

Zardari greets Dr Masoud F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday extended his heartfelt congratulations to Dr Masoud Pezeshkian on his election as the President of Iran. Pakistan and Iran enjoy fraternal ties and I hope that under your leadership our relations will grow further stronger, the president said in a statement. He expressed his eagerness to work together for the peace and prosperity of the region.



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Masoud will be Iran's next president

TEHRAN (Reuters): Relative moderate Masoud Pezeshkian urged people on Saturday to stick with him on "the difficult road ahead" after beating a hard-line rival to win Iran's presidential election. Friday's run-off vote was between Pezeshkian, the sole moderate in the original field of four candidates, and hard-line former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

Pezeshkian, a 69-year-old cardiac surgeon, has pledged to promote a pragmatic foreign policy, ease tensions over now-stalled negotiations with major powers to revive a 2015 nuclear pact and improve prospects for social liberalisation and political pluralism. However, many Iranians are sceptical about his ability to fulfil his campaign promises as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, not the president, is the ultimate authority in the Islamic Republic.

"Dear people of Iran, the election is over, and this is just the beginning of our working together. A difficult road is ahead. It can only be smooth with your cooperation, empathy and trust," Pezeshkian said in a post on social media platform X. "I extend my hand to you and swear on my honour that I will not abandon you on this path. Do not abandon me." During Friday's vote, the turnout was almost 50 per cent, following historically low turnout in the first round ballot on June 28, when over 60pc of Iranian voters abstained. The election was called after President Ebrahim Raisi was killed in a helicopter crash in May.

Pezeshkian managed to win with a constituency — whose core was believed to be mostly the urban middle class and young — that had been widely disillusioned by years of security crackdowns that stifled any public dissent from Islamist orthodoxy. Videos on social media showed his supporters dancing in the streets in many cities and towns



across the country and motorists honking car horns to cheer his victory.

In a post on X, President Asif Ali Zardari congratulated the newly elected Iranian president. "Pakistan and Iran enjoy fraternal ties & I hope that under your leadership our relations will grow further stronger," he said. "Looking forward to work together for the peace and prosperity of the region," he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also felicitated the Pezeshkian. "As neighbouring countries, Pakistan & Iran enjoy a close & historic relationship. We must ensure a bright future for our two peoples through mutually beneficial cooperation," he said.

Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, which restored ties with Tehran last year following a years-long rift, also congratulated Iran's new president-elect. King Salman, in a message to Pezeshkian, expressed hope for the "continued development of relations which link our two countries and our two brotherly peoples", according to the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA). He also expressed his wish for further "coordination and dialogue to strengthen regional and international peace and security", SPA said.

The president of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, wished success to Pezeshkian and said he looks "forward to working together to further strengthen ties between the

UAE and Iran for the benefit of our two nations and peoples". The emirs of Qatar and Kuwait sent cables of congratulations to Pezeshkian, official media reported. Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad Al-Sabah wished "more prosperity and development" for the Islamic republic, the official KUNA news agency said. Pezeshkian's victory lifted hopes of a thaw in Iran's relations with the West that might create openings for defusing its nuclear dispute with world powers. The election coincided with escalating regional tension due to the conflicts between Israel and Iranian allies Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as increased Western pressure on Iran over its fast-advancing nuclear programme.

Under Iran's dual system of clerical and republican rule, the president cannot usher in any major policy shift on Iran's nuclear programme or support for militia groups across the Middle East, since Khamenei calls all the shots on top state matters. However, the president can influence the tone of Iran's policy and he will be closely involved in selecting the successor to Khamenei, now 85. Backed by Iran's reformist camp led by former President Mohammad Khatami, Pezeshkian is faithful to Iran's theocratic rule and has no intention of confronting the powerful security hawks and clerical rulers.

Nawaz calls for supporting armed forces

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz president Nawaz Sharif on Saturday called for supporting the armed forces and security institutions for weeding out terrorism in the country.

The former prime minister expressed the views in a meeting with PML-N's parliamentary party leader in Senate Irfan Siddiqui. They also exchanged views on political situation in the country. Sharif said those who were creating instability in the country or defaming it abroad had nothing to do with democracy.

He lamented that the problems, which had been addressed seven years ago, had now become a serious crisis. A day earlier, top military brass expressed

concern over the unwarranted criticism of the Operation Azm-e-Istehkam by some quarters.

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 down 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.

Last month, a federal cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gave approval to Operation Azm-e-Istehkam and other related decisions taken at the Apex Committee formed under the revived National Action Plan (NAP). Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz had said it would be an intelligence-based exercise and didn't involve any hardships to general public, as he discussed the rumours circulating regarding the planned anti-terrorism operation.

prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and ex-finance minister Miftah Ismail, he asked how could a person without "loyalty" could do the "politics of ethics". Ironically, those who delivered "speeches with full of contradictions" had remained in the power and enjoyed its perks and privileges in the past, Tarar noted.

The minister said the public would ask them why they were silent while being in the highest offices of the country. Why the announcements made today were not implemented by them while being in the offices of the prime minister and minister of finance and petroleum, he questioned. "On the one hand, they say that power is not their destination and at the same time they also declare themselves as the Messiah," Tarar wondered.

Rebutting their "false statements", the minister said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government has been transforming the lives of the people by achieving major development milestones. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his cabinet have been working day in and day out to transform Pakistan economy he remarked.

Moon not sighted, Ashura on 17th F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The crescent moon for Muharram has not been sighted in Pakistan and the first day of the month will fall on Monday (July 8), Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad announced on Saturday.

Accordingly, Ashura — the 10th day of Muharram will fall on July 17. The announcement was made after the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee met in Quetta to sight the crescent of Muharramul Haram 1446 Hijri. Chairman of the moon-sighting body Maulana Abdul Khabir presided over the meeting to sight the moon of the first month of the Islamic calendar.

The meetings of zonal and district bodies of the Ruet-e-Hilal Committee will also simultaneously be held at their respective headquarters. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) had predicted unlikelyness of Muharram moon sighting today due to partly cloudy or cloudy weather in most parts of the country as the moon-sighting body gets busy.

Rich tribute paid to Lalal Jan Shaheed F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and Services Chiefs pay homage to Havildar Lalak Jan Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on the 25th anniversary of his ultimate sacrifice.

On this day, Havildar Lalak Jan demonstrated unwavering courage and selflessness, laying down his life in the line of duty during the Kargil conflict.

His valor and altruism continue to inspire future generations of brave soldiers. The highest honor is bestowed upon those who sacrifice their lives for the nation's defense. The nation remains forever grateful to its valiant soldiers for their unwavering commitment to protecting the motherland at all costs. We honor the memory of our fallen heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country.

SJC moved against IHC judge F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In response to a letter circulating on social media purportedly from the Karachi University's (KU) controller of examinations regarding the law degree of Islam-a-bad High Court (IHC) judge Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahan-giri, and the subsequent filing of a reference with the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), the IHC is expected to issue an official statement to the campaign against the judge.

Sources said that IHC judges will convene a meeting on Saturday to discuss the matter. On Friday, several social media activists and journalists shared the letter and the reference against Justice Jahan-giri allegedly sent to the SJC. Judges and senior IHC officials were informed about the letter, and the court administration offered to issue a rebuttal, sources said. However, Justice Jahan-giri has not yet approved this action.

Sources also claimed that the IHC administration had contacted Karachi University regarding the matter. The letter, which was widely shared on social media, is reportedly a response from KU to an application seeking information under the Sindh Transparency Right to Information Act, 2016. It stated that candidate Tariq Mehmood obtained his LLB degree in 1991 under enrolment number 5968. Moreover, Tariq Mehmood enrolled for LLB Part I under enrolment number 7124.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a review meeting on implementation of agreements and MOUs agreed upon during PM's visit to China.

New era of Pak-China coop to boost economic prosperity: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that a new era of cooperation with China commenced in areas of information technology, communication, minerals and mining; and energy which would boost economic progress, regional connectivity and the bilateral ties.

Chairing a meeting to review implementation of agreements and MOUs between the two countries reached during PM's recent visit to China, the prime minister said that he would not tolerate any disruption in the implementation of the same, declaring that he would personally supervise the process. Referring to time-tested Pak-China friendship, he said that China had always supported Pakistan in difficult and hard times. "China has emerged as the strongest economic power and Pakistan can emulate its development," he added. The prime minister observed that recently a delegation of Chinese shoes manufacturing companies had visited Pakistan with regard to relocation of their plants in Pakistan, adding that such companies had the capacity to invest about 5 to 8 billion dollars in Pakistan, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He said that the local shoes manufacturers association was in constant contact with the Chinese companies in this regard. Moreover, he said about 12 renowned Chinese companies related to agriculture sector would be taking very active part in the Food and Agri Expo being held in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, federal ministers including Jam Kamal Khan, Attaullah Tarar, Abdul Aleem Khan, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Dr Musadik Malik, Rana Tanvir Hussain, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of State Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PM's Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jahanzaib Khan and relevant authorities. The prime minister also reviewed progress on sending a total of 1,000 Pakistan students on government scholarships to China for seeking the latest training in the agricultural sector. He also directed for sending of students from the backward areas of Balochistan province on priority basis, besides other students from the four provinces, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir on merit.

The prime minister further directed for sending of students in the upcoming educational semester. The meeting was apprised that owing to the agreements and MoUs signed during prime minister's recent visit, more than 100 Chinese companies were in contact with the Pakistani counterparts for the business and investment purposes. The meeting was also informed by the ministry of IT on the progress made for imparting of technical training, one-stop operation for business facilitation, smart governance and smart city by Huawei to a total of 3,00,000 students. The prime minister directed WAPDA authorities for the establishment of safe center for the foolproof security arrangements of Chinese nationals working on Dasu and Diamer Bhasha dams. He asked for immediate implementation of all directives.

The prime minister was also apprised of the progress on different projects related to communication infrastructure, power and Gwadar. He directed for expediting work on steps for the development of Gwadar port, airport and industrial zone for transforming Gwadar into a regional corridor hub.

The prime minister also asked for accelerating negotiation process with the Chinese manufacturing companies for relocation of solar panels and its accessories units into Pakistan.

Shehbaz directs proceedings against officials, employees of power companies for extra units: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif directed for initiation of proceedings against those officers and personnel of the power distribution companies who were found sending extra units in the electricity bills of consumers. The prime minister directed the power division to suspend such officials of power distribution companies, besides ordering the Federal Investigation Agency to launch investigation into such matters. The prime minister chaired a meeting regarding reforms in power sector and solarisation process, PM

Office Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, federal ministers, Jam Kamal Khan, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Ahsan Iqbal, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik and senior relevant officials.

The prime minister said that exemplary punishment should be given to those officials who had included extra units in the monthly bills of consumers with their anti-public attitude, besides unmasking them who had sent extra units to the protected consumers category, using less than 200 units per month.

During the meeting, the prime minister directed for accelerating efforts over renewable energy for power generation, adding that Pakistan could no longer afford to generate power on imported fuel. He also expressed his resolve not to pass on the buck to the poor segment of society of the wrong policies measures of the past.

The prime minister said that the consumers would get relief in their monthly bills after utilization of affordable renewable energy resources for power generation. He directed for immediate closure of dysfunctional government run power units and those which had been producing expensive electricity.

The prime minister observed that the world was generating power by using renewable energy, adding in Pakistan, there was immense capacity to produce solar power. He directed for taking of measures to tap solar energy potential on priority basis.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif extended congratulations to Dr Masoud Pezeshkian on his victory in Iran's presidential elections. "I look forward to working closely with President-elect Dr Pezeshkian to further strengthen Pakistan-Iran bilateral ties and promote regional peace and stability," the prime minister wrote on his official 'X' account. He said as neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran enjoyed a close and historic relationship. "We must ensure a bright future for our two peoples through mutually beneficial cooperation," he added.

Abbasi, Miftah launch Awam Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former PML-N stalwarts Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail on Saturday launched Awam Pakistan — a new political party — with a promise to change the obsolete system which, they said, serves the elite only, and prescribed supremacy of the constitution as the sole remedy to all the ills faced by the country.

Miftah, who served as finance minister twice in the PML-N government, blasted the incumbent government by equating it with the East India Company and said middle class was being crushed, as he criticised the recent tax rate hike for the salaried classes, while also noting that 100 million people had been pushed below the poverty line.

He called for providing "economic opportunity for all" and said common people must join politics, as they were not allowed to progress. The country could not be managed under the existing system, as it failed to protect the people, said the former PML-N leader who started to distance himself from the PML-N top leadership after

Ishaq Dar replaced him as finance minister during the 16-month long PDM stint in government.

The current system cannot work. It has to be changed, said Miftah in his address at the launching ceremony of the latest addition to a long list of political parties in Pakistan. Describing provision of health and education services as a state responsibility, the former finance minister said the latest budget reflected the rulers' mindset, adding that the current system was meant to trap the masses.

As Miftah branded the existing state system as dual-faced, he said the newly-launched party would follow merit within its structure. Former prime minister Abbasi also spoke on the occasion and said there was neither political nor economic stability in the country, adding that the rulers were least cared about the people and the country.

Exports are on a decline, inflation is on the rise, he said and added that how a country could move forward where even milk had been taxed. Citing the fact that millions of children are out-of-school in Pakistan, Abbasi — who was pre-

ferred by PML-N President Nawaz Sharif over Shehbaz Sharif to assume the prime minister's office in 2017 — said no one was talking about the issues faced by Pakistan and their solutions.

Abbasi said those in government were worried about only staying in power and that grabbing the government at every cost wasn't Awam Pakistan's priority. He said the constitution was considered just a piece of paper and political parties formed as a ready-made product. "Awam Pakistan represents a new vision, it isn't a precooked meal."

Criticising the establishment's role in politics, Abbasi remarked that one must try once to run Pakistan on the basis of constitution. "Pakistan is a country where a person holding a constitutional office bulldozes the constitution on a daily basis," he said and added that every unconstitutional act had produced corrupt politicians. "It isn't possible that you keep violating the constitution and the country continues to march forward," Abbasi said and added that the products of Form-47 could not give anything to Pakistan.

