, and trafficking of drugs, weapons, nuclear and radioactive materials, organized crime and illegal migration. These challenges have become transnational issues. Cooperation has already been established in many areas of cultural and humanitarian cooperation in the format of inter-parliamentary interaction.

Second, in recent years there has been an expansion of the SCO security agenda. There is an urgent need to build a universal, comprehensive, inclusive, transparent infrastructure of indivisible and reliable security and sustainable growth in the region. Also, Belarus is open to cooperation and dialogue in order to ensure food, energy and information security.

And third, the creation of a common transportation network in the region covered by the SCO will ensure trans-boundary multimodal transport, and help develop the required transport infrastructure and system for integrated management of traffic flows using digital technologies. Belarus has many strengths for effective cooperation in the trade and economic sector (energy, information and technology and agriculture, for example), which will help address new challenges and threats in the economic sphere. This will help establish cooperation in the banking and financial spheres and create financial mechanisms within the SCO.

In the current geopolitical situation, Belarus needs easier access to international markets. Improving the common transport space, trans-boundary transport network, and coordinated development of highways, as well as diversifying the export potential of the Union State of Russia and Belarus and the

Eurasian Economic Union in the SCO region is of interest to Minsk.

The most promising areas for Belarus' cooperation in the SCO are industries and technologies, digital transformation and artificial intelligence, the green economy and climate adaptation, development of peaceful nuclear energy for civil use, and the use of cost-effective and environmentally-friendly technologies, eliminating trade barriers.

The formation of a single market and a free trade area of the SCO would promote healthy competition for the products of member states and counter the protectionist and sanction policies, and trade wars of the United States-led West. It will also play a significant role in organizing multimodal transport, improving the transport infrastructure and transit potential.

Belarus' entry into the SCO will certainly strengthen relations with the organization's other member states in areas of mutual interest. A relatively new area of cooperation is cross-border cooperation. Taking into account the increase in terrorist threats on the external borders of member states (those not shared by the SCO members), the level of interaction between border services should be increased.

It is also important to establish a mechanism for jointly safeguarding the security of the information space, in order to prevent threats to the political, economic and public security of the member states. There is also a need for the SCO to strive for the adoption by the United Nations of a "Rules of Conduct in the Field of Ensuring International Information Security" and based on this, work with other members of the international community to formulate unified international regulations for the infor-

mation and communications sector, and establish cooperation in this area.

By becoming a full member of the SCO, Belarus will not only be able to strengthen its political position in the international arena, but also have the opportunity to promote its products in new markets. Belarus supports the SCO's policies to counter trade wars and curb protectionist measures.

Besides, Belarus will be able to use its future full SCO membership to diversify its agricultural exports by cooperating with other SCO members in accordance with principles of interaction among SCO countries in the field of smart agriculture and agro-innovation since the majority of SCO members are importers of agricultural products. And Belarus' participation in the SCO's food security program will allow it to supply its mineral fertilizers to the other SCO member states in large volumes.

Minsk can also envisage the economic benefits of intensifying its digital transformation, especially with the help of China, which is a leader in the production of computer and communications equipment, and on the strength of Belarus which has gained significant success in the development of electronic products.

An important area of modern trade is cross-border e-commerce. E-trading in the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange can help the country sell goods to the other SCO countries. As such, cross-border digital trade, and digitalization of transport networks and customs services should become a new area of cooperation among SCO member states. Belarus also has huge potential when it comes to exporting engineering, machine tools and instrument-making products to the other SCO member states.

Britain wanted anything but the Conservatives

Keir we go! Keir we go! Keir we

OR maybe not. In a smart council building tucked behind King's Cross, the mood was jubilant but very far from triumphalist as the constituency of Holborn and St Pancras declared the result. Sir Keir Starmer, the sitting MP, and our new Prime Minister, held his seat. But at 3am, hours before the final results were in, there was no grandstanding. In fact, there was no reference to the historic Labour landslide over which he had just presided.

Instead of victory he emphasised it was "time to deliver" and pledged: "I promise this: whether you voted for me or not, I will serve every person in this constituency." While Starmer the barrister enjoyed a high flying legal career, Starmer the politician has always come across as awkward, stiff and strangely hesitant. Adenoidal and earnest, his hand rises and drops like a Thunderbirds puppet. But hey, still more reliable than Sunak.

By dawn he was presiding over flag waving party members and revelling in the dramatically altered fortunes of his party. In the early hours of Friday, however, we saw a very different man to the one we expected. Wearing a smart suit, box fresh shirt and red tie, he smiled – all the way to his eyes.

On course to become the next leader of a country in a cost of living crisis, he counter-intuitively looked more relaxed, more at ease than we have ever seen him before. He was accompanied by his wife, Victoria, who has punctiliously avoided the stump. Dressed in a chic three-quarter sleeved jacket and fashionable wide-legged navy trousers, she discreetly left the hall before the result was announced; how she will feel about the next five years' media glare remains to

be seen.

But even as Britain celebrated the Tories' resounding defeat, the impression persists that the country doesn't quite know who, exactly, it has voted for. In the run up to the election, The New Yorker mooted that Starmer's policies were the product of carefully calibrated political triangulation. Here on his home turf, we just thought he was square.

Truthfully, we're none the wiser about the man who adopted an ultra-cautious 'Ming Vase' campaign strategy, predicated on the notion that the precious trophy is already in your grasp: all you have to do is not trip over your own feet. Thrilling, no. Effective, yes. The people have spoken. Actually for weeks now they've been blowing the gaff to any random pollster who asked, that they would be voting Labour. Or Reform. Or even the Pick me! Pick me! Look, I can paddle board really badly too! Lib Dems.

Ultimately, the decision was easy as ABC. Anything But Conservative. And throughout the night, the blue wall turned red. Sir Ed Davey's total wipeout antics proved to be a winner and Reform UK staked its claim as a political force offering a home to disgruntled Tory voters, despite an absence of any actual policies. It was a bloodbath; Big Beasts like defence minister Grant Shapps and Jacob Rees-Mogg, Middling Beasts such as education secretary Gillian Keegan and of course Mini Beasts like – oh look, Rishi Sunak kept his seat, if not his berth at Number 10.

"Politics is at a 'crossroads'" said a visibly shaken Sir Robert Buckland, former justice minister, who lost his seat. The Conservative Party, he added, must make the "right choice" if it is to inspire a new generation. "I think that we

Judith Woods

have seen in this election an astonishing ill-discipline within the party," he said in his farewell speech. "Democracy is never wrong," said eminently dignified Leader of the Commons Penny Mordant who also lost her Portsmouth North to Labour.

She ought to try telling that to her Conservative colleagues who had forgotten the public anger over partygate, the 49-day economic cluster*ck of Liz Truss and Sunak's shameful D-Day desertion and were rather put out to discover the Great British Public hadn't. And so they found themselves on the nation's doorsteps enquiring whether they could rely on householders' votes only for said householders to insist on banging on about potholes on the roads, poo in the water, the dearth of GP appointments and complete absence of social care.

Running through the Tory campaign was a shocking disconnect between reality and politics. Earlier in the week party grandees seemed genuinely astonished that after 14 years and five prime ministers we just weren't that into them. They were damned if they were going to go with dignity. Instead, they fulminated and fear mongered like jealous exes, hurling insults and reproach. Interviewed on the BBC in the wee small hours, Jacob Rees-Mogg mournfully observed with breathtaking hindsight that his party faced defeat because "they took their core supporters for granted".

He was wide of the mark. What they did was far worse; they set about gaslighting every voter in the country, variously casting us as insane for "creating a supermajority" and decrying us as idiot architects of our own misfortune for daring to desert them. A vote for Reform would cause irrevocable

damage, we were warned. Labour, meanwhile, would bankrupt generations, imperil Brexit, leave the nation vulnerable on the world stage due to inadequate defence investment and clobber the country with a double death tax.

Yet all that still sounded better than the current lot. Why? Because after the multi-millionaire whose parents couldn't afford Sky TV but could scrape together enough to send him to Winchester, it turned out the only man who could ever reach us was the son of a – tool maker. Britain wanted the one thing Labour could give us. ABC: A Barnstorming Give. Whatever that looked like.

Sunak was gracious. He hung on to his seat, just, and demonstrated the sort of generosity towards his opponents – it was he who called the overall result and conceded long before the counting had finished – that has been vanishingly rare of late. Can it only be six weeks ago that addressed the nation from Drowning Street, as the heavens rather presciently opened onto his head: "Now is the moment for Britain to choose its future," he said.

Britain has chosen. It chose to definitively sweep away the Tories in a veritable tsunami. How they emerge from the wreckage will be a test of mettle and character; having lost the trust of the country they must earn the right to bellyache about Labour. One party's "insane" supermajority is another's overwhelming mandate and much needed as Starmer's main task now is to somehow find a way to unite the country or, to paraphrase D'Ream, things can only get bitter. As for the Tories, once again it's as simple as ABC: Absolute Bloody Carnage. As the removal vans trundle up to Number 10 and former cabinet ministers clear their desks, let the grisly post mortem commence...