Notorious bandit killed

KARACHI (PPI): Police on Saturday claimed to have killed notorious bandit Imdad Bhayo and got freed three abductees in an encounter. According to the Sindh home department office information, the government weapons were also recovered from the killed bandit, while three hostages were also got freed safely during the police action. The killed bandit was involved in the attack on the Kandhkot police post and the killing of policemen.

PHC orders CM to appear on 22nd Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim summoned Chief Minister to appear in person and explain the measures taken for ending enforced disappearance. PHC verdict issued in response to a petition filed by a citizen whose brother is abducted by the police while Station House Officer Zaida (Swabi district) demanding Rs7 million in ransom.

The counsel informed the court that the petitioner's brother was taken away by SHO Zaida police from Gulberg area of Peshawar and is being held in confinement. The SHO is demanding a ransom of Rs7 million for the release of petitioner's brother, he argued.

The Chief Justice annoyed increasing number of missing persons cases in the province and observed that the affected families accusing the police and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of being involved in the disappearances. The victim's families also blaming police and CTD due to their involvement in enforced disappearance for ransom, the verdict stated.



CM okays 'Punjab Honahar Merit Scholarship' plan

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif approved the 'Punjab Honahar Merit Scholarship Program' and directed the authorities concerned to increase the number of scholarships from 4,000 to 25,000.

Chairing a special meeting of the Higher Education Department here on Saturday, the CM said that 100 per cent fees of students doing BS from government and eight selected private universities would be paid from the scholarship.

Maryam emphasized the need to provide necessary support to the private sector to promote higher education. Private sector's partic-

ipation would provide opportunities for higher education to the youth of remote areas, she said.

The CM ordered for immediate establishment of new universities in Jhelum, Vehari, and Bahawalnagar. She reviewed recommendations for establishment of universities under public private partnership, and agreed to facilitate private sector in this regard. She also ordered to immediately launch laptop scheme.

The chief minister decided to introduce new market-driven disciplines in colleges with less number of students. She also directed to introduced a foolproof system for the appointment

of Divisional Directors and Principals purely on merit through an online portal system. A plan for providing new buses to government colleges was also presented to the Chief Minister.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that it is advisable to constitute a high-level ministerial committee to review affairs of the private universities. She decided to establish Punjab Board Coordination Commission for reforms in the affairs of education boards.

The chief minister expressed pleasure over the successful program of MD CAT and E CAT free classes in 90 colleges of Punjab. She said, "The scope of free

MD CAT and E CAT classes in colleges should be gradually expanded for the students from remote areas." She appreciated the performance of Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat and Higher Education Department.

Earlier, Secretary Higher Education Dr. Farrukh Naveed gave a detailed briefing in the meeting. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb and Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat attended the meeting. Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D, Finance Secretary, Principal Secretary to CM and other officers concerned were also present.

Strict security, majalis arrangements finalised

LAHORE (APP): Strict security and arrangements for majalis have been completed in all jails of Punjab, while holidays of all officers and officials of Prisons Police have been postponed till 12th of Muharram.

According to a circular, all superintendent, deputy superintendent, medical officers, paramedical staff and other prison officers are bound to be on duty from 28th of Zil-Hajjah to 12th of Muharram on weekly holidays.

All Shia prisoners will be kept in isolated barracks to organise their mourning meetings. Noha Khawan and Zakir etc. for Shia prisoners will be arranged from inside the prison. Jail officers and employees will be issued regular instructions to perform their

duties with patience and tolerance. An officer will be present all the time at the majlis places, and the administration would be in touch with the Prisons administration by wireless.

The circular said that a reserve force consisting of prison officers and employees would be formed to deal with any emergency situations. Each team of reserve force will consist of at least 14 personnel and one officer.

Jail superintendents, deputy commissioners concerned, district police officers concerned, Punjab Emergency Service (1122), Fire Brigade, local officers of electricity, gas and telephone departments, aistrict administration, local hospital administration and deputy inspector general of pris-

ons of their region would be in constant contact with the relevant higher authorities. In any emergency situation, they will be informed immediately through telephone, WhatsApp, and special messenger and will take appropriate steps to deal with the situation.

Meanwhile, the medical officer in jails and paramedical staff would make proper arrangements for provision of medical facilities to Shia prisoners. All kinds of goods will be sent inside the prison after being checked by scanning machine. In case of non-availability or malfunction of the scanning machine, the superintendent will arrange suitable alternative measures for checking and searching the prison equipment.

CS orders monitoring of flour, wheat prices

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Secretary (CS) Zahid Akhtar Zaman has directed all deputy commissioners to strictly monitor prices of flour and wheat. He issued this directive while presiding over a meet-

ing held to review the prices and availability of food items, here on Saturday. The administrative secretaries of industries, food and relevant departments attended the meeting, while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video-link.

The chief secretary said that sale of food items including 'roti' at higher-than-the-fixed price is not acceptable in any case. He ordered the deputy commissioners to ensure hundred per cent implementation of the rates, fixed for roti. He

said that those who fleece consumers by creating artificial inflation would be dealt with an iron hand. He further said that responsibilities should be assigned to price magistrates after allocating areas to them.

The CS said that providing relief to people was priority of the government. He mentioned that there was no justification for difference in prices of vegetables in different cities, adding that the relevant market committee would be held responsible in case of price instability.



RAWALPINDI: KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur talking to media persons.

KU awards degrees to 15,341 students

KARACHI (PPI): The University of Karachi on Saturday awarded degrees to its 15,341 students of various departments, including 8,041 of 2021 and 7297 of 2022 at its convocation.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori also presented degrees to the students. The convocation was also attended by Sindh Higher Education Commission Chairman Professor Dr Tariq Rafi, Uok Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Iraqi, professors, lecturers, students' parents and students themselves.

Addressing the convocation, the Sindh governor said that it was an honor for him to participate in the convocation of university. Mr Tesori said that highly educated youth are the future of the country and the nation.

"I have high expectations from these young people as they have full potential to stabilize and strengthen the country economically. Graduated youths are brightening the name of the country and nation in various fields today," he said.

Mr Tesori while addressing the students said that you should all clap for the teachers whose hard work led you to start your practical life today. "The students who graduated from Karachi University are brightening not only their name but also of the country in Pakistan and the world.

Section 144 imposed to maintain security during Muharram

LAHORE (APP):The Punjab government has imposed Section 144 across the province in view of Muharram Ul Haram security arrangements.

According to the spokesman for Home Department, a ban has been imposed on all sorts of innovations with reference to processions and majalis. A ban was also imposed on the display of lathies, knives, daggers, spears and any other article which may be used as a weapon of offence and combustible material at public places except where permitted by a competent authority.

The Punjab government has banned raising of slo-

gans and making of visible signs or representation which may incite public sentiments or directly or indirectly hit the belief of any sect, community or group.

Section 144 is also imposed on the dissemination of information through any system or device with the intent to glorify incite religious, sectarian hatred or uses abusive or derogatory remarks through any information system or device that advances or is likely to advance interfaith, sectarian or racial hatred.

It is also forbidden to construct Morchas on rooftops of houses or other buildings situated at the

route of processions and collection of stones, bricks, bottles and rubbish etc on procession routes.

The spokesperson said that occupation on the roofs of the shops and houses situated on either side of the routes at the time of processions & standing of spectators on the planks in front of shops is also banned. Section 144 is imposed on all these from 1st to 10th Muharram, whereas, pillion riding is banned from 7th to 10th Muharram.

It's pertinent to mention here that senior citizens, ladies and personnel of law enforcement agencies are given exemption from the ban on pillion riding.

Container disrupts Railway traffic

LAHORE (APP): A container stuck early Saturday morning under the Do-Moria Pul (bridge) on Circular Road caused significant damage to the railway tracks, disrupting train services for several hours.

The incident occurred at approximately 5am, when a container got stuck under the bridge due to driver's negligence, damaging the railway track girders and misaligning both the up and

down tracks.

As a result, railway traffic between Lahore and Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, and Narowal was halted for three to four hours. Trains affected included the Railcar from Lahore to Rawalpindi, the Shalimar Express from Karachi via Faisalabad, and the Khyber Mail, all experiencing delays.

The railways administration responded swiftly, repairing the tracks on an

emergency basis. Under the supervision of Chief Engineer Open Line, Fareed Ahmad, the damaged section was restored, and train services resumed by 10am. Divisional Superintendent Lahore Muhammad Hanif Gul acknowledged the container driver's negligence and noted that while the tracks are temporarily operational, additional repairs will be conducted at night to ensure complete restoration.

SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar
Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar

Case No: 84/1 of 2024 Date of hearing 12-08-2024. Suit for the Recovery of Rs.499005/- NBP Through its branch Manager main branch Mardan. Vs: Hussan Badshah etc. **Notice Versus:** 1. Hussan Badshah son of Fazal Jan R/o:- Raja Kally charsadda road Mardan. 2. Afzal khan son of Akram Khan R/o:- Bochey near Military Farm Mardan. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.499005/- Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs.

Issued today on 05-07-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Registrar | Banking Court,1 Peshawar



Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC Peshawar

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) is a specialist tertiary care cancer Centre built and funded by charitable donations with a mission to provide the best possible cancer care to all patients. SKMCH&RC has a team of UK and US-trained physicians who provide state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and support services to patients. SKMCH&RC is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

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- Consultant Clinical Haematologist
- Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon
- Consultant Medical Oncologist
- Consultant Nuclear Medicine
- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
- Consultant Pathologist
- Consultant Physician Critical Care & Pulmonary Medicine
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Pulmonology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Infectious Diseases
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Nephrology
- Consultant Radiologist
- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon
- Consultant Urologist

Locum Consultant Anaesthetist

- Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Locum Consultant Internal Medicine
- Locum Consultant Pathologist
- Locum Consultant Radiologist
- Locum Consultant Urologist

Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist

- Senior Instructor Anaesthesia
- Senior Instructor Breast Surgery
- Senior Instructor Clinical Haematology
- Senior Instructor Clinical and Radiation Oncology
- Senior Instructor Head and Neck Surgery
- Senior Instructor Medical Oncology
- Senior Instructor Paediatric Oncology
- Senior Instructor Radiology

CPSP Approved Fellowships:

- Fellow in Palliative Medicine

Hospital Based Fellowships:

- Fellow in Anaesthesia
- Fellow in Clinical & Radiation Oncology

Management, Administration & Technical:

- Assistant Manager Human Resources
- Waiter

Note: All Senior Instructor positions for Karachi & Peshawar involve working at Lahore for two years, followed by two years of training overseas. For further details regarding the position and eligibility criteria, please visit our website on www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk

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Ph: +92-42-3590 5000 Ext. 3536,3538
Email: careers.peshawar@shaukatkhanum.org.pk

PAKISTAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL

One-Day Awareness Seminar on 'Pakistan Standard Bidding Documents Construction Works for Building and Engineering Works Designed by the Employer, December 2023'

- Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), under the obligation of PEC Act 1976, has been formulating and updating the Standard Bidding Documents (PEC SBDS), Pakistan Standard Bidding Documents. Construction for Building and Engineering Works Designed by the Employer, December 2023 based on FIDIC 'Conditions of Contract Second Edition 2017, Reprinted 2022 with Amendments (Red Book)', is the first updated document notified by PEC in **March 2024** and made available on PEC Website for implementation by all concerned.
- In order to get relevant stakeholders/procuring agencies acquainted with the provisions of said document, PEC is going to arrange a series of 'one-day seminars' across the country as per following schedule: -

CITY	DATE/TIME	VENUE	FOCAL PERSONS
Islamabad, Rawalpindi & AJK	10 July, 2024 (02:00 PM)	PEC HQ Islamabad	Engr. Shais Qadir (Assistant Registrar) PEC M&E Department (0335-6863418)
Peshawar	11th July, 2024 (10:30 AM)	PEC R.O. Peshawar	PEC M&E Engr. Jehan Zeb Khan (Additional Registrar) (0301-
Karachi	20 July, 2024 (10:30 AM)	PEC R.O. Karachi	Engr. Ali Zafar (Deputy Registrar) - (0336-9224600)
Quetta	22 July, 2024 (10:30 AM)	PEC R.O. Quetta	Engr. Arbab Mujeeb-ur-Rehman (Deputy Registrar) (0333-3101152)
Lahore	25th July, 2024 (10:30 AM)	PEC RO, Lahore	Engr. Wasif Irshad Bhatti (Deputy Registrar) (0333-6400000)
Gilgit Baltistan	30 July, 2024 (10:30 AM)	PEC BO. Gilgit	Engr. Umair Haider Khan (Assistant Registrar) - (0307-8055500)

- Engineers registered with PEC and engaged in procurement and contract management.
- Government/Public Sector Procuring Agencies/Department (Federal/Provincial/Local Government).
- Engineering Consultants/Construction Managers/Professionals.
- Interested department/organization may send nomination of suitable professionals in city of their choice related to the subject topic in following format along with scanned (legible) copy of fee receipt through email to m.e@pec.org.pk.

Sr. No.	Name & Designation	Name of Organization with address	Valid Working Email ID	Contact No.	PEC Registration No. (In case of Engineers)	City of Choice
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Registrar/ Secretary
Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC)
Ataturk Avenue (East), Sector G-5/2, Islamabad
Ph: 051-9219500. Ext: 401
PID (I) No.130/24

CJ PHC chairs meeting on Case Management Policy

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim along with Judge(s)/Members of the Administration Committee chaired a meeting on Case Management Policy for District Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan and Swabi.

The meeting was attended by the District and Sessions Judge(S), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council Members, besides President(s) and senior Lawyers of the four districts, as well as Tehsil Bar Associations, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Registrar Peshawar High Court Ikhtiar Khan briefly elaborated the agenda of the meeting which was to discuss the total number of institution, pendency and disposal of cases in the four districts, the working strength and vacant positions of Judicial Officers, as well as the factors affecting the dispensation of justice in the four major (central) districts of the province.

He emphasized that iden-

tification of lacunas in the Justice System will help in formulating an effecting "Case Management Policy".

Opening the proceedings, District and Sessions Judge Nowshera Muhammad Asif Khan enlightened the forum that three posts of Civil Judges were vacant. While explaining the pendency of cases, he added that there were 5214 cases pending at the Sessions level whereas pendency at the Civil Courts in District Nowshera stands at 8946 cases. The pending UTP Cases are 188, whereas Juvenile and Gender Based Violence pendency stands at 8 cases and 111 cases respectively at District Courts Nowshera, he added.