The Telegraph

How will Labour change Britain

AND just like that, Frances Ryan & Aditya Chakrabortty

Britain kicked the Conservative party into touch. Labour's enduring poll lead long signalled victory for Keir Starmer – and this, coupled with an uninspiring campaign, resulted in a muted election for one so seismic. But watching the map turn from blue to red overnight, it was hard not to feel a kind of cathartic cleanse. This was close to a Tory wipeout by any definition. Former prime minister Liz Truss was spectacularly ousted, alongside a spate of cabinet members, including Penny Mordaunt, Jacob Rees-Mogg and Grant Shapps. Culture-war peddler Miriam Cates lost her battle, while Ben "vasectomies are free for the jobless" Bradley was cut loose.

Nothing will spoil Labour's thumping landslide, but voters hurt by Gaza and other concerns dealt several blows. Iain Duncan Smith, early architect of austerity, survived because of a split vote with a former Labour candidate. Reform took only a few seats but their national vote share should trouble Starmer.

At its heart, this election was less about welcoming Labour in than getting the Tories out. From austerity to Brexit to Partygate, voters have lived through an unprecedented era of cruelty, chaos and corruption. If a week is a long time in politics, 14 years of Conservative misrule has practically been a life sentence.

Many don't believe anything will change with a Labour government, let alone soon. In the coming months, Starmer must show it can. For now, it is enough to sit and savour what has ended. To draw a line under the worst of governments and remember the millions of lives made poorer, sicker, more afraid. Today is for Windrush, disability benefit deaths and Grenfell. It is for food banks, "go home" vans and the rape clause. For PPE contracts, cancer patients and Rwanda flights.

Goodbye to the vandals of Britain. How fitting they destroyed themselves in the end.

The most worrying story this morning must be that the hard right will now sit in parliament. Under party-funding rules, Nigel Farage's group will receive cash from the taxpayer. He will be entitled to even more airtime. Measured by share of the vote, the third-biggest political force in the UK today is Reform. One in seven voters support a party that includes representatives who praised Hitler as "brilliant" and called black people "jungle bunnies". Reform organisers have had links with fascist organisations. One of the activists helping Farage win Clacton was filmed using the P-word to describe Rishi Sunak, calling Islam a "death cult" and demanding the army "just shoot" refugees. These people and those views have only gained legitimacy in this election.

For years the media has lapped up Farage. For the most part, it has treated him as entertainment rather than a threat. The BBC has put him on comedy panel shows. But the braying, sour admirer of Enoch Powell is a threat – a threat to the millions of ethnic minority people in this country and a threat to British democracy. Reform is not a party, but a limited company majority-owned by one Nigel Paul Farage. His rise has been bankrolled by sugar-daddy businessmen and he now appears well placed to establish himself as the natural magnet for dark money in British politics.

As he became MP for Clacton last night, Farage said: "We're coming for Labour, be in no doubt about that." It is no idle boast. Cast your eye across what Labour still considers its "red wall". Vast swathes were won back by Keir Starmer last night, but in seat after seat Reform is now the main challenger: South Shields, Houghton and Sunderland South, Easington, Sunderland Llanelli, North Durham, Montgomeryshire and Glyndwr... the list goes on and on and on. It includes Angela Rayner's Ashton-under-Lyne, and Jonathan Reynolds's Stalybridge.

Few politicians are as adept at spinning a victim narrative as Farage, and he will point to his side's 14%

public support equalling only 0.6% of MPs and say: you've been robbed, just as you were on immigration. In some of these seats, the results were extremely close; in many, there were just a few thousand votes' difference between the centre left and the far right. The message is clear: seats that Labour once assumed were its own by inheritance now face serious challenge from a demagogue who takes his inspiration from Donald Trump.

That name shows us what happens when the hard right moves into the void left by the political mainstream. Yet throughout this election campaign, both Tories and Labour ducked out of challenging Farage. Starmer's team pulled its candidate out of Clacton and frogmarched him up to the Midlands. The Labour government taking shape this weekend will have to make urgent improvements to the daily lives of voters, especially in

many MPs picked for departmental posts, with New Labour veterans dwindling. There's only so much that shadow roles, briefings from experts and party grandees or life experience can do to prepare them for the mammoth responsibilities, the processes, culture and politics of Whitehall, and the scramble to "do something" about every unexpected controversy on the front pages.

Party figures have clearly been hard at work drawing up plans, but few are likely to be developed enough for the civil service to act on immediately – particularly with parliamentary recess looming. Even a likely shortened recess is a significant headache given the political significance of delivering within the first 100 days – the timescale Labour has already committed to for bringing forward legislation on its flagship employment reforms.

International affairs,

Five thousand one hundred and seventy-three days. That's how long it is since Labour last governed. It shows how monumental this victory is. I hope new MPs can squeeze in time to celebrate and breathe before parliament resumes. It also illustrates just how novel government will be for many MPs picked for departmental posts, with New Labour veterans dwindling. There's only so much that shadow roles, briefings from experts and party grandees or life experience can do to prepare them for the mammoth responsibilities, the processes, culture and politics of Whitehall, and the scramble to "do something" about every unexpected controversy on the front pages.

those de-industrialised areas that were left for dead decades ago. That is a huge challenge given the austerity politics that look set to dominate this decade.

The nicest thing to be said about the Conservatives' election performance is that they managed to avoid a total wipeout. The predictions by some pollsters of the party being reduced to double digits proved a little off of the mark – with Rishi Sunak instead slumping to 119 seats and counting. That means they remain His Majesty's official opposition and avoid the humiliation of being treated like a fringe party by the broadcasters.

But this is where any crumbs of comfort stop for Sunak. Ultimately the Tories have suffered catastrophic losses that they will struggle to recover from in one term. The casualties include plenty of so-called Tory big beasts, including Liz Truss, Jacob Rees-Mogg, Penny Mordaunt and Grant Shapps. But perhaps more damning is the areas they lost in – seats that have long been blue, from Aldershot to Surrey Heath, as well as the gains made in the Midlands and north in recent elections withering away. The rebuild will be hard.

To make matters worse, there will be a small but noisy intake of Reform MPs including Nigel Farage, Lee Anderson and Richard Tice. This group has the potential to cause mayhem and divide the Tories further as they try to regroup and recover. The question that will dominate the coming Tory leadership contest will be what to do about Farage and his party – hug them close or push them away? The voters turning to Reform played a large role in the Tory party's disastrous showing. In parts of the red wall, Farage can now claim his party is second to Labour.

The only other small ray of light for the Tories is that, despite Labour's landslide victory, the early signs are that its vote share has not risen significantly from 2019 – so the size of the majority may not reflect a rush of public enthusiasm for Starmer. The difference between the two parties is a mix of Labour's efficient campaigning in swing seats and the collapse of the Tory vote. But given this is the worst result in the Tories' history, this will likely be little comfort to them in the coming years in opposition.

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from a Nato summit in the US to a European Political Community summit held here, both this month, will also take up precious time that Keir Starmer may have wanted to spend making domestic headway.

Labour will certainly have a string of high-profile announcements to unveil imminently and sound like it means business – but it faces a tricky balancing act between promising to meet high public expectations of change, and dampening them given Labour's strict fiscal rules. With Nigel Farage warning he's "coming for" Labour, the pressure to spend big will grow louder by the week.

Responsibility for this historic defeat lies ultimately with the Conservative party's abandonment of its traditional and trusted values of conservatism, and its replacing of these with the dog-whistle politics of division. In becoming a party that stated only what it stood against, eventually it stood for nothing, becoming a party of nowhere. It didn't have to be this way. When Rishi Sunak personally decided to row back on net zero and climate action, promoting new oil and gas and opening a new coalmine, I stated that this would become the greatest mistake of his premiership. It turns out it was also his greatest political error, as the party lost not only in the "red wall" but across swathes of seats in the southern "blue wall". Seats where voters believed the Conservatives cared about conserving our environment turned against Sunak's headline rhetoric.

I had no choice but to resign and leave the party when it turned against its climate record. Net zero is the greatest economic opportunity of the decade, bringing with it jobs, growth and regeneration. Sunak instead preferred to follow Reform's corrosive culture war politics, which brought zero votes. The same could be said for the party's incessant attacks on migrants, on international humanitarian law, on international students, on our institutions and even family meals on a Friday. Again, the pattern was the same: hate not hope, blaming others, blaming each other. It didn't just lose the plot, it forgot where the theatre even was.

The country has not only voted for change: it has voted overwhelmingly to deliver the net zero mission that Keir Starmer has set out as one of his government's five key priorities. Putting politics aside, we now have the opportunity to restore the consensus on climate action that is sorely needed. Carbon dioxide knows no political colours. We must all now work together in this new parliament to deliver the change and results that our environment urgently requires.

West should stop spreading rumors about Xinjiang

Liang Yuchun

ONCE again, the US has pointed fingers at China's domestic affairs, tarnishing Xinjiang's records in its latest so-called religious freedom report released by the US State Department. This repetitive action is nothing new but an age-old tactic of slander, much like the unfounded rumor of "forced labor".

Labor is a human activity on which society is based and development pursued. People need to work to fulfill their or others' needs and wants, which contributes (along with other factors of production) the most toward the goods and services in an economy, and improves the lives of individuals. How can people be forced to seek a better life?

The International Labour Organization describes "forced labor" as all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily. Whether employed locally or seeking work elsewhere, Xinjiang's workers are motivated by a deep understanding of working values. In June, my research in Xinjiang confirmed that

members of minority ethnic groups were working in different enterprises of their own volition.

"My work, my choice" aptly describes the independent decision-making by Xinjiang's ethnic groups when it comes to employment. They opt for jobs based on their desire, skills, preferences and career aspirations without any external influence. For instance, in my survey, Abdurehim Tulyak, an employee at Kashgar Xinyue Textile Co. in Yuepuhu county, Kashgar prefecture, found a job through a WeChat group three years ago. Turaik said that: "We choose our jobs based on our interests, and the company tries to meet our preferences."

In fact, Xinjiang's workers have the freedom to choose their careers, reflecting the provisions of China's Employment Promotion Law, which guarantees equal employment and the right to choose one's career. The region's high-quality economic development has created a large number of jobs, allowing workers to choose which enterprise or institution to work for based on their interests

and capabilities without any racial, gender or religious discrimination.

Xinjiang promotes equal labor rights and employment opportunities, fair labor rules, and legal protection for employees. Local labor protection laws complement national regulations, fostering an inclusive environment, and prohibiting racial, gender and religious discrimination in employment. Way back in 2014, regulations were implemented to prevent discrimination in recruitments for State-owned enterprises. Recent recruitments by local branches of SOEs such as the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and China Unicom, and private companies like TBEA Xinjiang Sunaoasis Co.don't reveal any ethnic discrimination, demonstrating that the job market in Xinjiang is free from ethnic discrimination.

Last year, Xinjiang reached a significant milestone by creating 482,200 new urban jobs and 1.09 million jobs for those people lifted out of poverty. And while there are mechanisms to protect workers' right to fair wages and ensure their pay is increased as and when need-

ed, regulations ensure workers get enough rest and leave, including paid annual leave, statutory holidays, and female workers get special leave. Also, measures have been taken to ensure all workers are covered by social insurance programs, and to prompt companies to provide social welfare benefits such as annuity and supplementary health insurance for all workers.

Besides, while workplace safety measures, which align with the ILO's standards, are strictly enforced in Xinjiang, religious beliefs and practices, and dietary preferences of workers from minority ethnic groups are respected and protected. Not to mention that the quality of employment in Xinjiang has improved with more workers employed in technology-intensive and high-tech industries. Western criticism can't overshadow the reality of Xinjiang's labor landscape, where the rights and dignity of workers are respected and protected. And Xinjiang is committed to building harmonious relations through collective bargaining and employment contracts, and by developing fair and safe working conditions.

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In brief

Cricket squad, to train

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan women's cricket team and Pakistan Shaheens will begin preparations for their respective assignments by training and practice sessions in Karachi from 6 and 8 July, respectively. Shaheens will depart for Darwin, Australia on 14 July to face Bangladesh 'A' in two four-day matches. On the tour, Shaheens will also feature in two one-day matches and will take part in a nine-team T20 tournament, which will be played from 19 July to 18 August. Pakistan women's team will travel to Sri Lanka on 16 July to feature in ACC Women's Asia Cup, which commences from 19 July, according to a PCB communique on Friday.

Kabaddi Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inter Departmental National (Asian Style) Kabaddi Championship 2024 will roll into action from July 22, at Liaquat Gymnasium Islamabad. Secretary General Pakistan Kabaddi Federation, Muhammad Sarwar Rana said on Tuesday that seven teams of various department's will take part in the championship including Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Wapda, Higher Education Commission, Pakistan Railways and Pakistan Police. The managers' meeting will be held on July 11. The final match will be played on July 14. Sarwar Rana said that the players, who would perform well in the championship would be included in the national team. The selected players will participate in the Asian Indoor Games to be played in Thailand in November this year.

Norris tops Grand Prix

LONDON (Agencies): McLaren's Lando Norris set the pace in first practice at the British Grand Prix. Norris, seeking his first win in his home race, was 0.134 seconds clear of Aston Martin's Lance Stroll in a session that provided little insight into competitive form. Norris' teammate Oscar Piastri was third, with Max Verstappen's Red Bull fourth. The world champion was the quickest driver to set his best lap on medium-compound tyres, while the three drivers in front used softs. Mercedes' George Russell was fifth fastest, also on the medium tyres and just 0.009secs slower than Verstappen. Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso was sixth fastest, ahead of Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and the Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz. Alpine's Esteban Ocon completed the top 10 from Haas' Nico Hulkenberg and Sauber's Valtteri Bottas. Piastri suffered a reliability problem late in the session when he stopped in the pit entry with a hydraulics failure. Briton Olivier Bearman, announced on Thursday as a Haas driver for 2025, was 14th fastest in a practice outing for his new team. At the back of the field, Alpine reserve Jack Doohan was 17th fastest in his practice outing in the car of Pierre Gasly, who will receive a grid penalty for excessive engine usage this weekend. Argentine Franco Colapinto was 18th in Logan Sargeant's Williams and Isack Hadjar 19th in Sergio Perez's Red Bull. Yuki Tsunoda was slowest of all after an early spin at Luffield in the RB, which brought out a red flag to stop the session for his car to be recovered from the gravel trap.



LONDON: Bianca Andreescu of Canada in action against Jasmine Paolini of Italy in the Ladies' Singles third round match during day five.

Paolini beats Andreescu to reach fourth round

LONDON (Agencies): Jasmine Paolini reached the Wimbledon fourth round for the first time by impressively defeating Bianca Andreescu. The French Open finalist, seeded seventh, won 7-6 (7-4) 6-1 under the roof on Court One. There was little to separate the players in the first set as they both looked to attack at the first opportunity, but Andreescu could not maintain her level. Italian Paolini, 28, is into the second week having never previously won a match at Wimbledon until this year. It continues a remarkable career surge - she had not gone beyond the second round of a Grand Slam until 2024. She will play 12th seed Madison Keys or 18th seed Marta Kostyuk in the last 16. Paolini and Canadian Andreescu played each other in the French Open third round five weeks ago, when the Italian won in three sets. That was Andreescu's first tournament in nine months as she returned from a back problem, the latest in a series of serious injuries that have blighted her career since she won the US Open as a 19-year-old in 2019. Now ranked 176th in the world, she matched her opponent's shot-making in the first set but faded in the second, losing the final six games with Paolini sealing victory with a backhand return winner. "I think I played a good match," said a delighted Paolini. "I tried to be aggressive because, if not, I am going to have to run so much." Elsewhere, 19th seed Emma Navarro beat Russian Diana Shnaider 2-6 6-3 6-4 and will next play second seed and fellow American Coco Gauff or Britain's Sonay Kartal.

Turkey says Demiral ban for Euros 'wolf' salute is unfair

BERLIN (AFP): Turkey defender Merih Demiral will miss his team's Euro 2024 quarter-final against the Netherlands after UEFA banned him for two games on Friday for making a ultra-nationalist salute, a move Ankara blasted as "unfair and biased". Demiral scored both of Turkey's goals in the 2-1 last-16 win over Austria on Tuesday and during celebrations for his second goal made a gesture associated with Turkish right-wing extremist group Grey Wolves. UEFA said in a statement it was banning Demiral "for violating the basic rules of decent conduct, for using sports events for manifestations of a non-sporting nature and for bringing the sport of football into disrepute". Should Turkey overcome the Dutch on Saturday, Demiral would also miss the semi-final against England or Switzerland. Turkey's Sports Minister Osman Askin Bak claimed the ban was politically motivated. "We condemn UEFA's unfair and biased decision, which has no legal basis and that we consider to be purely political," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Demiral has said his celebration was related to his "Turkish identity". The 26-year-old former Juventus defender, now at Al-Ahli in Saudi Arabia, insisted there was no "hidden message" in the salute. Demiral posted a photo of his celebration on X with the caption "How happy is the one who says 'I am a Turk'". His gesture has triggered a diplomatic row between Turkey and Euro 2024 host nation Germany, where an estimated three million Turks live. Germany's Interior Minister Nancy Faeser warned "the symbols of Turkish right-wing extremists have no place in our stadiums". Turkey then summoned the German ambassador on Wednesday over politicians' reactions to Demiral's celebration. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will attend the quarter-final at the Olympiastadion in the German capital, which tens of thousands of Turks are expected to attend. Erdogan himself has said Demiral was just "showing his excitement" and several ministers and the spokesman of his ruling AKP party have condemned Faeser's reaction. The Grey Wolves advocated radical ideas and used violence in the 1980s against leftist activists and ethnic minorities. The group has been banned in Austria and France, but not in Germany. Germany's Agriculture Minister Cem Ozdemir said Wednesday "nothing about the wolf salute is hidden". Ozdemir, one of the most prominent German politicians with Turkish roots, said the symbol "stands for terror (and) fascism". The Grey Wolves were labelled "a terrorist organisation" by the European Parliament in 2021 and "especially threatening for people with a Kurdish, Armenian, or Greek background and anyone they consider an opponent". Accusing German authorities of "xenophobia", Turkey's foreign ministry pointed out that Germany's domestic intelligence service had emphasised in its report "not every person making the grey wolf sign can be described as a far-right extremist". Demiral's goals helped Turkey reach the last eight of a major tournament for the first time since 2008.