Justice Muhammad Asif Khan highlighted that there were 1452 old cases pending which were instituted before 31-12-2020. He further added that the institution vs disposal ratio for the month of June, 2024 stood at 131.69 percent.

The District and Sessions Judge Charsadda

Muhammad Asif informed that the total pendency at Sessions level and Civil Courts was 5314 and 6588 cases, respectively. He also mentioned that total 402 UTP cases were pending and highlighted that the institution vs disposal ratio for the month of May 2024 stands at 117.19 percent.

The District and Sessions Judge Mardan Mohammad Zeb Khan informed that four posts of Civil Judges were vacant. He added that there were total of 23070 cases pending whereas disposal stood at 5772 cases, as of June, 2024. The District and Sessions Judge pointed out certain challenges they have been facing like non-connectivity between head-quarter and tehsil courts, non-provision of videolink facility between Tehsil Takht Bhai and Katlang, non-availability of Revenue Record Cell.

He also shared the initiatives taken to reduce pendency like separation of Criminal and Civil Courts at Sessions Level, estab-

lishment of Jail Vigilance Committee, application of Probation and Parole Act 2021 in Narcotics cases, besides various smart practices and capacity uplift initiatives have been undertaken for effective administration of justice.

The District and Sessions Judge Swabi Ashfaq Taj informed that the total 12728 cases were pending out of which 361 are UTP cases. He also shared certain challenges being faced like frequent adjournments sought by senior lawyers, strikes by lawyers, shortage of judicial officers as four posts of Civil Judges are vacant.

The Chief Justice after the presentations by the District and Sessions Judges, invited the Senior Lawyers for their valuable suggestions.

The Chief Justice emphasized that such meetings and liaison with the Bar would help in dispensation of justice as well as in formulating a policy for effective Case Management.



PESHAWAR: Senior vice president SCCI Sanaullah Khan presiding a shield to Ambassador of Philippines Maria Agnes M Cervantes. Vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

Scandal of fake license uncovered

PESHAWAR (INP): A shocking discovery has revealed that 85 out of 90 international driving licenses issued by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were counterfeit.

According to documents from the KP Transport Department, a verification request from Hong Kong exposed that only 5 of the 90 licenses sent for validation were genuine. The Transport Department has since sent a written response to Hong Kong confirming the findings.

During the verification process, it was discovered that there were no records for 85 of the licenses. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has directed the KP government to investigate this matter urgently, with a 14-day deadline. Director of Transport Ahmed Kamal has already completed the investigation and submitted the report to the Chief Secretary.

This scandal raises serious concerns about the integrity of the licensing process in KP and the potential risks posed by the widespread distribution of fake driving licenses. Further actions are anticipated as the government addresses this alarming issue.

Employees demanded to restore taxes

PESHAWAR (APP): The Local Government Employees Association (LGEA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday demanded from the provincial government to restore the abolished taxes of local bodies, including one percent property tax and license fee.

Talking to a group of gathering, the provincial leaders of LGEA Shaukat Ali Anjum, Shaukat Kayani, Haji Anwar Kamal Marwat, Haji Niaz Ali Khan, Sulaiman Hoti, Mehboob Allala and Raheel Ahmed in a joint statement said that Tehsil Municipal Administrations had been paralyzed by the provincial government.

They said the municipal bodies have not been able to ensure the payment of salaries and pensions to their employees and pensioners because their employees' sources of income have been reduced from time to time amid the additional burden of employees of district councils, assistant directors of local government on the tehsil municipal administrations.

There have been emissions of four million tons of carbon dioxide per year from deforestation and degradation before 2012, which have been reduced up to 50%, which resulted in emission reduction of two million tons per year.

He said protected areas have increased from 10% to over 15.6 % which has

positive effects on emissions' reduction, adding due to forest conservation and improved forest management natural forests sequester about eight million tons of carbon dioxide per year.

He said afforestation projects have been implemented in KP which will result in carbon sequestration of five million tons of carbon dioxide.

He said the forest department had conducted forest carbon stock assessment in all forest regions and developed carbon tables for 15 major tree species.

Besides establishing a satellite land monitoring system in collaboration with SUPARCO for continuous monitoring of forest cover changes, he said the forest department was

Meeting reviews preparations for conduct of MDCAT

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, was held on Saturday to discuss the preparation and conduction of MDCAT 2024-25 by Khyber Medical University (KMU).

Attendees included Additional Secretary KP Abid Majeed, Secretaries HED, Health, VC KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Rep of IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Commissioners of Peshawar, Mardan, Malakand, Hazara, Kohat, and D.I. Khan.

During the meeting, Abid Majeed ACS Home and Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq presented the MDCAT 2024-25 preparations.

Chief Secretary praised

KMU's efforts and administrative efforts for last year's successful MDCT

test and assured similar support for 2024-25.

The Cabinet Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has declared KMU as the admitting university for the session 2024-25 and onwards. The KMU will conduct a centralized Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) at the provincial level and make centralized admissions in all public and private sector medical/dental colleges in the province.

In all other provinces of Pakistan, medical universities are given the mandate to conduct MDCAT and make admissions to medical and dental colleges, including UHS, DOW, Bolan, and ZSMU, for the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Islamabad, respectively.

Last year, on the direc-

tion of the Provincial Government, the MDCAT-2023 was conducted by KMU on November 26th, 2023. With the support of KP Govt, KMU conducted a fair and transparent MDCAT test and merit-based centralized admission in both public and private sector medical and dental colleges, to the satisfaction of students, Government, PMDC, courts, and the community at large.

This year will be even better than before. The Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, CS KP, and the entire Cabinet have assured full cooperation with KMU.

The date of MDCAT will be decided by PMDC, but we have started full preparation along with the KP government, said Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, VC KMU.

Transfer of KP Postmaster General suspended

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Services Tribunal comprising of Acting Chairman Justice Rana Zahid Mahmood, Justice Muhammad Javed Ghani and Dr. Hashim Popalzai suspended transfer orders of Postmaster General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Nisar and directed him to continue working on his position until further orders.

The counsel Sultan Muhammad Khan advocate argued that transfer order is illegal and violated the principles of natural justice. The petitioner, a career civil servant with 24 years of service, was appointed as Postmaster General in 2018. Despite his impeccable record, he was suddenly transferred without any reason or justification on 25th June, 2024.

The transfer orders were issued by the Director General of Postal Services, Islamabad, without following the proper procedure or providing any valid reasons, the lawyer argued. He added that the transfer was in violation of the

Estacode, which requires that an officer cannot be transferred without a valid reason and without following the proper procedure.

The lawyer also pointed out that the transfer was arbitrary and motivated by malice, as Nisar was replaced by an officer who was not qualified for the position.

The tribunal also issued notices to the Federal Secretary Communications, Director General of Postal Services, and Inshan Ullah, to respond to the appeal by 15th July.

PDMA issues GLOF alert in 5 mountainous districts

PESHAWAR (INP): PDMA on Saturday has issued Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding (GLOF) alert in five mountainous districts of KP in the wake of persistent higher than normal temperatures and expected rain spells from 6th to 8th July in upper parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is an increased likelihood of triggering GLOF events, flash floods, landslides and a rise in river stream flows due to melting," reads the advisory.

Warmer conditions are expected to persist until the

mid-July and it is therefore requested to kindly take all precautionary measures to avoid any loss of life, livestock and damages to infrastructure, crops, it added.

Furthermore, all concerned authorities are requested to ensure local community of at-risk, vulnerable areas is forewarned. Ensure availability of Emergency, Rescue Services personnel and C&W, equivalent departments during the period.

SCCI calls for cementing Pak-Philippines bilateral trade ties

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry senior vice president Sanaullah Khan stressed the need for further cementing bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Republic of Philippines.

76th meeting of ASR held

PESHAWAR (APP): The 76th meeting of Advanced Studies and Research Board (ASR) of Agricultural University Peshawar was held under the Chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Emeritus Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht in which all members participated.

Secretary Director Advanced Studies and Research Professor Dr. Mohammad Sajid presented the agenda of the meeting. After much deliberation, the 75th ASRB minutes were confirmed. Apart from this, various cases were discussed a lot in the meeting, in which time barred students of PhD, MS and MPhil were extended, 8 PhD synapses were approved, while 10 PhD theses foreign evaluation reports were approved.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht thanked all the members for holding the successful meeting and said that the university employees should play their role in the development of the university and focus on quality education, research and training.

On this occasion, Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Daud Jan, Dean Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain Khalil, Dean Prof. Dr. Abdul Rehman, Dean Prof. Dr. Khalid Nawab, Controller of Examinations Prof. Dr. Shahid Sattar, Director of ORIC Prof. Dr. Muhammad Arif, Director of Climate Change Studies Prof. Dr. Humayun Khan, Director Quality Assurance Dr. Khurram Nawaz Sadu-zai and Dr. Malik Muhammad Shafi was present.

The senior office bearer said there is immense potential to enhance mutual trade between Pakistan and the Philippines.

He, however, emphasized joint initiatives must be taken to benefit from each other's experiences and potentials to improve trade and economic ties between the two countries.

Sanaullah Khan made these remarks during a visit of Maria Agnes M Cervantes, Ambassador of Philippines to Pakistan along with her other members of delegation here at the chamber house on Saturday.

Vice president of the SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi, FPCCI former president Ghazanfar Bilour, former vice president of the FPCCI Hanif Gohar, Honorary Consul General of Philippines in Karachi Dr Imran Yousuf, Honorary Consul General Philippines in Lahore Fahdal Sheikh, member of 10-members delegation of Philippines, former president Sherbaz Bilour, former senior vice president Imran Khan Mohmand, member of the chamber executive committee Affaf Ali Khan, Qurat Ul Ain, Monawar Khurshid, Naecem Qasmi, and Fahad Amin, and Sohail Javed, Waqar Ahmad, Saddam Gul, Faiz Rasool, Acting Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan, Secretary Sohail Anjum, traders and industrialists

were present in a large number during the meeting.

Maria Agnes M Cervantes while speaking on the occasion invited Khyber Pakhtunkhwa businessmen to visit the Philippines and make investment in potential sectors of the country. She said prospects for further improving Pak- Philippines bilateral trade and economic relations are brighter.

She added both countries have enjoyed cordial trade, cultural and diplomatic relationships and needed to fully exploit each other's potentials and take each other's experiences to further enhance collaboration in multi-sectors.

During the meeting, a detailed multi-media presentation was given by a senior office of the embassy, highlighting the Philippines historic importance, potentials, trade volume, investment opportunities in important sectors, which was highly appreciated by participants.

Sanaullah Khan said KP/Peshawar is the golden gateway to Afghanistan and onward regional countries.

He said KP business and trade mostly depend on trade with neighbouring Afghanistan and central Asian republic states.

Senior office bearer said Pak- Philippines bilateral trade volume is not a true reflection of relations between them.

HIA team meet DG PDA to address key issues

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of the Hayatabad Industrialists Association (HIA) here on Saturday held a meeting with the Director General (DG) Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) Capt. Khalid to discuss pressing issues faced by the industrialists community.

The primary agenda of the meeting was to demand the reopening of a closed entry point to the Hayatabad Industrial Estate.

The DG PDA listened

attentively to the concerns presented by the HIA delegation and agreed to address the matter promptly. He assured the delegation of resolving all the issues and send the Chief Engineer to reopen the pathway for vehicular access causing a major inconvenience for the industrialists.

The delegation apprised the DG about various challenges faced by the industrialists, including infrastructure and accessibility issues. The DG PDA committed

to resolving these issues swiftly. He also ordered to repair the main entry road from Karkhano Market to improve the overall infrastructure.

Later, the delegation expressed gratitude to the DG PDA for his cooperation and prompt action. They hoped that these measures would significantly enhance the operational efficiency and ease of access for the industrialists in the Hayatabad Industrial Estate.

Unlocking KP's forests carbon stocks vital to offset ecological changes

PESHAWAR (APP): The uncontrolled population coupled with poverty and unemployment have negatively impacted on forestry sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the green gold was being axed ruthlessly in community and private lands, making it vulnerable to flooding and ecological changes.

Driven by high population growth and climate change vulnerabilities, Pakistan is losing about 27,000 hectares of forest per year mostly in Gilgit Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, making an adverse effect on carbon sequestration process, which resulted an increase in temperature.

Tue National Forest Policy 2015 has disclosed that the axing of forests

mostly in community and private lands in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan owing to rapid population growth and poverty has increased chances of floods and glaciers' melting due to climate change susceptibility besides made negative effects on carbon sequestration.

"Carbon sequestration is very important for humans, animals and even aquatic resources as it help make our environment clean and control temperature," said Gulzar Rehman, former Conservator Forest while talking to APP.

He said it was the process of capturing, securing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and makes our planet worth living.

In case the carbon

sequestration process was affected then temperatures would rise, chances of floods to increase due to fast melting of glaciers and heatstroke's case would substantially rise.

"Trees purify the environment after absorbing carbons and produce oxygen," he said, adding the international companies provide payment as carbon credits to developing countries due to extra discharge of fossil and fuels besides gas emissions.

KP and Gilgit Baltistan is blessed with around 3,000 lakes out of which 33 were most vulnerable due to climate change. He said chances of Glacial Lakes Outburst Floods (GOLF) in Chitral, Swat and Gilgit Baltistan have enhanced due to rapid melting of glaciers in

down valleys of northern areas due to deforestation.

"The developed countries are earning millions of dollars due to industrialization and economic projects and give low financial assistance to poor countries as carbon credits that need to be enhanced," he said.

Highlighting KP's carbon potential stocks, he said 51% of the country's forest carbon stocks were present in KP.

In Pakistan, he said most of the carbon dense forests were temperate forests KP contains about 170 tons carbon per hectare.

He said "Avoiding one hectare deforestation means emission reduction of 367 tons of carbon dioxide."

Through natural forests

and substantial plantations on vast areas achieved under billion tree project having a potential of annual carbon sequestration ie 11.20 million tons and gets stock of 194.31 million tons including 67.60 million tons in Hazara division, 73.25 million tons in Malakand division, 3.87 million tons in southern belt and 49.60 million tons carbon in merged tribal districts.