Babar is a world class player, says Young

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Australia's leading power-hitting coach Shannon Young declared Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, who has been under fire for the team's performance in the recently-concluded T20 World Cup, as a "a world class player". "He is well, he is a world class player," said Young while speaking about Babar's strike rate amid the ongoing criticism which the young skipper is facing. The coach said that Australians are very rarely critical of their world class players. "We back them in and we say they've been world class players, they're gonna be world class players again. I think sometimes the passion tips over that these guys carry so much expectation through Pakistan's one of the best players in the world, he's gonna be fine," Young added. Showering praise on Babar, the coach said he is a very nice guy and is doing great work with the academy and giving young boys and girls the opportunity which is admirable and fantastic. Young also spoke about his visit to Pakistan, saying that his plan is to bring high performance Australian cricketers and the younger cricketers for tours next year. "We're hoping that maybe April. Previously, and I've always wanted to come to Pakistan, so I got the opportunity and I knew really early on that the Australians would love Pakistan. So we're gonna bring hopefully a couple of tours to play cricket here," he expressed.

Pakistan suffer defeat in Asian Team Snooker C'ship final

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan lost to Thailand in the final of the ACBS Asian 15 Red Men's Team Snooker Championship 2024 in Riyadh on Friday. Thailand won the final 3-0 with scores of 61-4, 75-53 and 90-26 as they overpowered their opponents throughout the game. In the first single match, Pakistan's Asjad Iqbal lost without giving a proper fight. However, in the second single encounter, Awaish Munir showed resilience but ended up making a foul during colour potting after which the Thai opponent cleared the frame and won the match. The situation remained the same in the doubles frame and Pakistan managed to secure a silver medal after a defeat in the final. Earlier in the semi-final against Hong Kong, Pakistan's team comprising Iqbal and Munir, came from behind in the semi-final after the defeat in the first frame to win 3-1 against Hong Kong. In the first singles match, Iqbal was defeated 47-72. Munir won his frame 80-44 to level the match at 1-1. In the doubles frame, Pakistan played a 99-clearance break to secure victory. Iqbal defeated Nansen Wan 28-82 in his second singles match and bagged a win. Meanwhile, in the quarters, Pakistan defeated India (2) with a score of 3-0. Pakistan's winning scores were 63-35, 75-22, and 70-06. The India (2) team comprised Sarav Kothari and Hussain Khan. It is worth mentioning that Munir won the Asian 6-Red Snooker Championship in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Tuesday (July 2) after beating Hong Kong's cueist Nansen Wan. Munir secured a 6-3 victory over his opponent. The game was tied at 2-2 and Munir won three sets straight and made his lead 5-2. In the eighth frame, Nansen made a comeback. However, in the ninth frame, Munir displayed excellent control and potting to clinch the victory. Munir won the match with scores 0-65, 35-26, 27-36, 38-20, 0-65, 13-46, 8-60, 34-0, 27-40.

2024 WSF World Jr C'ships draws, seedings announced

ISLAMABAD (APP): The draws and seedings have been announced for the 2024 WSF World Junior Squash Championships, which are taking place in Houston, USA from July 12 to 23. In the women's draw, defending champion Amina Orfi of Egypt has been declared top seed as the 17-year-old aims to equal national legend Nour El Sherbini's haul of three World Junior titles. The Egyptian targeting a first ever title after a painful defeat to Pakistan's Hamza Khan last year. Khan, who last year ended Pakistan's 37-year wait for the title, has been named No.2 seed, meaning that the Houston crowd could be in for a second showdown between the two round and, should the tournament go to seedings, will contest an all-Egyptian final against Fayrouz Aboelkheir, said a press release. In the men's draw, 2023 runner up, Mohamad Zakaria has been made the early favourite, with the Egyptian targeting a first ever title after a painful defeat to Pakistan's Hamza Khan last year. 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In brief

ANF seizes over 149 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in a crackdown against drug dealers conducted 5 operations and managed to recover 149 kg drugs besides netting 5 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that 100.8 kg hashish and 26.4 kg opium were recovered from a vehicle near Misri Banda Road, Nowshera. 20 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested on North Bypass Karachi. 1 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an Afghan resident rounded up near a college in Peshawar. In another operation, 1 kg hashish was recovered from a drug dealer arrested near PC Hotel in Multan. In 5th operation, 10 grams cocaine was recovered from a Nigerian resident nabbed near H-13, Islamabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Rubina assures support for minorities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid, in a meeting with Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Provincial Assembly Anthony Naveed Friday, assured her unflinching support for the minority communities. The two sides discussed the recent BISP survey, which identified the special needs of deserving Christian families. The BISP chairperson said BISP's core initiatives were designed to provide substantial benefits to the minority community, ensuring they receive the necessary support and relief. Senator Rubina reassured Anthony Naveed of the Programme's dedication to assist the minority community, reinforcing its commitment to inclusivity and equitable support for all underprivileged groups in Pakistan.

IRSA releases 341,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 341,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 500,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tabela Dam was 1497.68 feet and was 99.68 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 277,400 cusecs and 144,200 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1188.25 feet, which was 140.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 45,200 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 187,200, 173,900, 108,100 and 38,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 90,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 55,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

IESCO notifies power shutdown prog

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued 3-day power suspension programme for Saturday, Sunday and Monday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Saturday From 07:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Doda, Lakho Road, Commercial Market Feeder From 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Isolation Hospital, Raha, CM Pak Zong D-12/1&2, Zaraj 1,2, IST, Dhok Awan, Morra Nagyal.



ISLAMABAD: Security Forces conducted a flag-march with an objective to maintain peace and tranquility in the Federal Capital for coming holy month of Muharram ul Haram. —APP Photo

Naqvi takes decisions to transform Islamabad into a World-Class City

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi has made key decisions to transform Islamabad into a world-class city while chairing an important meeting at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) headquarters on Friday. On the Minister's directives, CDA will now only purchase electric motorbikes in future to reduce environmental pollution. Additionally, eco-friendly electric buses will be introduced for the citizens of Islamabad. The Interior Minister has also imposed a ban on the purchase of conventional motorcycles. International standard emergency services will be provided to the citizens of Islamabad and the administration of emergency services will be transferred from MCI to CDA. Moreover, the establishment of Capital Waste Management Company will also be expedited. Furthermore, the matters related to the establish-

ment of Capital Waste Management Company will also be finalized soon. The Interior Minister said that work on the Serena Chowk Underpass and F-9 Park Chowk Flyover projects will begin soon to alleviate traffic congestion issues in Islamabad. He added that the long-delayed Expressway project will be completed on a priority basis. He stated that development work in the non-developed sectors of Islamabad will also be completed, and possession will be handed over to the allottees. He highlighted that work on the Islamabad Model Jail, which has been stalled for 17 years, is progressing rapidly, and the first phase will be completed within the stipulated time. The Interior Minister said that Business Facilitation Centers are being established in Islamabad, where investors will be provided with all facilities under one roof. Land has also been allocated for

the Health Tower in Sector H-16. The Interior Minister congratulated CDA team, including Chairman CDA, on achieving record tax collection but warned that no organization can run solely on plot and land sales; therefore it is essential to develop the assets of the organization. In this regard, the Interior Minister directed that an investment plan be prepared and presented within seven days. The meeting also reviewed the progress on various ongoing development projects, including the Kuri Enclave, renovation of Federal Secretariat building, Diplomatic Enclave, and Smart Parking projects. Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, briefed the Federal Minister for Interior on various projects. The meeting was attended by Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Memon, and all members of CDA.

30 E-Buses safely docked at Convention Center: Tarar



ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday informed the Upper House of the Parliament that 30 Electric-Buses of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) were safely docked at the Convention Center declared as its initial terminal and depot with proper charging and maintenance infrastructure in place. Responding to the question of Senator Fawzia Arshad on the reasons behind the CDA's failure to establish depots for public transport buses to be received from China in upcoming months and any precautionary measures taken to ensure protection of the vehicles, the Minister informed that it was the first batch of the buses received from China and two more batches were in the offing. Senator Tarar informed that the Chinese company had installed charging sta-

tions with a capacity of charging 12 buses at a time within 3 hours which was sufficient to manage the entire fleet. He informed that the soft launch was today, and all measures were in place whereas the members of the House were welcomed to travel in the newly inducted E-Buses. He added that a charging facility at Bus Depot in Sector H-9 was also being developed to cater for the 2nd batch of 70 Electric-buses and would be made operational after one month of mandatory driver's training. "The bus depots at Taramri, I-9/H-9 and Zero Point were tendered there, but unfortunately, the bids received were on a significantly higher than estimated cost and were therefore canceled. These depots will be tendered again shortly and are expected to be completed within a period of five months," Senator Tarar said.

Responding to the supplementary query of Senator Humayun Mohmand, he said the transport was a devolved subject and the federal government could only operate E-Buses not other than Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added that the federal government's policy was to shift over renewable energy and friendly policies for solar panels and EVs were introduced. "The import of luxury vehicles beyond 2500cc have been capped so that relaxation should be given at the basic level to the common masses and the government would encourage small users to opt for EVs. The future is of EVs and E-Buses have been given relaxation in the policy and being promoted in the country as they are environment friendly and it will help save fuel and foreign exchange," he added. Earlier, Senator Danesh Kumar asked the Minister to brief over the safety measures taken to mitigate risks of blasts or accidents at the facility. Senator Humayun Mohmand termed the E-Buses induction into mass transit fleet as a positive development to shift over E-Buses and focusing public transport. He inquired the Minister to explain on any future prospects of nationwide rollout of E-Buses across the country.

IFA cracks down on adulterated milk

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) led by food safety teams (FSTs) on Friday, carried out a major operation in Rawat, resulting in the destruction of 1100 liters of contaminated milk. Talking to APP, Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of IFA, Dr Tahira Siddique, said that during the operation, 10,000 liters of milk were tested. Using a milk adulteration testing kit, the team found positive results for contamination on the spot, leading to the immediate destruction of the adulterated milk. Dr. Tahira Siddique, commenting on the issue, emphasized that mixing milk and water or any other substances was a serious offense. She stressed that such practices harm children and infants, causing gastrointestinal and liver diseases. The timely intervention by the food safety teams prevented the distribution of this harmful milk to Rawat and nearby areas. Dr. Siddique warned that any reduction in the quality of milk, especially for children, would not be tolerated. Deputy Director of the Islamabad Food Authority stated that strict measures would be taken against those violating food regulations, and no concessions would be given to offenders.

Yousaf Raza Gillani pays homage to Z.A Bhutto Shaheed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani on Friday paid homage to former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed with regard to July 5th when his government was toppled. Addressing the House, the Chairman said that the Pakistan's constitution of 1973 was initially unicameral due to which the sense of deprivation was prevailing amongst the provinces and most the east Pakistan was being deprived. Latter Bicameral system was introduced in the Constitution due to which the House of federation came into existence, said the Chairman adding that all provinces had equal representation in the House of federation. He said, all political parties signed Charter of Democracy (COD) in 2008

and agreed to restore the Constitution of 1973 in its original form. "I give the credit to all political forces of the country who restored the Constitution in its original form" said the Chairman Senate adding that today's democracy in the country was because of the COD. Earlier, Senator Zameer Hussain Ghumro said that the legitimate government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was toppled on July 5th, 1977 and the Constitution was abrogated. He said the Supreme Court of Pakistan in its recent judgment, has declared Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's murder was a judicial killing. 5th July 1977 will always be remembered as the Black Day in the political history of Pakistan, he added. Senator Poonjo Bhel

said that today was the Black Day but the country's strength was hidden in the democratic process which should not be derailed at any cost. Senator Saifullah Abro said that the House should pass a resolution of condemnation against the dictator of that time who toppled the government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. He said that the judiciary's role in the judicial murder of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto must be condemned and those involved in his murder should be hanged at D-Chowk if alive and if died their coffins should be hanged at D-Chowk. Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan said that all political parties should learn from the horrific incidents of July 5th 1977 and should work together for the betterment of the country.

Electricity system in Pakistan is rusty: Laghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Awaiz Ahmad Khan Laghari on Friday told the Upper House that entire electricity system in Pakistan was rusty which needs complete overhauling. Responding to calling attention notice of Senator Falak Naz about excessive and un-announced load shedding of electricity in Upper and Lower Chitral causing problems for the residents of these areas, the minister said that the complete system would restore in two weeks time.

He said Golan Gol Hydro power project produces 108 megawatt electricity but due to some technical issue it stopped power generation. The other option to restore electricity was to provide electricity from national grid through PESCO but the line constructed and managed by WAPDA was also faulted which caused problem however the teams are working on war footings for complete restoration of electricity in Chitral, he said. He also apologized over

the in-efficiency of employees and said that unless the entire system would not be overhauled, there would be no change in the system. Our actions are yielding good results and we are working on war footings to provide electricity to the people of Chitral, the minister said. Chairman Senate Seyd Yousaf Raza Gillani also assured the Senator that the issue would be taken up when the Ministry will come to brief the Committee of the whole of Senate on power crises.

Police conducts flag march to maintain peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police and other law enforcement agencies on Friday conducted a flag march in the city with a purpose to maintain peace and tranquility in the federal capital. A police public relations officer said that, following the orders of the Inspector General of Police Islamabad (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, Islamabad Police has taken comprehensive security arrangements during Muharram ul Haram. He said that flag marches are being conducted in various areas to make security more effective and added that strict vigilance

would be maintained like previous years to maintain law and order in the city. He said that the flag march started from the Pakistan Sports Complex and culminated at the same point after passing through various areas of the capital city. DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza emphasized that the Islamabad Police are taking all possible steps to maintain peace in the city adding that all forces are all time alert to tackle any untoward incident. He said that the security has been enhanced at all entry and exit points while Dolphin squad is patrolling in different

areas of the city adding that all senior police officers have been directed to remain in their relevant areas and check the duty points according to the security point of view. He said that crackdown against one wheelers, tinted glasses, pillion riding, without number plates vehicles and motorcycles is underway. He also appealed to the citizens to cooperate with police during checking and inform police about any suspicious activity around them through Pucar-15 adding that no stone would be returned to secure the lives and property of the citizens.

Kundi attends certificate distribution ceremony at NIM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday attended the certificate distribution ceremony at the National Institute of Management (NIM) Islamabad, where he awarded certificates to the government officials who completed the 40th Mid-Career Management Course. During the ceremony, the Governor congratulated the officials from various government departments and appreciated their professional skills. On this occasion, Director General NIM Muhammad Tariq Moj briefed the Governor about the training courses con-

ducted by the institute. In his key note address, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that these training courses not only enhances the professional capabilities of the officials but also prepares them to face future challenges. He added that government officials engaged in public service hold a very important position in society, and the well-being of the public is linked to their prompt services. The Governor advised government officials to reduce the gap between themselves and the public and ensure timely delivery of services to restore public trust.

He emphasized the need for improving the efficiency of government institutions and officials while innovating methods of public service. The ceremony was also attended by Chief Instructor of the Mid-Career Management Course Samreen Zahra, Chief Instructor of the Senior Management Course Masood Ahmed, and officials from various government departments. The Governor urged employees to perform their duties with courage and integrity to uphold the dignity and grandeur of the country.

931 Traffic Wardens to regulate traffic during Muharram

RAWALPINDI (APP): Over 931 Traffic Wardens under the supervision of inspectors and DSPs would perform duties on city roads to control traffic flow during Muharram. According to a City Traffic Officer (CTO), Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan, Traffic Police Officers, and Wardens have also been directed to take action against vehicles having tinted glasses, revolving lights, unregistered vehicles and motorcycles and others moving without improper

and fake number plates. In order to ensure the security of the mourning processions during Muharram-ul-Haram, the City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has issued a comprehensive traffic plan. According to the plan, there would be a complete ban on parking any vehicle or pushcart on the route of the procession. Fork lifters would move with Muharram processions. The CTO informed that the wardens have been directed to remove all kinds of

encroachments from the procession routes besides keeping a vigil on suspected persons and things. Entry of vehicles on the route of the processions would be blocked by erecting barricades and other hurdles, the CTO added. The CTO said, Traffic Police officials would be deployed along with district police personnel to ensure the security of the mourners. Strict disciplinary action would be taken against the delinquent officials, the CTO said.



ISLAMABAD: A view of fallen trees on the roadside after heavy rain in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

583 Afghan migrants deported

KABUL (Amu TV): At least 322 families, comprising 583 individuals, were deported by Pakistan and Iran on Thursday, according to the Taliban-run Ministry of Refugees. The ministry reported that the refugees from Pakistan returned through the Torkham and Spin Boldak crossings, while those from Iran entered via the Abrisham and Islam Qala border crossings. According to the statement, 90 families returned through Torkham, 91 families through Spin Boldak, and 86 families were deported by Iran.

UNICEF supports treatment

KABUL (Amu TV): The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported that it has supported the treatment of at least 234,200 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition in Afghanistan in 2024. The UN children's agency also provided 314,000 people with access to safe drinking water in the country. "602,000 children vaccinated against measles," the organization noted on X. Earlier, the World Food Program revealed that 12 million people.

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

Tribal elders, scholars meet with Deputy PM

KABUL (ToloNews): Several tribal elders and scholars from various parts of the country have met with the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs and discussed the implementation of large economic projects and creating job opportunities for citizens.

Hamdullah Fitrat, the Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, said that during this meeting, the tribal elders expressed their support for the interim government and pledged their cooperation in various sectors.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, mentioned in this meeting that currently complete stability and security exist in the country, providing the groundwork for various projects to be implemented. He further added that the Islamic Emirate is striving to utilize the available resources for the advancement of Afghanistan.

On the other hand, some scholars and Shia elders, in a meeting with Abdul Hanafi, Administrative Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office, said that they are ready for



any kind of cooperation with the Islamic Emirate. Hanafi, in this meeting, also referred to Afghanistan as a shared home for all and emphasized that we must defend the current government and country through cooperation.