There have been emissions of four million tons of carbon dioxide per year from deforestation and degradation before 2012, which have been reduced up to 50%, which resulted in emission reduction of two million tons per year.

He said protected areas have increased from 10% to over 15.6 % which has

positive effects on emissions' reduction, adding due to forest conservation and improved forest management natural forests sequester about eight million tons of carbon dioxide per year.

He said afforestation projects have been implemented in KP which will result in carbon sequestration of five million tons of carbon dioxide.

He said the forest department had conducted forest carbon stock assessment in all forest regions and developed carbon tables for 15 major tree species.

Besides establishing a satellite land monitoring system in collaboration with SUPARCO for continuous monitoring of forest cover changes, he said the forest department was

tasked to create a gateway for carbon offset buyers and for national and international investors to channel finance towards carbon sequestration projects.

He said the department was increasing registration of projects in the voluntary carbon market by focusing on ecosystem restoration.

Besides exploring alternative sources of sustainable energy and also exploring non-timber forestry products (NTFP), he said the department was registering other sources of carbon credits renewable energy for sustainable income.

Underscoring the need for mapping out carbon potential of KP, he called for conducting survey to identify potential sources of climate finance generation including existing

renewable energy sites, existing forestry and potential afforestation sites.

There was a need to develop a carbon offset development framework and conduct preliminary carbon sequestration assessments to confirm viability of each site for generating carbon offsets.

A liaison with verified carbon standards for accreditation of offsets based on findings of study and development of a master plan for harnessing of carbon finance must be prioritized.

He said the KP government needs to encourage private sector and investors to bring funding from national and international markets under carbon offsets generation for benefits of the masses.



In brief

Free medical camp conducted F.P. Report

DADU: The Pakistan Army, in collaboration with doctors from District Health Quarters Umerkot, organized a free medical camp at Government Boys Public School Shah Panjo Sultan in Taluka Mehar, District Dadu. The camp provided comprehensive medical services to over 1,360 patients, including men, women, and children. Specialist doctors from various fields, including gynecology, pediatrics, general medicine, and pathology, along with paramedical staff from Mehar, participated in the camp. The services offered included laboratory tests for dengue, malaria, hepatitis B and C, typhoid, pregnancy, urine RE, and blood sugar. Patients received free medications, supplements, and medical advice. Vaccinations were administered, and hygiene and first-aid kits were distributed. The camp addressed various health issues such as anemia, URTI, malaria, dengue fever, gastroenteritis, nutrition, diabetes, UTI, high blood pressure, and prenatal care. Local residents welcomed the initiative and expressed gratitude for the free medical services provided by the Pakistan.

Alamgir defends M. Phil thesis F.P. Report

BUNER: A Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) scholar Alamgir Khan resident of Karapa a village in Buner has successfully defended the thesis at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM). The title of his thesis was "Exploring the prevalence and Antibiotics resistance of Staphylococcus aureus associated subclinical mastitis in dairy cattle and Goat". Dr. Sumbal Haleem was his external supervisor, while Dr. Tahir Usman was his internal supervisor. He attributed his success to the blessings of Allah and the prayers of his parents."

Man kills sister, paramour

BAHAWALPUR (INP): A man gunned down his sister and her alleged paramour for honour before fleeing here on Saturday, police said. According to details, the incident took place in Goth Mehru of Bahawalpur where 20-year-old Shoban Chishman came to meet her beloved girl. Accused Noman after seeing her sister with a stranger youth shot dead both and escaped the scene. The bodies were shifted to RHC Samasatta for post-mortem. The police registered a case into the incident and started raids to arrest the culprit.

Six power pilferers booked

SARGODHA (INP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (Fesco) caught six power pilferers during an ongoing crackdown here on Saturday. According to official sources, task-force teams conducted raids in various areas of the district and caught the accused stealing electricity directly from the main line, and through meter tampering. The teams imposed Rs 181,874 fine on power pilferers. On the report of Fesco, the police registered cases against pilferers.

Civil Defense KP holds training F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Directorate of Civil Defense Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday arranged a training program for volunteers of Kar-e-Khair Foundation. The training was organized following directives of Director General Civil Defense KP and DC Lower Dir, Wasil Khan.

Convocation of University of Swat Kundi distributes degrees, medals among graduates



Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi attended the third convocation of the University of Swat as a special guest and distributed degrees among 152 graduates from various disciplines, including 58 outstanding students who were awarded gold medals for their academic achievements.

Governor Kundi inaugurated a tree plantation drive in the university's green campus to promote environmental sustainability. The event was attended by Vice Chancellor Dr. Hassan Sher, political figures including Najmuddin Khan, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, Dr. Haider Ali Khan, Sajid Hussain Turi,

along with students, parents, and faculty members.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi praised the academic accomplishments of the students and emphasized the unique position of the University of Swat in fostering education and peace. He highlighted Swat Valley's global recognition through figures like Malala Yousafzai, a Nobel laureate and advocate for education worldwide.

Governor Kundi urged the educated youth of Swat University to promote the valley's natural beauty and tourist attractions globally. He stressed the need for faculty members to conduct innovative research in natural resources and tourism sectors to attract international investors and devel-

op the region.

Acknowledging financial challenges faced by public sector universities in the province, Governor Kundi expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister for allocating funds in the 2024-25 budget, aimed at improving the financial stability of universities across the country. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi concluded by calling on all universities to prioritize self-sustainability, maintain academic standards, and prepare students to face future challenges with merit and excellence. The convocation not only celebrated academic achievements but also underscored the University of Swat's pivotal role in promoting education and peace in the picturesque Swat Valley.

PPP observes 1st death anniversary of Liaquat

F.P. Report

PABBI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) observed 1st death anniversary of late Liaquat Shabab at his residence to pay tribute to him. Liaquat Shabab was a devoted worker of PPP and had a long history of political struggle. He was a strong advocate for the party's ideology and never compromised on his principles.

This was claimed by speakers including former

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Barrister Masood Kausar, central additional general secretary Muhammad Humayun Khan and provincial senior vice president Ayub Shah praised Liaquat Shabab's services to the party and his unwavering commitment to its ideology.

The event was attended by a large number of PPP workers and leaders, including former provincial presidents, central executive committee members,

and district office bearers. The participants paid tribute to Liaquat Shabab political struggle and his unwavering commitment to PPP's ideology.

Late Liaquat Shabab's son Yusuf Shabab and PPP district Nowshera workers were also present at the event. The speakers said that Liaquat Shabab's legacy would continue to inspire PPP workers and that his services to the party would never be forgotten.

LG employees demand restoration of abolished taxes

F.P. Report

SWABI: Local Government Employees Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Saturday demanded from the provincial government to restore the abolished taxes of local bodies, including one percent property tax and license fee.

Talking a group of gathering, the Provincial Leader Shaukat Ali Anjum, Shaukat Kayani, Haji Anwar Kamal Marwat, Haji Niaz Ali Khan, Sulaiman Hoti, Mehboob Allala and Raheel Ahmed in a joint statement said that the Tehsil Municipal Administrations have been paralyzed by the provincial government.

The government sacrifices TMEs in the name of providing relief to the people. In 2001, in the name of devolution of powers to the

lower level, AD local government staff and former district councils staff and pensioners were handed over to TMEs.

They said that by setting up Rescue 1122, instead of accommodating the municipal fire brigade in Rescue 1122, they fed their own people and left the fire brigade staff with the TMEs. Earlier in the year 1999, the tax collection was abolished and the staff were left with the municipality, while again in 2013, the district councils were abolished and the staff, including pensioners, were handed over to TMEs, whose salaries and pensions were paid, they added.

Municipal bodies have not been able to ensure the payment of salaries and pensions to their employees and pensioners because the

sources of income of TMEs have been reduced from time to time and the additional burden of employees of district councils, assistant directors of local government also on the tehsil municipal administrations.

Camp setup for blood donation for Thalassaemia hospital: Maa Jee Welfare Foundation, Blood Transfusion Services Thalassaemia Hospital Swabi with the collaboration of Ezwa Khidmat-e-Khalq-in Welfare Maneri Payan, setup a blood camp in a private medical institute in Swabi city.

In this regard, Maa Jee Welfare Foundation CEO Dr Usman and his team took blood donations from the students and preserved the blood in a very professional manner.



KHUNJRAB: Shepherds guiding herd of sheep and goat heading towards grazing field at Khunjrab Pass.

Police arrests wanted accused F.P. Report

SWABI: Toordhair Police traced the double blind murder and arrested the accused along with the murder weapon and pistol. Police control Swabi told media men here on Saturday.

According to details, one Badshah filed a report in the Toordhair Police Station on July 1 that he along with his wife going to bazar on a motorcycle when Imran and Yasir opened fire on both of us with firearms in Ferozpur near Mian Dhandral Tomb area and as a result of which his wife was hit by bullet and died on spot while he got injuries.

He said, District Police Officer Swabi Haroon Rasheed Khan assigned the task to Toordhair Police Station to arrest the main culprits behind the indiscriminate firing killing the wife of Badshah. SP investigation Swabi Malik Muhammad Fayaz Khan along with SHO Toordhair Munsif Khan and the investigative team using modern methods found the real culprits behind the murder Badshah's wife.

On investigation, it was surfaced that Badshah had committed the murder of his wife but fabricated a false claim and made a drama of firing attack. A false FIR was registered by SHO Munsif Khan. During a successful raid, the accused Badshah of Jalbai along with the murder weapon was arrested. During the investigation, the accused revealed all the secrets. After killing his uncle, he ran away with his wife and got married to her, later he killed his wife and made a false claim to save himself. Further investigation is underway.

Meanwhile, DPO Swabi Haroon Rasheed visited Atla Police Station in Circle Topi, where he reviewed the steps taken regarding the security of the police station and area besides going through all records of the police station and the cases under investigation.

We all are victims of terrorism: Sindh CM

F.P. Report

JAMSHORO: Sindh Chief Minister has alleged of adopting discriminatory attitude towards province in power supply despite providing electricity generated in Thar to national grid. Talking to media persons in Jamshoro on Saturday, he said that one could not deny the fact that Sindh was providing 3,000-megawatt low cost electricity to the national grid. Murad Ali Shah said that we were well aware of the sufferings of the people of province due to loadshed-

ding in intense heatwave and making all out efforts to provide relief to them.

He further stated that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto has also raised the issue in the National Assembly. The chief minister ruled out any possibility of further change in the Sindh cabinet. He termed the recovery of abducted trader Naresh Kumar as major success of the Sindh Police. He said that smart city systems will be installed in all divisional headquarters including Karachi and Hyderabad.

"The recovery of

Naresh Kumar is success of the smart city system," he added. Murad Ali Shah said the PTI in the past adopted the politics of issuing threats, which inflicted losses to the party. "Those believe in democracy used to engage in dialogue on political matters", he said. He said prime minister's invitation to PTI to attend the APC has been a good step and the PTI's response to attend the moot has also been positive. "We all are victims of terrorism, we have to join hands to get rid of it", he added.

Youths advised to get technical, vocational skills

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Speakers at a function held at Timergara have asked students and youth to get professional and technical skills along with their formal education as it is the era of software and technical skills. The youth affairs department Lower Dir arranged the function at the deputy commissioner's jirga hall on completion of a month-long CCTV camera installation short course.

A total of 70 youths participated in the course. The youth were awarded course completion certificates on the occasion. The function was addressed by additional deputy commissioner Bashir Khan, district youth officer Tariq Shahzad, divisional president of the Insaf Youth wing Rahat Farooqi, Principal Muhammad Ilyas, Principal Javed Iqbal and others.

The speakers highlighted the importance and need of modern technology and stressed the participants to equip themselves with the knowledge of science and technology. They urged

youths to get professional and technical skills as it was the era of information technology. They said that students and graduated youths should develop skills including critical thinking and innovation. The speakers said that graduated youths should be imparted vocational training in their free time so that they could utilize those training in career building. They said that skills' development and vocational training enabled youths to get lucrative jobs in many fields inside the country and abroad.

Talking to reporters on the occasion, some of the participants termed the short course useful for them. They said that they had learnt the installation of CCTV cameras during the course. They demanded the district administration and its youth affairs' department to arrange more such advance training and workshops for them.

Children drowned: Two children were drowned in the Panjkora river, one near the district jail Timergara and one in Wari, residents and Rescue 1122 officials said. They

said that both the children were taking baths along with other children when the incidents occurred. The Rescue 1122 divers, volunteers of the Al-Khidmat Foundation and civil defense started searching for the bodies.

The volunteers succeeded to fish out the body of one child identified as Mahmood ul Hassan 15 S/O Haji Qasim near the district jail Timergara. The Rescue 1122 emergency team shifted the body to the district headquarters hospital Timergara where the doctors declared him dead. Search operation for the second child was in progress till evening.

Prosecutors' meeting: The SP investigation Rashid Khan chaired a meeting of the prosecution staff and police investigation officers to discuss the cases under investigation at Timergara police lines. District public prosecutors, prosecutors and police investigation officers including DSP investigation Bakht Jamal Khan were in attendance. The meeting discussed various cases especially those related to anti-rape act 2021.

Israel-Palestine conflict and the shut eyed world

Mehwish Abbas

THE Israel-Palestine conflict has once again erupted into a fierce war, resulting in widespread human suffering. As violence escalates, the global response remains fragmented and inadequate. This failure of the international community, particularly the West and Muslim majority nations raises pressing questions about complicity, apathy, and moral responsibility.

The United States has long positioned itself as a mediator in the Israel-Palestine conflict, but its actions often betray a clear bias towards Israel. This favoritism has profound implications for the dynamics of the conflict and the prospects for peace. Billions of dollars in military aid flow from Washington to Tel Aviv annually, boosting Israel's military capabilities. This financial and military support perpetuates the cycle of violence and contributes to what some describe as a systematic campaign against the Palestinian people. The latest surge in hostilities has seen Israeli airstrikes devastate Gaza, resulting in significant civilian casualties and widespread destruction.