Hamdullah Fitrat, the deputy spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said: "The Administrative Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office stated that this system is a shared system, and Afghanistan is

the home of all. It is necessary for all citizens to collectively support this system and work together for its development."

According to some economic experts, the lack of job opportunities is a fundamental cause of increasing poverty in the country, and the initiation of large economic projects by the Islamic Emirate could have an impact on reducing poverty.

Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an economic

expert, said: "How do we use the God-given resources? How can we change the situation of our neighbors compared to ourselves? This plan requires expertise and an understanding of Afghanistan's situation. Those present here and who are educated should develop plans to overcome this situation."

After the return of the Islamic Emirate to power in Afghanistan, various economic projects have been funded by domestic revenue.

Afghanistan population faces hunger, poverty: GIZ

KABUL (Amu TV): The German development organization, GIZ, has warned that the situation for many people in Afghanistan has drastically deteriorated since the Taliban's takeover. According to GIZ, the Afghan population is facing severe hunger and poverty.

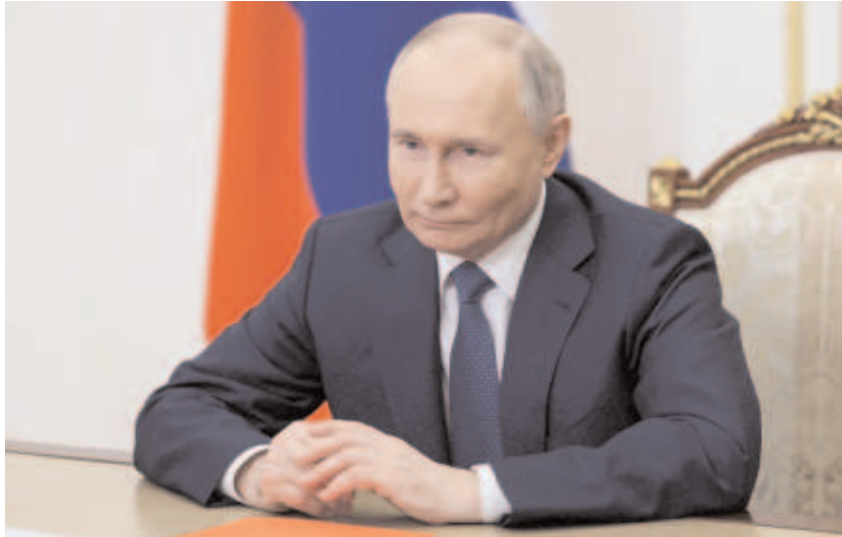
In a statement confirming reports of restructuring its operations in Afghanistan, GIZ announced that it will implement projects exclusively through non-governmental organizations (NGOs). While existing and commissioned projects will continue, GIZ emphasized that starting in 2025, it will no longer employ its own national staff in Afghanistan.

"People need support to cover their most basic needs," the statement noted.

The German aid organization further stated that its efforts in Afghanistan will focus on supporting the local population with essential services. "This includes improving self-sufficiency in poorer urban and rural communities, training midwives and women health professionals, and supporting women entrepreneurs and women-led organizations," the statement read.

This development comes as many aid organizations have been forced to suspend or reduce their operations in Afghanistan due to the Taliban's restrictions on women's work, raising concerns about the worsening humanitarian situation. The humanitarian crisis has been escalating in the country since the collapse of the former government.

Putin: 'Taliban' allies fight against terrorism



MOSCOW (ToloNews): Russian President Vladimir Putin, at the end of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, introduced the Islamic Emirate as his country's ally in the fight against terrorism.

Putin said that the 'Taliban' have power in Afghanistan and, therefore, are Moscow's partners in the fight against terrorism.

Putin said: "We must assume that the Taliban have control over power in Afghanistan. For this reason, of course, the Taliban are our allies in the war against terrorism because any authority is interested in the stability of the country they govern."

Meanwhile, Zakir Jalali, director of the third political department of the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Emirate, said he

found Putin's remarks understandable.

Jalali said: "The recent remarks of Russian President Vladimir Putin regarding the normalization of relations with the Afghan government at the Shanghai Organization summit are understandable."

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, described the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit as an important regional meeting, stating that the member countries of this organization have good relations with the Islamic Emirate.

Zabihullah Mujahid said: "The Shanghai summit itself is an important meeting in the region, and the countries that attend it have good, close, and trustworthy relations with the Islamic Emirate."

In response to the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's demand for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, Zabihullah Mujahid said that countries should discuss matters such as regulating their relations with Afghanistan.

Mujahid said: "The issue of an inclusive government is an Afghan matter, and Afghanistan will make decisions based on its national interests in all areas. Distant and neighboring countries should talk about matters such as regulating relations with Afghanistan and creating a space for cooperation at the regional level."

The next summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization leaders is scheduled to be held on October 15 and 16, 2024.

Religious scholars in Mazar-e-Sharif call for security ahead of Muharram



BALKH (ToloNews): A number of religious scholars, residents of the northern and northeastern provinces, and local officials held a consultative gathering in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, the center of Balkh province, to prepare for the month of Muharram.

In this meeting, the participants stressed the importance of maintaining unity and solidarity among all citizens

and sects in the country and called on the authorities to facilitate the holding of Muharram mourning ceremonies. "We must neutralize the enemy's propaganda. We must build the country. We have both the strength and the plans for the prosperity, dignity, and power of Islam and Afghanistan," said Sayed Haider Hashimi, the organizer of this gathering.

their religious and spiritual ceremonies in complete peace," said Ali Madad Fazl, a religious scholar from Badakhshan. "The gathering of people is ultimately a motivation and coordination between Islamic scholars," said Reza Alamzada, the head of the Sar-e-Pul scholars council.

Local officials in Balkh assured the security of mosques and religious gathering places during the days of Muharram and urged the people to cooperate with security forces in this regard. "The aim of the Islamic Emirate is not to restrict the religious ceremonies of any ethnic group or to impose limitations on any sect; their only goal is to protect all our brothers," said Abdul Jalil Shaheedkhil, the head of Balkh Education department. "The Islamic Emirate derives its strength from the scholars. If this government shows the right path to the people, when will this be achieved?" said Sayed Noor Agha Hashemi, the head of vice and virtue department of Balkh. The participants of this meeting also said they appreciated the efforts of the Islamic Emirate to address the demands of the citizens of the country, especially in creating a safe environment for holding religious programs.

Aziz, Uzbek officials discuss connectivity projects, agriculture

KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Minister for Commerce and Industries Nooruddin Azizi during a meeting with Uzbekistan Transport Minister Ilham Makhkov stressed progress on the Trans-Afghan Connectivity project and talked about Tashkent's support for Afghanistan's agriculture sector, a statement said on Friday.

The two sides also discussed other vital connectivity projects and said that Afghanistan was the central point connecting South and Central Asia.

Azizi said that trade growth was linked to well-equipped, easy and cheap transit routes, and Central Asian countries can access South Asian markets through Afghanistan. He insisted on the imple-



mentation and completion of the Afghan Transport Project and requested Uzbekistan to invest in land and air transport in Afghanistan. Discussions also included plans to establish trans-

port services for passengers between Mazar and Tarmez, and to develop a corridor connecting #China, #Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. Additionally, Minister

Azizi discussed with Minister Rahmonov the enhancement of Afghanistan's agricultural mechanization and technology transfer initiatives within the agricultural sector.

Work on historic Silk Road underway: Amiri

FAIZABAD (Pajhwok): The construction of historic Silk Road between Afghanistan and China has reached to the zero point between the two countries, an official said on Friday.

Eng. Zabihullah Amiri, head of the provincial Information and Cultural Affairs, visited the Pamir and the Ghaizeer valleys. He told Pajhwok Afghan News the construction work has reached to the zero point.

The first phase of the Silk Road, which was started by the engineering department of the Ministry of National Defense, with a length of 60 km and a width of 11 meters, was started

from Ishkashim district has been constructed till the Khandud area of Wakhan district, some parts were ready for asphaltting, earlier the administrative aide of the acting PM said that the asphaltting work will be launched in the near future."

Amiri termed the Wakhan corridor vital for Afghanistan and the region and said that after the completion of this route and the re-opening of the Chinese port, the people of Afghanistan would be provided with many facilities in the economic field and the East Asia with connect-

with the South Asia. Ameeri said: "The construction of this road started last year from the Bazaegumbad area went through the Ghaizeer valley's historic road and reached the zero point of till the Afghanistan, China border. It is 50 kilometres long and seven metres wide and completely ready for movement."

This historic road is 450 kilometres long starting from Faizabad, the provincial capital of Badakhshan. The asphaltting work of 150 kilometres till Ishkashim has been almost 80 percent completed and work on the remaining 300 kilometres till Wakhan was underway.

No compromise on Islamic value: Mawlawi Abdul Kabir

KABUL (Pajhwok): All Afghans have rendered sacrifices for the establishment of an Islamic system and every Afghan without discrimination could feel part of this system, a senior leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has said.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the acting prime minister's aide for political affairs, said this during a meeting with some ulema and tribal elders from different provinces said a statement from his office on Friday.