In response, the U.S. has reiterated Israel's right to self-defense, while offering minimal

criticism of actions that international observers have labeled disproportionate and punitive. This stance effectively endorses ongoing military aggression, undermining efforts for a balanced peace process. Despite ongoing human rights abuses and violations of international law, the U.S. continues to veto UN Security Council resolutions that seek to hold Israel accountable. This consistent use of veto power restrict international efforts to impose checks on Israeli military operations and ensures that Israel remains shielded from substantive global criticism.

Such actions not only reinforce the status quo but also send a message of impunity. This double standard not only fuels resentment but also diminishes America's credibility as a neutral arbiter in peace negotiations. While U.S. officials call for restraint on both sides, their diplomatic actions do not match these words. The dichotomy between America's public statements and its concrete actions reveals a troubling inconsistency that undermines trust and exacerbates tensions. The role of the United States in this conflict cannot be ignored.

From the Camp David Accords to the Oslo Accords, American presidents have

sought to mediate peace between Israelis and Palestinians. However, these efforts have often been hampered by a lack of impartiality and a failure to address the fundamental asymmetries in power and justice. The current administration's approach continues this trend, providing military and economic support to Israel while failing to hold it accountable for its actions against Palestinians.

The response from Muslim majority countries has been equally disappointing. Despite the religious and cultural ties to Palestine, many Muslim nations have limited their actions to issuing condemnatory statements and passing tepid resolutions. This is because of the political incompetence and fractured solidarity within the Muslim world. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE, major players in the region, have called for peace and provided some humanitarian aid, but their efforts lack the urgency and cohesion needed to effect real change. The normalization of relations between several Arab states and Israel through the Abraham Accords further complicates the geopolitical landscape.

These accords, while labeled by some as steps toward regional peace, have been criticized for

sidelining the Palestinian cause and prioritizing economic and strategic interests over justice. Turkey and Iran have voiced strong opposition to Israeli actions, but their rhetoric often lacks follow-through, and their regional ambitions sometimes overshadow genuine concern for Palestinian welfare. Turkey's vocal stance, while forceful in condemnation, often stops short of concrete action that could shift the balance. Iran's support for Palestinian groups is viewed with suspicion by many Arab nations, further fracturing potential Muslim solidarity.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a body representing 57 Muslim-majority countries, routinely condemns Israeli policies but fails to move beyond statements to actionable plans that could alleviate Palestinian suffering. The OIC's resolutions, while symbolically significant, often lack the mechanisms and political will necessary to influence the situation on the ground. This lack of effective action from the Muslim world is not just a failure of policy but also a betrayal of shared values and historical ties. The disunity and political maneuvering within the Muslim majority countries contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict, leaving Palestinians feeling abandoned

by their supposed allies.

As the world watches the Israel-Palestine conflict unfold, it becomes clear that both Western powers and Muslim majority countries bear a significant share of the responsibility for the ongoing genocide of Palestinians. The global community's failure to address the root causes of the conflict, enforce international law, and provide equitable support to both sides has prolonged the suffering of millions. In Gaza, hospitals are overwhelmed and often bombed, struggling to treat the injured amidst shortages of medical supplies and electricity. The blockade imposed by Israel has crippled the economy, leading to high unemployment and widespread poverty. In the West Bank, continued settlement expansion and military incursions disrupt daily life and undermine any prospects for a contiguous Palestinian state.

The international community's inaction allows these conditions to persist. The European Union, while occasionally critical of Israeli policies, has been reluctant to take strong measures such as sanctions or arms embargoes. Similarly, other Western nations often align with U.S. policy, further insulating Israel from meaningful international

pressure. It is imperative for the international community to adopt a more balanced and proactive approach. This includes holding all parties accountable for violations of human rights, ensuring that humanitarian aid reaches those in need without political conditions, and supporting genuine peace initiatives that consider the rights and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians.

The path to peace requires a commitment to justice and equality, recognizing the legitimate claims and grievances. The current scenario only leads to more destruction and despair. A truly just resolution requires the world to open its eyes and act with fairness and compassion. Only through sustained and principled engagement can we hope to see an end to this cycle of violence and pave the way for a lasting peace in the region.

In this critical moment, silence and inaction are complicity. The international community, particularly influential actors like the United States and key Muslim nations, must rise above political expediency to champion justice, human rights, and a future where Palestinians can live in peace and dignity. The stakes are too high for the world to remain shut-eyed any longer.



Russian strikes leave thousands in Ukraine without power and water

KYIV (AP): Russian strikes overnight left over 100,000 households without power in northern Ukraine and cut off the water supply to a regional capital, Ukrainian authorities reported Saturday, while civilian casualties rose sharply in the country's embattled east.

The northern Sumy region, which borders Russia, was plunged into dark after Russian strikes damaged energy infrastructure, the Ukrainian Energy Ministry said. Hours later, the Ukrainian public broadcaster reported that Russian drones hit the provincial capital, also called Sumy, cutting off water by hitting power lines that feed its system of pumps.

Russian state agency RIA cited a local pro-Kremlin "underground" leader as saying that Moscow's forces overnight hit a plant producing rocket ammunition in the city, which had a pre-war population of over 256,000. The report didn't specify what weapon was used, and the claim could not be independently verified. Explosions rocked the city during an air raid warning early Saturday, according to Ukrainian media reports.

In the Donetsk region in the east, Russian shelling and overnight killed 11 civilians and wounded 43, local Gov. Vadym Filashkin reported on Saturday. Five people died in the town of Selydove southeast of Pokrovsk, the eastern city that has emerged as a front-line hotspot. The Ukrainian General Staff on Saturday morning said that Ukrainian and Russian forces clashed 45 times near Pokrovsk over the previous day.

According to Filashkin, three more

people died in Chasiv Yar, the strategically located town in Donetsk that has been reduced to rubble under a monthslong Russian assault. A Ukrainian military spokesperson told the AP that Ukrainian forces had retreated from a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Chasiv Yar. The town's elevated location gives it strategic importance, and military analysts say its fall would put nearby cities in jeopardy. It could also compromise critical Ukrainian supply routes and bring Russia closer to its stated aim of seizing the entire Donetsk region.

According to the Ukrainian General Staff, Russian forces and overnight launched six rocket strikes and 55 airstrikes across Ukraine, and used more than 70 "glide bombs" — retrofitted Soviet-era weapons that have wrought devastation in the country in recent weeks.

In Kyiv, Ukrainian service members gathered on Saturday to pay last respects to a British combat medic who set up a charity delivering essential supplies to front-line fighters. Peter Fouché died "in the battlefield" last Thursday as his unit clashed with Russian troops, according to his colleague at Project Konstantin, the volunteer group that since 2022 has ferried drones, vehicles, uniforms and food to Ukrainian soldiers in the east. According to its website, it has also helped evacuate 219 Ukrainian soldiers from combat zones.

At the funeral ceremony, Ukrainian soldiers carried Fouché's coffin through Kyiv's landmark Independence Square, the site of

mass protests in 2014 that forced out a pro-Russian president. Fouché's comrades held back tears as they lined up to say goodbye. Others read prayers as they held up Ukrainian flags and military insignia. Fouché's partner, wearing a traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt, knelt down to embrace the coffin. A statement released Monday by Halyna Zhuk, Project Konstantin's Ukrainian co-founder, called Fouché "a hero" and praised his "relentless commitment to Ukraine and her people."

Fouché, a native of west London who turned 49 this year, helped build a field hospital in Kyiv before he started Project Konstantin, according to the group's website, and later enlisted in the Ukrainian army. At least five other Britons have been killed while volunteering in Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. In Russia, two civilians were wounded after Ukrainian forces overnight shelled a border town in the southern Belgorod region, its Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its troops overnight shot down a total of eight drones over the Kursk and Belgorod regions in the south. In Krasnodar province next to Russia-annexed Crimea, local authorities reported on damage caused during the night by falling drone debris. Debris sparked a fire at an oil depot, set fuel tanks ablaze in a separate location and damaged a cellphone tower, the reports said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.



KYIV: Ukrainian servicemen carrying coffin of British combat medic, volunteer, Peter Fouché, 49 who was killed during his work in East Ukraine.

Mount Everest's highest camp is littered with frozen garbage

KATHMANDU (AP): The highest camp on the world's tallest mountain is littered with garbage that is going to take years to clean up, according to a Sherpa who led a team that worked to clear trash and dig up dead bodies frozen for years near Mount Everest's peak.

The Nepal government-funded team of soldiers and Sherpas removed 11 tons (24,000 pounds) of garbage, four dead bodies and a skeleton from Everest during this year's climbing season. Ang Babu Sherpa, who led the team of Sherpas, said there could be as much as 40-50 tons (88,000-110,000 pounds) of garbage still at South Col, the last camp before climbers make their attempt on the summit.

"The garbage left there was mostly old tents, some food packaging and gas cartridges, oxygen bottles, tent packs, and ropes used for climbing and tying up tents," he said, adding that the garbage is in layers and frozen at the 8,000-meter (26,400-foot) altitude where the South Col camp is located. Since the peak was first conquered in 1953, thousands of climbers have scaled it and many have left behind more than just their footprints.

In recent years, a government requirement that climbers bring back their garbage or lose their deposits, along with increased awareness among climbers about the environment, have significantly reduced the amount of garbage left behind. However, that was not the case in earlier decades. "Most of the garbage is from older expeditions," Ang Babu said.

The Sherpas on the team collected garbage and bodies from the higher-altitude areas, while the soldiers worked at lower levels and the base camp area for weeks during the popular spring climbing season, when weather conditions are more favorable. Ang Babu said the weather was a big challenge for their work in the South Col area, where oxygen levels are about one-third the normal amount, winds can quickly turn to blizzard conditions and temperatures plunge.

"We had to wait for good weather when the sun would melt the ice cover. But waiting a long time in that attitude and conditions is just not possible," he said. "It's difficult to stay for long with the oxygen level very low." Digging out the garbage is also a big task, since it is frozen inside ice and breaking the blocks is not easy.

It took two days to dig out one body near the South Col which was frozen in a standing position deep in the ice, he said. Part way through, the team had to retreat to lower camps because of the deteriorating weather, and then resume after it improved. Another body was much higher up at 8,400 meters (27,720 feet) and it took 18 hours to drag it to Camp 2, where a helicopter picked it up. The bodies were flown to Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu for identification.

Of the 11 tons of garbage removed, three tons of decomposable items were taken to villages near Everest's base and the remaining eight were carried by porters and yaks and then taken by trucks to Kathmandu.

'Many countries 'turn a blind eye' to RSF crimes'

KHARTOUM: Sudan army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has said "many countries remain silent and turn a blind eye" to crimes allegedly committed by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the country's more-than-year-long civil war. Sudan has been gripped by war since April 2023, when fighting erupted between forces loyal to al-Burhan and the RSF led by his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

Since the war broke out, tens of thousands of people have been killed and millions more have been displaced as a humanitarian crisis has deepened. Both sides have been accused of possibly committing war crimes by UN officials and rights groups.

In an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera in Port Sudan, al-Burhan said, "Many countries remain silent and turn a blind eye to the crimes being committed every day."

"Every day, the enemies are killing the Sudanese people, plundering their land and raping their wives and daughters ... Everyone who remains silent and those who support what the other side is doing daily is definitely an enemy," al-Burhan said, without naming any country.

"Perhaps some countries have used their influence to stop aid provided to the Sudanese state. Some countries may have used their international and regional mechanisms to stop supporting the armed forces," he added. In March UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, said his team had documented dozens of cases of sexual violence.

"Sexual violence as a weapon of war, including rape, has been a defining — and despicable — characteristic of this crisis since the beginning," he said. His team has documented 60 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, involving at least 120 victims across the country, the vast majority women and girls, he said but added that "these figures are sadly a vast underrepresentation of the reality."

"Men in RSF uniform and armed men affiliated with the RSF, were reported to be responsible for 81 percent of the documented incidents," Turk said.

The RSF has, in recent months, made several breakthroughs and is closing in on Port Sudan on the Red Sea, where the army, government and United Nations agencies are currently based. When questioned about the RSF's military gains, al-Burhan stated that "losses in battle or retreating in a certain situation does not mean losing the battle itself, and doesn't mean defeat", adding that "the Sudanese people and the Sudanese armed forces will never be defeated".

In late June, the Integrated Food Security

Phase Classification (IPC) said that the war has left some 755,000 Sudanese facing "catastrophe", the most severe level of extreme hunger, while 8.5 million people grapple with food shortages that could result in acute malnutrition and death. The United Nations hunger monitoring system recently warned of a realistic chance of famine in several areas of Sudan including parts of Darfur, Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira states. When asked about the humanitarian situation, al-Burhan told Al Jazeera, "When we're talking about famine, we must talk about its causes and about those responsible for it."

"Sudan has vast areas of arable land, and Sudan has huge numbers of farmers who know how to work these lands; most of the arable land has been cultivated except for the lands where the Janjaweed terrorist groups threatened citizens and prevented them from cultivating," he said. The RSF was born out of the Popular Defence Forces militias, commonly known as Janjaweed, mobilised by Sudan's former President Omar al-Bashir against non-Arab tribes in Darfur. "In Sudan, we have shortages in some areas that are under the control of these rebels, but in the rest of the country, there are no shortages, except for areas where people have been displaced," he said. — Al Jazeera

France ends ugly campaign and draws breath before historic vote

PARIS (BBC): France's rushed and sometimes violent election campaign is over, brought to an end with stark appeals from political leaders ahead of Sunday's pivotal vote. Centrist Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said that a far-right government would "unleash hatred and violence".

But the leader of the National Rally, Jordan Bardella, accused his rivals of immoral, anti-democratic behaviour, and he urged voters to mobilise and give him an outright majority. One in three French voters backed National Rally (RN) last Sunday, in the first round of parliamentary elections. The choice a week on is between France's first far-right government of modern times or political deadlock, and voters fear there is turmoil ahead whoever wins.

The climate is so fraught that 30,000 extra police are being deployed. Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin said 51 candidates, or their deputies or party activists, had been physically attacked by people of varying backgrounds, including some who were "spontaneously angry". In one incident, an extremist network published a list of almost 100 lawyers "for eliminating", after they signed an open letter against National Rally.

President Emmanuel Macron's decision to call it less than a month ago came as a shock, but the consequences are unknown. When voters speak about the election, the tension is often palpable. Kaltoun's hair is covered and says in her town on the border with Belgium, where RN won the first round, she and her daughter have felt increasingly uncomfortable. "It's a remark or a look; each election it's got worse."

In nearby Tourcoing, Gérald Darmanin is facing a strong challenge to hold his seat from the far-right candidate who was just 800 votes behind him last Sunday. That is why left-wing candidate Leslie Mortreux decided to pull out of the second round to give him a better chance of defeating RN.

In the 500 seats being decided by run-off votes, 217 candidates from the left-wing New Popular Front and the Macron Ensemble alliance have withdrawn to block the RN from winning. Although dozens of three-way

elections are still going ahead, 409 seats will now be decided by one-on-one contests. After the first round, some opinion polls gave RN a chance of winning an outright majority in the National Assembly.

The final polls of the campaign suggest that is no longer on the cards. Even if RN boss Marine Le Pen believes they still have a "serious chance" of winning the 289 seats they need to control the Assembly, the pollsters say about 200 is a more realistic figure. One major poll that came out hours before the end of the campaign suggested that the awkward series of withdrawals by third-placed left-wing and centrist candidates had succeeded in scuppering the hopes of National Rally boss Marine Le Pen's protege of becoming prime minister aged 28.

"We are presiding over the birth of a single Mélenchon-Macron party," Jordan Bardella complained. "And this dishonorable alliance has been formed with the single goal of keeping us from winning." The Popular Front is made up of Socialists, Greens and Communists, but its biggest party is France Unbowed, led by radical firebrand Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

He is widely condemned by his rivals as an extremist, and he is certainly no ally of President Emmanuel Macron. Despite their agreement to keep out the far right, there is no love lost between the two camps. "You don't beat the far right with the far left," the interior minister said, even though a France Unbowed candidate had pulled out to help him win.

The Macron centrists are third in the polls, well behind the Popular Front as well as the National Rally. "In France we're fed up with Macron, and I'm more in the centre" said Marc in Tourcoing. "The cost of living is bad, and the rich have become richer and the poor are poorer." National Rally has focused its campaign on media appearances by Mr Bardella and Marine Le Pen, and there have been claims of "phantom candidates" barely showing up in some areas.

When one candidate in the city of Orléans, Élodie Babin, qualified for the second round with little attempt at campaigning she later insisted she

had been ill for 10 days. RN is especially popular in rural areas. In Menecy, a sleepy town in the Essonne area south of Paris, Mathieu Hillaire was holding his final campaign event as Popular Front candidate. He is in a duel with RN candidate Nathalie Da Conceicao Carvalho, after the pro-Macron candidate pulled out to give her left-wing rival a better chance of blocking the far right.

Mr Hillaire said while the climate was less tense locally than elsewhere some people were still worried: "Of the voters that I've met, there are many who are scared of Jordan Bardella." Many of RN's policies focus on cutting the cost of living and tackling law and order, but their anti-immigration plans have raised particular concerns.

RN aims to give French citizens "national preference" over immigrants for jobs and housing, and wants to abolish the right to automatic French citizenship for children of foreign parents, if those children have spent five years in France from the age of 11 to 18. Dual citizens would also be barred from dozens of sensitive jobs. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal spoke of an "uncertainty and worry" among the French people.

He said in the first round his party had averted the risk of Jean-Luc Mélenchon winning a majority. Now the risk came from a far right whose policies would "unleash hatred and violence with a plan to stigmatise some of our fellow citizens" and be catastrophic for the French economy. But what happens on Sunday night if there is deadlock, and no obvious way forward towards forming a government?

The Olympic Games are now only 20 days away, and there is a suggestion that France might have no government or prime minister when it hosts such a high-profile global event. Mr Attal, who had earlier suggested his minority government might stay in place "as long as necessary", was far more vague. "Next week I don't know what I'll be doing, where I'll be doing it," he said. "But I know who I'll be doing it for: the people of France, that's all that counts for me."

are damaged by Russian missiles or drones," UKrenergó spokeswoman Maria Tsurian tells the BBC.

The lack of generated electricity is made worse by rising temperatures in the summer, when Ukrainians turn on power-hungry air conditioning systems. To cope with the shortfall, UKrenergó has had to implement a policy of sweeping power cuts across the country, which last for many hours a day every day.

As a result, millions of Ukrainians have become increasingly reliant on fuel-powered generators or big power banks. The Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, has been experiencing lengthy power cuts. Roksolana was elected by residents of her 24-storey apartment block to help run the building's facilities. She says living in tower blocks is not easy because power cuts also mean no running water on the upper floors. "The lifts are not working either, so mothers with children and disabled people have to wait. They plan their trips outside depending on when there is electricity," she adds.

lance service for her son can be a struggle too.

"Sometimes it takes half an hour, sometimes it's an hour before the ambulance arrives when my child goes into convulsions and turns blue," she says. "My son can die if he doesn't get oxygen. I'm lost for words." Recent blackouts have lasted as long as 12 hours a day in Tetiana's neighbourhood. For millions of Ukrainians, the absence of power can mean no running water, air conditioning, lifts or access to life-saving equipment.

Over the past three months alone, Ukraine has lost nine gigawatts of generating capacity, the national energy company UKrenergó says. This is more than a third of the capacity Ukraine had before the full-scale invasion in February 2022. It is enough to power the whole of the Netherlands during peak hours of consumption — or Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia combined, UKrenergó says. "All state-owned thermal power plants are destroyed. All hydropower plants in our country

'We've learnt to do surgery without electricity': Ukraine's power cuts worsen

KYIV (BBC): Power supply is a matter of life and death for Tetiana's son. He was born with disabilities, and needs electricity-powered equipment to be able to breathe, to eat, and to receive medication.

"We are very dependent on electricity. If it wasn't for this bloody war, life would be difficult, but we'd be able to cope," Tetiana tells the BBC. Ukrainians are learning to live with extended blackouts as Russia continues to pummel its energy facilities across the country. Persistent Russian air strikes mean even previously unaffected parts of Ukraine have to go without electricity for hours on end, practically every day.

Tetiana, who lives in the southern port city of Odesa, says that the endless power cuts make life extremely difficult because she needs to make sure the supply of electricity is constant. She has a generator which runs on petrol and needs to be topped up all the time, but it has to be stopped every six hours to cool down. Power cuts also affect mobile phone coverage, so getting through to the ambu-

lance service for her son can be a struggle too. "Sometimes it takes half an hour, sometimes it's an hour before the ambulance arrives when my child goes into convulsions and turns blue," she says. "My son can die if he doesn't get oxygen. I'm lost for words." Recent blackouts have lasted as long as 12 hours a day in Tetiana's neighbourhood. For millions of Ukrainians, the absence of power can mean no running water, air conditioning, lifts or access to life-saving equipment.

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German investigators detain third suspect

BERLIN (AP): German investigators said they have arrested a third suspect in an attempt to blackmail the family of former Formula 1 racing driver Michael Schumacher. The 52-year-old man, who was detained in a town near Wuppertal in western Germany, had worked for the family as a security officer, German news agency dpa reported, citing prosecutors.

Investigators searched the man's home and took away items including mobile phones, hard drives and memory sticks to comb them for evidence, prosecutor Wolf-Tilman Baument said. The suspect's name wasn't given in line with German privacy rules. Prosecutors in the case arrested two men last month and said the pair — a father and son from Wuppertal — had told employees of the family that they were in possession of files that the family wouldn't want published. The two men allegedly demanded a payment of several million euros or else they would publish the files on the darknet, prosecutors said.

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Ukraine is an expediency

DESPITE the Russia-Ukraine conflict becoming a bloody war of attrition, as long as Ukraine thinks it can take advantage of it to elbow its way into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Volodymyr Zelensky government will regard the cost in lives as being a price worth paying for the Eastern European country.

Gaining support for Ukraine to be a member of NATO has been an important part of Ukrainian President Zelensky's shuttle diplomacy among Ukraine's Western allies over the past two years, apart from pressing them to supply Ukraine with more military aid. But ahead of the approaching NATO summit in Washington on Tuesday, a US State Department official told the media that the Ukrainian leader had been discretely informed during his meeting with US President Joe Biden in Washington in June that Ukraine's NATO membership cannot be considered for now because Ukraine is too corrupt to join NATO.

Zelensky has been trying to tackle the problem head on, in an effort to prevent Washington making corruption an excuse to block Ukraine's way to NATO membership. In September last year, he fired all six of his deputy defense ministers with no explanation, weeks after dismissing his top defense minister.

But that is far from enough to change Washington's stance. The anonymous US official said: "We have to step back and applaud everything that Ukraine has done in the name of reforms over the last two-plus years... As they continue to make those reforms, we want to commend them, but we want to talk about additional steps that need to be taken, particularly in the area of anti-corruption. It is a priority for many of us around the table."

As a matter of fact, Biden made that point crystal-clear in an exclusive interview with CNN in July last year, saying that conflict needs to end before the alliance can consider adding Kyiv to its ranks. The message from the US and its allies is clear-cut: although Ukraine can obtain military assistance from them, they will not allow Ukraine to use NATO membership to drag them all into its fight with the Russians. Corruption is only an excuse Washington is using to shut NATO's door in Kyiv's face. Since it seems impossible for Ukraine, with even its huge losses, to get the membership it desires to transform itself from a buffer zone between Russia and the West to a member of the West, Kyiv should give a serious thought to what its end game is, instead of indefinitely prolonging the conflict.

I'm hungry

WHEN Keir Starmer stood on the steps of 10 Downing Street as our new prime minister, he spoke of hope and of a promise that things will change for the better. But hope is in short supply in my household. At the age of 44, I have never been in this skint, this hungry, this cold or this worried. I am unable to work owing to multiple disabilities, and the past few months have been a very frightening time to be receiving benefits. While I understand people cheering the end of 14 years of the Conservatives, I am nervous that when Starmer promises change he is not thinking about people like me. In his victory speech he spoke of cleaners, builders, and nurses facing insecurity despite doing the right thing. I feel that insecurity every minute of every day, but simply cannot work because of my disabilities. That leaves me completely unable to make ends meet.

Personal independence payments (Pips) should cover the additional costs of my disabilities, such as a chiropractor to manage the pain of my fibromyalgia, or holistic therapy for my mental health. But the cost of living is so high they never stretch that far. The Conservative party even discussed replacing some of the support I receive with vouchers. This feels like a form of discrimination: it's demoralising to be trusted only with vouchers rather than money. I am glad to see the back of the Tories, but it's hard to feel excited about a Labour government when it has made no promises to invest in social security.

I know many say we have to be patient, and that change will come. But my kids face empty food cupboards on a weekly basis. We cannot wait for this change. It needs to come now. The political debate over this election has been focused on immigration and pledges to support "hard-working Britons" while people like me are left to scabble to get by. What about people who are unwell and who can't work? When we do feature in political debate, it's only as a problem that needs fixing: cut our benefits, say the Conservatives; get us back to work says Labour.

Every day I wake up and try to think of ways to make ends meet. My situation is hopeless: I can't afford a weekly shop from the supermarket and have now gone two weeks without buying my own shampoo and conditioner. Instead I've had to rely on charity. It wasn't even much better when I was working; in my job as an administrator, I still had to go to the food bank. Levels of social security payment leave families like mine below the poverty line, and yet we still hear comments far too often that imply people choose a life on benefits. But no one would choose this life, my life, and I want this to change, so that families everywhere can have a hope of something better. Families like mine, where no one is in work, have lost an average of £5,500 a year since 2010.

And disabled people often face additional costs. My health conditions mean I need to use the washing machine and shower more often than most people – as is the case with many disabled people – so capping the price of energy bills would really help. The benefit cap must also go, and free school meals should be universal. This is not asking a lot – just for our basic needs to be met. Starmer said on the steps of Downing Street that the work of change will begin immediately. I truly hope so. But for me to have trust in him, he must listen to people like me and change our failing social security system to make a better future possible for us all.

Important Notice

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Trump's immunity has a limit

Norman Eisen

BEFORE the ink was dry on the US Supreme Court's extreme presidential immunity opinion on Monday holding that former presidents are immune from criminal prosecution for certain official acts, former President Donald Trump launched a Hail Mary to once again try to delay accountability for his crimes in New York.

Trump's attorneys wrote to Justice Juan Merchan to delay the previously scheduled July 11 sentencing for his conviction on falsifying business records while Trump petitions the court to overturn that conviction based on the Supreme Court's decision. We can expect to see something similar in Georgia soon, with Trump using the opinion to update his initial motion to dismiss that case on immunity grounds filed earlier this year. Trump has pleaded not guilty in Fulton County to charges alleging election interference.

Merchan has postponed Trump's sentencing in Manhattan to September 18 to allow time to rule on the motion, stating that he will do so by September 6. When that happens, the convictions should not and almost certainly will not be disturbed. The Supreme Court opinion does not affect Trump's 34 felony convictions stemming from the 2016 election conspiracy and cover-up.

Nor will the ruling save Trump from facing accountability for conspiring to change the outcome of Georgia's 2020 presidential election. In both instances, the alleged actions related to his campaign were purely personal and political and are clearly unofficial conduct not "within the core of his official duties" as president. And as Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the majority, "There is no immunity for unofficial acts."

Let's begin with the Manhattan case. Conspiring to unlawfully interfere in the presidential election as a private citizen by paying hush money to an adult film actress and then falsifying business records to cover it up is not even "within the outer perimeter" of a president's official responsibilities, as Trump's team argued. Trump was not yet president in 2016 when he tried to influence the election by keeping Stormy Daniels

quiet about her allegations of a liaison with him (which Trump denies). And although he was president in 2017 when he reimbursed his private attorney for fronting the money to Daniels, his falsification of Trump Organization business records was certainly not part of his presidential duties.

These private acts have no resemblance to those the Supreme Court indicated are official, such as Trump considering replacing the attorney general or allegedly pressuring Justice Department employees to make false voter fraud claims to state officials.

Trump knows that, of course. So out of desperation, he is complaining that stray pieces of evidence introduced at his trial constitute official acts for which he is immune from prosecution, and thus that evidence should not have been admitted before the jury under the recent Supreme Court opinion. But Trump already tried to block his New York felonies on the basis of presidential immunity, and both federal and New York courts rejected his arguments.