The meeting participants hailed the IEA stance in Doha meeting and added that today all Afghans treated equally by the virtue of an Islamic system.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir said that all Afghans rendered sacrifices for the sake of an Islamic system and every Afghan could feel part of this system without discrimination.

grade, but we are not allowed to go to school. Our request from the government is to reopen the schools. If we could build this project today, we can do even better in the coming years."

Laila Jan, another student, said: "I dream of contributing to society in the future and achieving a high degree. That's why we worked hard."

A total of 180 students participated in this exhibition, showcasing more than ninety scientific, cultural, and robotic projects at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Science exhibition held in Kabul



KABUL (ToloNews): A science exhibit was held at one of the private schools in Kabul.

The organizers said that the aim of holding this exhibition is to promote creative thinking and innovation among students.

Mohammad Rafi Musazai, the principal of the private school, said: "The goal is to raise the educational and training standards, and to foster students' creative thinking and innovation."

Mohammad Omar, who

presented his project named "Non-Burnable Hand" at this exhibition, said that creating such projects by the younger generation can help them build even bigger projects in the future.

"Young people should make good use of phones and smart devices and work on practical projects that will benefit their future, and the government should also support them," he said.

A number of female students at the exhibition once again emphasized reopening schools for girls above the sixth grade in the country.

Asma, a student, said: "This year we are in the sixth grade, and next year we will be in the seventh

Afghanistan-Pakistan trade agreement extended



KABUL (ToloNews): Amid concerns from some of the country's traders about violations of the trade and transit agreements by Pakistan, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has announced the extension of the trade and transit agreement between Kabul and Islamabad.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) was signed on October 28, 2010, after several years of negotiations and with the mediation of the former US Secretary of State, aiming to expand trade, transit, and economic relations

between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and regional countries.

Meanwhile, from time to time, Pakistan violates this agreement, creating problems in trade between the two countries.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, said:

"Extending the APTTA agreement is a necessity, and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, understanding this necessity and the current conditions, is jointly working with Pakistan on this

agreement."

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment emphasized solving trade challenges between the two countries and called the continuation of these problems to the detriment of both sides.

"History shows that even during the intense wars of Najib and Karmal [early presidents of Afghanistan], our transit was not closed and, according to an agreement recognized by the United Nations, it was beneficial for Afghanistan," said Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the ACCI's

board of directors.

Some traders, coinciding with the export season of agricultural products and the increase in customs tariffs by Pakistan, criticized the existing challenges in trade and the violations of some terms of trade agreements.

They called on officials of both countries to facilitate their exports and imports and emphasized creating alternative routes by the Islamic Emirate.

"The Spin Boldak gate is closed to our agricultural goods, and many traders in the western zone cannot export through it and face various challenges," said Omid Haidari, one of the traders.

"When our grape and pomegranate season arrives, and now it's melon season, if the Islamic Emirate establishes a good agreement, our traders and farmers will not suffer," said Farid Azimi, another trader.

In recent years, political relations and border tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan have also affected the economic activities of the two countries. The country's traders have always criticized the Pakistani government's behavior.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of members of New York State Assembly and American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee, led by Deputy Speaker Phil Ramos, called on Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur.

KP govt working on introducing ‘Education Card’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the members of New York State Assembly and American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee, led by Deputy Speaker Phil Ramos, called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here in Islamabad the other day. Provincial Cabinet’s Members Syed Qasim ali Shah, Faisal Khan Tarakai, Muzammil Aslam, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah and other relevant high ups of the provincial government were also present on the occasion.

Matters related to promoting state to state relationships between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and New York State came under discussion. Similarly, prospects for mutual cooperation in the different social sectors were also discussed in the meeting. Both the sides agreed to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for partnership in Health, Education, Trade, Human Resource and other important sectors. It was also agreed on the occasion to initiate Nursing Exchange and Tele Health programs with the mutual cooperation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and New York State.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister specifically raised the matter of cipher case and demanded that it must be investigated at the level of US Congress, adding that the matter has created a confusion in the political scenario of Pakistan, so it is necessary to unveil the real facts behind this matter. The Chief Minister urged

the New York State Assembly’s members to play their role in getting this important matter investigated by the US Congress.

Talking to delegates, the Chief Minister said that the provincial government has always welcomed and appreciated the support of US government in the different public welfare projects, adding that expending cooperation between both the governments will further strengthen the relationships between Pakistan and the United States.

Touching upon the priorities of his government, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur said that the health and education have been the top most priority of PTI government in the province since day one, and we have introduced multiple reforms in these sectors, which have resulted in significant improvement in providing quality healthcare and learning facilities to the people as per their expectations.

“Entire population of the province is being provided with free healthcare facilities in the reputable public and private hospitals enlisted under the Health Card Scheme of the provincial government”, he said and disclosed that his government is also working on introducing “Education Card” on the analogy of Sehat Card Scheme.

He maintained that enrollment of the out-of-school children as well as increasing female literacy rate in the province is an integral part of the priorities of incumbent provincial government. Similarly, he said that the government would need support in providing scholarships to students for higher education abroad as well as imparting modern vocational training

to the talented youth, adding that both the governments can benefit from the skilled manpower of the province.

While mentioning the investment opportunities in the province, the chief minister said that we have immense potential for foreign investment in the various productive sectors, especially in tourism, mines and minerals, agriculture and hydropower. The government is also looking forward for investment in these sectors. He said that the government, under its ease of doing business policy, will provide conducive environment and all possible facilities to foreigners interested in investing here, adding that efforts are underway to putting aforesaid potential sectors on modern lines with the aim to increase the revenue stream of the province and to provide job opportunities to the people.

He maintained that an integrated strategy has been devised to strengthen economy of this war affected province; necessary legislations are also in progress so as to sustain the continuity of reform process of the provincial government. The delegates on this occasion, lauded the reform initiatives introduced in the health, education, police and other social sectors.

They said that the provincial government’s initiatives aimed at dealing with the impacts of climate change, are highly commendable, adding that increasing the forest cover of the province to 26% is undoubtedly a great achievement of the provincial government. Apart from this, extending free healthcare facilities to entire population of the province is also an admirable and exemplary initiative of the government, they remarked.

Yasmin requests judiciary to take notice of injustices

LAHORE (INP): Senior PTI leader and former provincial minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid has called on the higher judiciary to take notice of the injustices being inflicted on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Outside the Anti-Terrorism Court on Friday, Dr. Yasmin Rashid handed a memorandum to journalists, demanding the judiciary’s intervention.

Dr. Yasmin Rashid stated that democracy is being strangled, and people’s voices are being silenced. She urged the judiciary to review and stop this oppression, warning that such injustices would ruin Pakistan. “You cannot remove the love for Imran Khan from people’s hearts through oppression and coercion,” she asserted. She mentioned that the suffering endured by PTI workers is unprecedented in history. On February 8, people came out and showed the world that Imran Khan is their leader. PTI stands, and will continue to stand, with Imran Khan’s slogan of real freedom.

The former provincial minister criticized the Form 47 government, saying its actions against democracy would harm not just PTI but all political parties. She emphasized that history shows that injustice towards others will eventually come back to haunt the perpetrators. “Peaceful protest is the beauty of democracy, and you cannot stop this protest,” she added.

She further stated that the budget imposed by the IMF is being forcefully accepted by the people, but the Form 47 government is not acceptable to Pakistan’s citizens. She demanded the return of the stolen mandate so that the rightful government can take control of the country.

JI chief seeks traders’ support for sit-in

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman held consultations with various traders’ organizations at Mansoorah on Friday regarding the proposed shutter-down strike and sought their support for a sit-in in Islamabad on July 12.

Talking to media persons on the occasion, he mentioned that the JI would announce the strike either before or after the sit-in, following the completion of discussions with traders’ organizations across the country. He also noted that he would be visiting Peshawar on Saturday for further consultations.

Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman said the traders must stand united against the significant taxation, particularly on exports, introduced in the recent budget. He criticized the government for formulating the budget under IMF dictation and for the prime minister’s proud announcement of it without shame. The JI is organizing the sit-in to protest against the massive increases in electricity and gas tariffs, the petroleum levy, and the imposition of unfair taxes on the salaried class. The JI chief accused the ruling elite of enjoying tax exemptions and free resources while burdening the poor with inflated utility bills. He stated that the ruling parties lack the public’s confidence and credibility to make decisions on critical matters, saying they came to power through rigging. He said the opposition parties except the JI, are not willing to address public issues. Instead, the opposition is either involved in internal conflicts or seeking power through the same dubious means as the ruling parties.

Rehman expressed concern that the public’s anger could lead to anarchy, which would allow non-democratic forces to take advantage. He emphasized that the JI could not abandon the masses in such circumstances and decided to organize them. He asserted that peaceful and organized resistance is the only option left for the people to claim their rights. The JI is seeking the support of traders for this purpose. The trader leaders assured the JI Emir of their full support for the movement, and both sides agreed to continue consultations. JI Secretary General Amirul Azim and other leaders also participated in the discussions.