First, he claimed presidential immunity when he tried to remove his case from state court to federal court. The federal court found Trump was not immune because the alleged campaign corruption and cover-up were purely personal and political, not official: "Hush money paid to an adult film star is not related to a President's official acts. It does not reflect in any way the color of the President's official duties," wrote US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein. Regardless, the court explained that Trump had "expressly waived any argument premised on a theory of absolute presidential immunity." Trump abandoned his appeal of that decision, so as a matter of law he is barred from wasting more time raising this claim again.

Despite his loss in federal court, Trump next argued unsuccessfully in state court that presidential immunity protected him from prosecution. Like the federal court, Merchan swiftly rejected this claim, explaining that Trump, who waited until after the state court's deadline for such motions, had plenty of opportunity to raise it

sooner.

Trump's Monday letter to Merchan also fails on the merits. His argument that some evidence was related to official conduct flops if you look at the specifics. First, Trump's 2018 Office of Government Ethics financial filing disclosing the payment to his former attorney Michael Cohen was properly admitted because, even if completing it was an official act for which Trump cannot be prosecuted, it is a public record — and as the Supreme Court explained, "Of course the prosecutor may point to the public record to show the fact that the President performed the official act." Introducing this type of routine publicly available filing poses absolutely no "dangers of intrusion on the authority and functions of the Executive Branch" that the opinion is concerned with.

Second, the prosecution introduced at trial some of Trump's tweets, likely all of which reflect private, not official, conduct and thus were properly admitted in evidence. Many of the tweets from Trump's time in office involved Trump's private, personal attorney, Cohen — such as discussing Cohen's retainer, the reimbursements to him and the non-disclosure agreement between Cohen and Daniels. These kinds of tweets clearly concern Trump's personal affairs, which makes them admissible as unofficial, private conduct.

Finally, Trump may seek to challenge testimony from two prosecution witnesses who worked in the White House: Trump's former executive assistant Madeleine Westerhout and communications director Hope Hicks. But again, their testimony focused on their knowledge of Trump's personal, not official, conduct — including the process by which Trump reimbursed Cohen and what Trump thought of Cohen's purely non-governmental activities relating to the hush money. There is no credible argument that any of that constitutes official conduct that would be off-limits to the jury.

What of Trump's other election inference case — the Fulton County prosecution in Georgia? Here, too, the "official acts" exclusion in the immunity ruling is his bane.

Just as a mini-trial in DC

on the 2020 election interference federal charges would indicate substantial unofficial conduct including his contacts with state authorities and private parties, so too would an evidentiary hearing in Georgia. As Justice Amy Coney Barrett observed in her opinion concurring in part with the majority, "The President has no authority over state legislatures or their leadership, so it is hard to see how prosecuting him for crimes committed when dealing with the Arizona House Speaker" (whom the federal indictment alleges that Trump pressured on election fraud claims) would be off-limits. The Georgia indictment similarly focuses on Trump pressuring state officials, including the infamous call with Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger in which Trump said he had to "find 12,000 votes."

Although Trump will argue that he was merely ensuring the integrity of a federal election, the "close analysis" of the federal indictment's "extensive and interrelated allegations" that the Supreme Court requires will show this was personal and political, not official, conduct. Indeed, the federal courts have already held that the conduct at issue in the Georgia indictment is political, not official, in the context of a failed effort by former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows to remove the case from state court (albeit on other legal grounds).

Trump is not immune in his 34 felony convictions in Manhattan or the Georgia prosecution, and his current and coming efforts to invoke the Supreme Court's recent opinion in both places will surely fail. As for those who are frustrated that Merchan is holding things over until September in New York City — don't be. The judge taking his usual methodical approach has the incidental effect of eating up the runway Trump needs to get this issue to the only court dishonest enough to say immunity may apply here: the Supreme Court. After the trial court rules, there will be two layers of time-consuming state appellate review before the deeply conflicted justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and their colleagues gets their bite at the apple. That almost certainly won't come until 2025.

For Britain's Conservatives, party may be over

Christopher Phillips

IN the end, Labour's victory in Thursday's UK parliamentary election was not quite as historic as some polls predicted. Keir Starmer secured a thumping majority by winning 412 seats within the 650-seat House of Commons but didn't quite surpass Tony Blair's 1997 numbers or Stanley Baldwin's record 1924 win that some forecast he would. Even so, it was a dramatic night for Labour, and on Friday Starmer took office as prime minister.

But history was made on the other side. Rishi Sunak's Conservatives were trounced, falling from 372 seats to a lowly 121. This is their greatest defeat ever since the foundation of the modern Conservative party in 1834, surpassing their previous low of 156 seats in 1906. Key figures who lost their seats included Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, former Prime Minister Liz Truss and Penny Mordaunt, who many thought might be Sunak's successor as leader. This is quite a turnaround for the most successful political party in British history that has long positioned itself as the natural party of government. There are serious questions about the future and some have even suggested the defeat is so great that the party's very existence is in doubt.

So why did the Conservatives lose, and what next? The first question is easier to answer than the second. Defeat has been forecast for years. Boris Johnson won a handsome majority with 365 seats in 2019, but his handling of the Covid pandemic cost him public support, not least after he and his staff were found to be partying during lockdown. This scandal prompted his party to jettison Johnson in 2022, but his successor Liz Truss tarnished the Conservative brand further with wild economic policies that spooked the markets and sent voters' mortgages skyrocketing.

By the time the Conservatives removed Truss after barely 50 days in office, the party already looked doomed. Her successor Sunak steadied the ship, but he couldn't reverse the damage to the economy, which was already struggling in the wake of Covid and the Ukraine war. Sunak lacked the charm to woo either voters or his own party, which continued to fight internally, and the writing was on the wall long before he called an election.

External causes made matters worse. Most important was Starmer himself, who, as a moderate centrist was far more appealing to voters than Johnson's leftist Labour opponent in 2019. Another factor was the Reform Party, a populist right-wing party that drew many former Conservative voters, splitting the right-wing vote to help Labour win. But, as many commentators noted on election night, this was an election that the Conservatives lost more than Labour won. Labour's share of the national vote did not change much nationally from 2019, but Conservative support plummeted, with former voters backing Labour, Reform or the Liberal Democrats, who came third with 71 seats.

How might the Conservatives recover? Some have hypothesized that they can't, and the party

will fade away in the coming years as centrist voters head to Labour or the Liberal Democrats while right wingers head to Reform. But Reform is a new party that lacks the national infrastructure to easily replace the centuries-old Conservative party machine. A more realistic option would be for the two parties to merge. Reform leader, Nigel Farage has previously mooted his possible takeover of the UK Conservatives in a similar manner to how Canada's right-wing Reform party merged with the Canadian Conservatives.

But Farage is unpopular among Conservative MPs and certain parts of the public and some fear that merging with Reform would deter more voters than it would win over. Better, they argue, to adopt populist right-wing policies to win Reform voters back rather than formally bringing Farage into the fold. Former Home Secretary Suella Braverman, a possible leadership candidate, used her election night speech to urge something along these lines.

However, other Conservatives disagree. Some, such as the former education secretary, told the BBC the Conservatives needed to look instead to the political center to win back the voters they lost to Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Historically more elections have been won with broadly centrist policies than those of the far right or left. After losing to Tony Blair in 1997, who himself had moved Labour to the center, the Conservatives elected a series of more right-wing leaders who all lost successive elections, before David Cameron won power in 2010 after embracing centrism. With Starmer having similarly shifted Labour once again to the center and emerged victorious, center-right Conservatives warn that embracing Reform's agenda or even merging with Farage might consign the Conservatives to the electoral wilderness for a generation.

The counter argument made by the right wing is that this is not 1997. Starmer may have won a huge majority, but he only won 35 percent of the vote and, as in Western democracies elsewhere, faith in the established parties is at an all-time low. To avoid the fate of France's Republicans, the traditional conservatives who have been squeezed out by Marine Le Pen's National Rally, right-wing Conservatives may believe they must embrace Farage's populism to survive.

These debates will no doubt rage among the Conservatives in the coming months as the contest to replace Rishi Sunak heats up. The party has survived similar, if not quite so big, defeats in the past, and found new ways to adapt. They might even be inspired by their Labour rivals who recovered after an historic defeat in 2019 to win a landslide five years later.

However, at the same time there is a sense that this election is different, with the Conservatives' position as one of the two main parties in the UK no longer guaranteed. The Conservative party is not dead, but it is seriously wounded, and its recovery, which is by no means guaranteed, could take years.

Arab News

Make space for cooperation, not confrontation

Ranvir S. Nayyar

AT a time when most countries are being extremely secretive about their scientific and technological prowess, in a welcome breath of fresh air, a truly multinational project — at the forefront of science and cutting-edge technology — this week took a major step forward.

The good news came from the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, known as ITER, which is the world's largest experimental nuclear fusion reactor. It is being constructed jointly by more than 30 countries and blocs, including the EU, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the US. With this week's announcement that the final magnetic coil had been installed in the reactor in France (although it still won't be fired up for more than a decade), it is heartening to note the sig-

nificant progress being made in a project that brings together countries like Russia, China and the US to work on a common platform, even while they see themselves as arch-rivals, if not enemies.

Nuclear fusion is a technology belonging to the future as, so far, it exists only as a theory or a phenomenon that a few scientists have achieved for a nanosecond or a picosecond in a well-equipped laboratory. ITER is a project, the sole project, that seeks to convert this phenomenon into a never-ending source of reliable energy that is almost free of cost, at least once the reactors have been built.

At a time when humanity is grappling with the extremes of climate change, nuclear fusion is being seen by some scientists as one of the major sources of renewable energy, capable of producing

many times more power than the likes of solar and wind.

ITER is not the only major scientific project that has survived the unprecedented and severe turmoil that has gripped the world, dividing it into numerous camps. Space is another domain where international cooperation has continued, despite all the tensions, conflicts and sanctions that lie thousands of kilometers below on Earth. The International Space Station is jointly operated by Russia and the US, whose astronauts are launched in the same space vehicles and who conduct joint research while onboard.

ITER and the International Space Station are stellar examples of long-term scientific research projects with goals for the good of

humanity that have managed to stay alive and relevant, trumping the short-term visions of politicians concerning matters that are more terrestrial.

Another area that has been relatively unaffected by global geostrategic tensions is climate change, although here the divide is strictly along the lines of rich and poor. Yet, each year, the leaders of countries gather to discuss climate change and the measures they need to take, individually and collectively, to try to arrest the advancement of global warming. Yes, climate change negotiations are not exactly anyone's idea of a flying success, unlike the space cooperation or ITER, but it is crucial that countries at least get together and negotiate with each other.

There are perhaps a

handful of other areas where international, and truly global, cooperation and coordination is progressing relatively smoothly, completely isolated from political or commercial divisions. Unfortunately, these are too few and the needs of the world far too many — be it issues related to improved access to health, notably in Africa and South Asia, or better education for almost all developing nations, better vocational training or cooperation in the preservation of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, as well as the protection of wildlife. These are just some of the innumerable areas where all the countries in the world need to work in close coordination with each other to identify the best available solutions.

Nations — or, more precisely, political leaders — need to realize and

acknowledge that almost all of the current disputes and conflicts and the reasons behind them are based on relatively short-term goals and visions. Meanwhile, the real challenges facing the world are long-term ones that need long-term visions of cooperation and collaboration if humanity is to overcome them.

Here, the fantastic success stories of the fusion reactor and the International Space Station can point the way forward in terms of how cooperation beats confrontation hands down. Thus, it is time for all nations to put aside their differences and pool their best brains and resources in order to find solutions to these problems. Otherwise, they will one day very soon threaten the existence of not just one city or nation, but the entire world and all forms of life.

Starmer won by shifting to the right. But the Labour left doesn’t need to spend these years in wilderness

Andy Beckett

WHEN Labour wins a general election by centrist means, some on the left of the party always have mixed feelings. They welcome the crushing of the Conservatives. It’s sometimes forgotten by centrists that the Labour left hates the Tories with a particular intensity. The left’s optimists also often hope, despite evidence to the contrary, that a Labour victory will open up new socialist possibilities – or at least provide some emotional catharsis. When Tony Blair won his 1997 landslide, Diane Abbott went to the Labour celebrations at the South Bank, she told her biographers Robin Bunce and Samara Linton. “And it was just the most amazing feeling ... It felt like I had waited my whole life for this.”

Yet, mixed in with such elation can be a sinking feeling that the left’s enemies inside the party have been vindicated. What Keir Starmer always pointedly describes as his “changed Labour party” – others would call it a purged Labour party – has almost doubled its number of parliamentary seats, after ditching most of its leftwing policies and conducting an election campaign that prioritised winning over Tory voters with promised restrictions on public spending and with traditional patriotic themes. In the huge new parliamentary Labour party, the few dozen MPs considered leftwingers – the label can be hard to apply precisely – will be even more outnumbered than before. In the strange new world of British politics, likely to be dominated by both Starmer’s stern realism and the rightwing fantasies of Reform, does the Labour left, and the left more generally, still have a future?

One way to try to answer this question is to look at the election results: not the headline changes, but the more subtle shifts in local and national support. Strikingly, among the few Labour MPs who increased their majorities were several left-

wingers: both veterans such as John McDonnell and much younger figures, such as Olivia Blake, Richard Burgon and Sarah Sultana – the latter of whom is seen by some on the left as a potential future challenger for the Labour leadership and last night increased her majority from 401 to 10,201. In an election where enthusiasm for Labour was harder to find than fury against the Tories, in some places the left did manage to connect strongly with voters, despite the conventional wisdom that its moment has passed.

In Islington North, running as an independent against the far greater resources of the party that disowned him, Jeremy Corbyn won much more comfortably – by more than 7,000 votes – than most pollsters and even many of his canvassers expected. In this contest – as in others across urban Britain – Gaza, the climate crisis, the housing crisis, the cruelty of the benefits system and other issues insufficiently addressed by Starmer, at least in the left’s view, eroded Labour’s support. The party’s national vote share was startlingly thin: little more than a third (34%), far lower than Corbyn’s party got in 2017, and not much more than it managed in its heavy 2019 defeat.