Iran holds runoff presidential vote

TEHRAN (AFP): Polls opened Friday for Iran’s runoff presidential election, the interior ministry said, pitting reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian against ultraconservative Saeed Jalili in the race to succeed Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a May helicopter crash.

The Islamic republic’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has final say in all state matters, cast his ballot when the polls opened at 08:00 am (0430 GMT), state TV showed. “We are starting the second round of the 14th presidential election to choose the future president from among the two candidates across 58,638 polling stations in the country and all stations abroad,” Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said, according to state TV.

The vote comes against the backdrop of heightened regional tensions over the war in Gaza. Iran’s dispute with the West over its nuclear program and popular discontent at the state of the country’s sanctions-hit economy. In last week’s first round, Pezeshkian, who was the only reformist permitted to stand, won the largest number of ballots, around 42 percent, while the former nuclear negotiator Jalili came in second place with 39 percent, according to figures from Iran’s elections authority.

Only 40 percent of Iran’s 61 million eligible voters cast their ballot — the lowest turnout in any presidential election since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. On Wednesday, Khamenei called for a higher turnout in the runoff. “The second

round of the presidential election is very important,” he said in a video carried by state TV.

He said participation was “not as expected” in the first round but that it was not an act “against the system.” Last week’s vote saw the conservative parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf come in third place with 13.8 percent, while cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi garnered less than one percent. Iran’s presidential election was originally scheduled for 2025 but was brought forward by the death of ultra-conservative president Raisi in a May helicopter crash.

The rival candidates in the runoff have held two debates where they discussed Iran’s economic woes, international relations, the low voter turnout and Internet restrictions. Pezeshkian is a 69-year-old heart surgeon who has represented the northwestern city of Tabriz in parliament since 2008.

He has earned the support of Iran’s main reformist coalition, with former reformist presidents Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani declaring their backing for his bid. Jalili, 58, rallied a substantial base of hard-line supporters and received backing from Ghalibaf and two other ultraconservative candidates who dropped out of the race before the first round. In one recent debate, the rivals expressed dismay over turnout in the first round. On Tuesday, Pezeshkian said people were “fed up with their living conditions ... and dis-

satisfied with the government’s management of affairs.”

Ali, a 24-year-old university student who asked that only his first name be used, said the better choice is Pezeshkian, whom he believes would work on “opening the country to the rest of the world.” Pezeshkian has called for “constructive relations” with Washington and European countries in order to “get Iran out of its isolation.”

Jalili, known for his uncompromising anti-West position, has insisted that Tehran does not need the 2015 nuclear deal with the United States and other world powers to make progress. The deal — which Jalili said violated all Iran’s “red lines” by allowing inspections of nuclear sites — had imposed curbs on Iran’s nuclear activity in return for sanctions relief. The accord has been hanging by a thread since 2018 when the US withdrew from it.

At a campaign event late Wednesday, 40-year-old Maryam Naroui said she believed Jalili was “the best option for the country’s security.” Jalili has held several senior positions in the Islamic republic, including in Khamenei’s office in the early 2000s. He is currently one of Khamenei’s representatives in the Supreme National Security Council, Iran’s highest security body. Regardless of the result, Iran’s next president will be in charge of applying state policy outlined by the supreme leader, who wields ultimate authority in the country.

Govt encouraging use of electric vehicles: Senate

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate was informed that the federal government is encouraging the use of electric vehicles in order to protect the environment and reduce dependence on imported fuel.

Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar told the House during Question Hour that thirty electric buses have been imported from China. These buses have been stationed at Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad where state of the art charging facilities have been made available. He said the soft launch of these buses is taking place today.

The Minister for Law told the House that NADRA centers will be established in each Union Council in the next two and a half years. He said the NADRA has prepared a comprehensive phased wise plan in this regard and 1150 Union Councils will have NADRA centers in ten months.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar told the House that the government has not ceased the advertisement of any television channel. He said the advertisements are being given in accordance with their ratings. He said newspapers received advertisements worth nine billion rupees, and television channels of six billion rupees over the last five years.

The Minister for Information also clarified that no new tax has been imposed on newspapers in

the budget 2024-25. He emphasized the need for making advertisement policy more effective after consultations with the stakeholders.

Taking the floor, Leader of the House Ishaq Dar assured that the privatization process will be taken forward in a transparent manner and due process will be followed. He however emphasized there should not be any politics on this matter. The Leader of the House proposed formation of a special committee to ascertain why the privatization of Pakistan Steel Mills did not occur, which resulted in the loss of hundreds of billions of rupees.

The Senate also passed The State Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) Amendment Bill, 2024. It was moved by Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar.

The Law Minister said the bill is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Boards of Directors of State-Owned Enterprises. Minister for Parliamentary Services and Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar apprised the Upper House of the Parliament that the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) would cover almost 11,777 union councils (UCs) across the country to enhance its population data registration footprint at the grassroots level.

The Minister was responding to the question of Senator Fawia Arshad during the second

meeting of the 340th session of the Senate. Senator Tarar said the NADRA’s UC level initiative would be rolled out across the country, whereas initially 1150 UCs have been selected horizontally starting from the mega urban centers of the country covering every nook and corner and it would not be restricted to the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

He added that there was a total of 11,777 UCs in the country and within 2.5 years small NADRA Centers would be established providing three main facilities of child registration certificate (CRC) – Form B, Cancellation of NIC due to death (CD), and NIC reprint or lost. He added that NADRA had introduced motorbike teams to cater for disabled and elderly individuals and some 16,700 cases were addressed by those NADRA teams.

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, responding to a supplementary query of a Senator, explained that the mobile kit comprised of a camera stand, laptop, biometric and other required paraphernalia for facilitating elderly and specially-abled who were mostly unable to reach offices and mobile vans for their data registration. He added that the mobile team initiative was being piloted in many districts, whereas urban areas with larger population were targeted first on priority and then the semi urban areas including hard areas would be targeted.

Appointment of BOG Chairmen: PHC suspends June order till verdict

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Waqar Ahmad ordered Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for submission detail report in a plea filed by former Chairman of the Board of Governors (BOG) of Khyber Teaching Hospital cumstances and decided to organize them. He asserted that peaceful and organized resistance is the only option left for the people to claim their rights. The JI is seeking the support of traders for this purpose. The trader leaders assured the JI Emir of their full support for the movement, and both sides agreed to continue consultations. JI Secretary General Amirul Azim and other leaders also participated in the discussions.

The lawyer claimed that Dr. Omar Ayub was not informed about his removal until 15th June, when it was reported in the media and argued that the removal is made against the law.

Advocate General (AG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal argued that the removal was lawful and that Dr. Omar Ayub was informed about his removal on 11th June. However, the petitioner’s lawyer claimed that the AG’s statement was contradictory, as the AG had earlier stated on 13th June that the case is premature.

The petitioner, Dr. Omar Ayub, claimed that he was removed from his position without any reason and that the removal was a violation of the law. He also claimed that he had performed well during his tenure and had made significant contributions to

the hospital.

PHC expressed its dissatisfaction with the AG’s response and asked him to provide a detailed answer on the next hearing date. The court also directed the provincial government to submit a detailed response on the matter.

Moreover, Justice Syed Arshad observed that the 20th June orders is suspended till conclusion of the plea and added that PHC had restrained from any orders while Justice Waqar Ahmad remarked that why Chairman BOG is appointed despite court stop it. PHC also stopped fulfillment of two vacancies of BOG members till the conclusion of the case. The court adjourned the hearing until the next date and directed the former Secretary Health to submit a written response along with an affidavit.

World Bank expresses support for \$300m project in Sindh

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah during a meeting with a World Bank delegation, led by its Country Director Mr Najy Benhaaine, discussed today the need to increase the storage capacity of Keenjhar Lake to manage the ever-increasing water demand of Karachi.

According to the CM, Keenjhar Lake is crucial for providing drinking water to Karachi and its surrounding areas. The proposed project includes improving the KB Feeder Lower Canal System, extending Keenjhar Lake, and developing social and environmental plans. The World Bank has expressed support for the project, which is estimated to cost around \$300 million. Additionally, the Pre-feasibility of mod-

ernisation of right bank canals of Sukkur Barrage was carried out under the Sindh Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP), and detailed feasibility would be carried out under the ongoing Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation Project (SWAT) at an estimated cost of \$200 million.

Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro briefed the meeting about the Keenjhar Lake expansion and KB Feeder improvement projects. A 10-year Engagement Strategy: The CM and World Bank team discussed a 10-year engagement strategy called Country Partnership Framework (CPF) 2025-34 to achieve five different goals. The goals include reduced child stunting, reduced learning poverty, more resilience to climate change, decarbonization of the economy and more

inclusive job opportunities.

Reduced Child Stunting: The objective of initiating Reduced Child Stunting is to improve access to basic health, diversified nutrition and family planning services. The other objective is to improve access to clean water, sanitation services and hygiene. Reduced learning poverty: Under this project access to quality schools and foundational learning would be improved.

Minister Education Sardar Shah said that the education dept was working to increase equitable access to quality early childhood education (ECE), and primary and secondary education to promote social cohesion and to provide greater opportunities for learning, participation and 21st-century skills to marginalized groups, particularly girls and women.