Some of Labour’s modest total support this time was probably down to tactical voting, to party supporters backing the Lib Dems to eject Conservatives. But Labour’s ambiguous mandate, both overwhelming and unconvincing, also reflects the fact that for millions of Britons, Starmer’s party is not too leftwing, as the Tory press claims, but too centrist or rightwing. As the authoritative British Social Attitudes survey has been showing for several years now, on economic issues in particular, public opinion is in a leftwing phase. If that remains the case for several years more – and the behaviour of big businesses such as the privatised utilities isn’t winning capital-

ism many converts – the left’s longer term prospects in Britain may be better than they seem at present.

And yet, as Starmer’s no doubt exhausted but deeply satisfied electoral strategists will tell you, winning moral arguments and obtaining political power are not the same thing. So how might the left maximise what leverage it does have?

One way would be to try to find common ground with the government’s more left-leaning members, such as Ed Miliband and Angela Rayner. They need help to prevent Labour’s remaining relatively radical policies – for instance on improving workers’ rights and investing in green technologies – from being further watered down. Another, more long-shot strategy for the left would be to try to influence Starmer himself. For all his shifts to the right as leader, he has continued to talk about creating “an economy that works for working people”. Close allies insist that his commitment to this goal, which would reverse decades of egalitarian trends, is genuine. The vagueness of his language – who exactly are “working people”, and in what ways could an economy “work” for them? – suggests a possible opportunity for the left to help define these terms through private lobbying and public campaigns.

The left could have an important say in another fundamental debate that may soon happen inside and outside government: about how to pay for more state spending. McDonnell and other leftists believe that within a year or two, Starmer will be forced to raise taxes to avert a meltdown in public services. It’s easy to see that as leftwing wishful thinking, but recently hints emerged from the Labour campaign that the party was drawing up contingency plans to raise more revenue from the wealthy, through changes to capital gains tax and inheritance tax. Unless the economy and existing tax revenues improve

dramatically, or the Labour right suddenly produces innovative fiscal ideas in a way that it has failed to do ever since Blairism ran out of steam two decades ago, leftwing solutions to Britain’s great public spending crisis might be the only ones that the Starmer government finds available.

If Starmer and the equally stern chancellor Rachel Reeves stick to a different, more rightwing path, the Labour left could become perpetual anti-government rebels, as Corbyn, Abbott and McDonnell did during Blair’s premiership. In this role, leftwing MPs may receive unlikely encouragement from a rightwing press desperate to find ways to undermine Starmer. More genuine support would come from the large minority of Britons who still see themselves as socialists, and from protest movements outside parliament. As Corbyn’s capture of the leadership showed, such networks can become very potent. But the process is slow: 32 years passed between his election as an MP and his election as leader. In today’s more impatient, more personally exposing politics, it’s hard to imagine one of the dozen young leftwing MPs gradually working their way to the top of the party by the middle of this century.

Well before then, they may be tempted to abandon Labour altogether. From one common leftwing perspective, Starmer’s leadership has already been yet another demonstration of Labour’s fundamental intolerance towards socialists, and of the need to set up a new party. Yet the British electoral system notoriously discourages such ventures. In our politically fragmented, polarised, populism-haunted era, the least bad option for the Labour left, and for the Starmer government with its vast but brittle majority, may be to try to find a few ways to work together. For what might transpire if such a collaboration never happens, the French elections this Sunday may provide a warning.

The Guardian

Reconciling the fossil fuel industry with climate goals

Rodrigo Tavares

RESPONDING to the threat of climate change and continuing to produce fossil fuels seem like opposing and irreconcilable poles. Those who advocate for sustainability are often labeled ideologues, while those who defend the production of fossil fuels are seen as complicit in environmental degradation. However, neither extreme will lead us to success. As we transition to net zero, the world will need to run two energy systems in parallel.

Decarbonization will undoubtedly take time, similar to the time it took to build our dependence on fossil fuels. The key is to ensure a balanced approach that prioritizes sustainability, affordability, and security, all within the context of economic responsibility and fairness for developing nations. While the adoption of renewable energy sources is rapidly gaining momentum, oil and natural gas still account for 54.8 percent of global energy consumption, according to the 2024 Statistical Review of World Energy.

The oil and gas industry plays a pivotal role, both in providing the energy that drives today’s economy and in enabling energy transition for the future. I would even go further and say that the technical expertise, required capital, extensive value chain, experience in capital optimization, familiarity with complex operations and markets, and mastery of the technology necessary to achieve the transition to a low-carbon economy can all be found in oil companies.

Keeping oil companies profitable and leveraging their strengths will be crucial to accelerating the energy transition. While

some oil companies aiming for net zero are making strides in certain areas, they are falling short when it comes to developing low-emission fossil fuels, which refers to the extraction, processing and use of oil and gas in ways that minimize environmental impact.

This contrasts with recent advancements in other heavy industries, where innovations like green cement, iron, and steel production are demonstrating the feasibility of reducing emissions, even at a premium. The oil and gas industry needs to catch up. “There is some value in this ‘green oil’ label. In general it is welcome to have fossil fuels with low or zero production emissions as they represent 12 percent of the total equivalent CO₂ emissions,” Andy Brown, Shell’s former upstream director and executive committee member, who also served as CEO of Galp, told me.

Since 2019, companies like BP, Lundin Energy, Occidental Petroleum, Petronas, Eni, Total, and Shell have offered “carbon neutral” oil and liquefied natural gas, some of them with a price premium and reputational gains. But transparency is key when branding these products as “green oil.” For the term to be accurate, clear regulations defining what constitutes carbon-neutral crude oil are needed. This would include a universal methodology for calculating emissions throughout the industry.

Additionally, certification for carbon neutrality should be consistent, and oil majors would need to address emissions across their products’ entire life cycle. Most importantly, achieving it could not

rely solely on the purchase and retirement of carbon credits to compensate for the calculated lifecycle CO₂e emissions of the product. “Offsets have increasingly been discredited as a way to claim abatement,” said Brown. Priority should be given to switching to lower operational greenhouse gas emissions.

Tellingly, just a couple of months ago, staff at the UN-backed Science Based Targets initiative, which certifies whether a company is on track to help limit global warming to under 1.5 C, expressed concern after plans were announced to allow companies to meet their climate targets with carbon offsets. As we are still far from reaching this scenario, existing carbon crediting organizations like Verra lack the necessary standards for oil companies to generate carbon credits based on emission reductions.

But while “green oil” is difficult to attain, that should not preclude oil companies from pursuing product carbon reductions, aiming at positive impact and economic upsides. But how can firms maximize returns on investment and minimize emissions per barrel?

Scaling up electrification, especially through renewable electricity, investing in energy efficiency, reducing fugitive methane emissions, venting and routine flaring, and improving geological surveying and digital technologies to decrease the number of dry holes are all viable options. Carbon capture, utilization, and storage is another avenue. Aramco is currently developing one of the largest

CCUS hubs in the world at Jubail Industrial City.

Through the 2023 Oil and Gas Decarbonization Charter, the 2015 “Zero Routine Flaring by 2030” Initiative, and the 2014 Oil and Gas Climate Initiative, oil majors pledge to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adopt targets for reducing carbon dioxide and methane emissions. And all leading oil companies have established net zero targets. These are important steps.

The future may see carbon intensity become as important a factor in valuing crude oil as American Petroleum Institute gravity and sulfur content are today, directly impacting its price. International energy and sustainability organizations should establish clear methodologies, criteria, and standards for oil and gas to be classified as “low carbon” — a more achievable target than “green” or “carbon neutral.”

Only then can a price premium be realistically introduced into market dynamics. Potential buyers include environmentally conscious refiners, who can leverage low-carbon oil to market cleaner fuels and sustainable products. Airlines and shipping companies, facing increasing pressure to reduce emissions, are also potential customers, as many have adopted ambitious carbon neutrality pledges.

One should note that governments worldwide are implementing mandatory carbon pricing schemes where polluters pay for their emissions, making low-carbon oil even more attractive. While low carbon oil shows promise, it is just one step. We must prioritize replacing fossil fuels altogether with renewable sources.

Where ice melting between Beijing and Moscow

Luke Coffey

IT is obvious that the war in Ukraine has had consequences for Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region, but they have been felt further afield too — for example, in the Arctic region. China is not an Arctic state but aspires to a bigger role there. The consequences of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have created an opportunity for Beijing. For example, Western economic sanctions have resulted in new openings for Chinese companies in Russia, which means more cooperation between Moscow and Beijing in the Arctic region.

There is also a lot of ambition regarding energy cooperation in the Arctic, especially as Moscow looks for alternative energy markets now that it can no longer sell to its traditional customers in Europe. China is also now using Russian shipping lanes in the Arctic more than ever and the two have even signed an agreement to increase coastguard cooperation there.

Beijing’s interest in the Arctic is economic and diplomatic, at least for now. The region’s abundance of natural resources, including oil, gas and fish, makes it particularly important for China. In the simplest terms, China sees the Arctic region as another place in the world to advance its economic interests and expand its diplomatic influence.

Meanwhile, Russia is an established Arctic power and one of only eight countries in the world that has territory above the Arctic Circle. Not only that, it is also the world’s largest Arctic country and about half of the Arctic coastline belongs to the Russian Federation. Since the time of Peter the Great the region has held a special place in the hearts and identities of the Russian people. With nationalism on the rise, President Vladimir Putin’s Arctic strategy is popular. Focus on the Arctic can also serve as a useful distraction for Russia’s other geopolitical challenges, such as Ukraine. For Putin, the Arctic is an area that allows Russia to flex its muscles without incurring any significant risk.

For both China and Russia, a recent focal point of Arctic policy has been the remote Svalbard archipelago off the coast of Norway about 650 kilometers from the North Pole. The islands’ small population of about 2,000 is the northernmost permanently inhabited human settlement in the world.

There is a good reason why Svalbard interests Moscow and Beijing. As part of the series of international agreements that followed the First World War, the islands were demilitarized and Norway was granted sovereignty by the 1920 Svalbard Treaty. However, the terms of the treaty allow any of its signatories to have non-discriminatory access to the islands’ fishing, hunting and other natural resources. Those signatories can also use Svalbard for scientific and research purposes. In all, 46 countries enjoy equal access to Svalbard’s natural resources, including Russia and China.

Since the 1920s, Russia has taken advantage of the opportunities afforded by the treaty. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union maintained three settlements on Svalbard. Today only the small coal-mining village of Barentsburg remains active. Barentsburg is incredibly remote and home to only a few hundred people. The village produces enough coal to sustain itself and no more. The main motivation for Moscow to maintain its settlement there is national prestige.

In recent months Moscow has shown renewed interest in Svalbard. Russian officials have proposed the creation of a new scientific research center on Svalbard for the BRICS countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Curiously, and somewhat provocatively for the Norwegians, Russians have started flying the old flag of the Soviet Union around Russian settlements on Svalbard.

Russia has also been using more military symbolism on Svalbard, which runs counter to the spirit of the 1920 Svalbard Treaty. Last year Russia’s top offi-

cial in Svalbard, who is said to be linked to military intelligence, organized a “naval parade” at Barentsburg with local ships in a flotilla. In recent weeks, a camouflaged armored military vehicle has been spotted (or perhaps not!) driving around Barentsburg. It even participated in Russia’s Victory Day parade last month marking the end of the Second World War. While both incidents seem innocent at first glance, these are considered provocative moves by Norway, which works hard to ensure the demilitarized nature of the island in the spirit of the 1920 treaty.

China is active on Svalbard too. It has conducted scientific research on Svalbard since 2004, at the Arctic Yellow River Station in Ny-Alesund. China has recently tried taking its engagement on Svalbard one step further by attempting to purchase the last privately owned land on the archipelago. The plot of land, about 80 square kilometers, was on the market for \$325 million. In the end, the Norwegian government blocked the sale to China on national security grounds. This attempt by China to purchase Arctic territory in NATO’s backyard was reminiscent of Beijing’s attempts to buy land in Iceland and Greenland in recent years. In both cases government intervention blocked those too.

So far there has been no direct evidence of Russia and China cooperating in Svalbard, but it cannot be ruled out. China has the geopolitical ambition and the money. Meanwhile, Russia needs resources and investment to enhance its own position in the Arctic as the war in Ukraine takes a toll on Moscow’s coffers. With all of this taking place in NATO’s backyard, you can bet that developments in Svalbard are being closely watched.

For now, the Arctic region has remained stable and at peace. However, with the continued breakdown in relations between the West and Russia, and Moscow’s increasing cooperation with Beijing, a close eye needs to be kept on the region.

Chin up, here’s how to enjoy life in socialist Britain

William Sitwell

THE last time this happened, I was with my pal Natasha on a beach in Mexico. Her phone rang and there was a familiar chirrup on the line. “Welcome to socialist Britain,” squawked our friend, the very late, lamented, charming and fun Derek Draper. “Save your welcome, we’re in Tulum,” we chorused back. Twenty-seven years later and I’ve no such luck. While the wilds of Exmoor might provide as much remote cover as the Caribbean Sea, there’s no escape. Labour are back in power and we’re going to have to put up with this mob for at least five years.

But don’t despair; in fact, take it all on the chin. Let your lefty pals rub your nose in it, let them jump for joy and cheer their brilliant triumph to the rafters because our time will come. And soon at that. In fact, it’s going to be fun and the fun might start by Sunday. So cheer up, this could become the best laugh we’ve had in decades.

Watch as the new Prime Minister takes fits of pique to altitudes higher than Mount Everest. If there’s one thing guaranteed to infuriate him, it’s not being treated quite as properly as befits the great lawyer and now international statesman. Recall the way he used to say the word “party” across the dispatch box to Boris Johnson, almost literally throwing up the expression, such was his absolute contempt.

But it’s one thing flipping your way to the leadership of your party and the country, but now we need specifics: the actual policies, the real tax rises, the stealth revenue streams. And the prospect of Sir Keir baulking and harrumphing his way through tough Today programme interviews is more infuriating than a can of Red Bull. In the 1980s, the T-shirt read “Frankie Says Relax”; in the mid-2020s, it’s: “Keir Says How Dare You!”

They were vocal in their disparaging of the blues, disgusted with Boris, disappointed with Rishi. So they lent their graceful support to Labour, to the progressive Sir Keir, then look what happens: the wretches raid their savings, their offshore bank accounts, their pensions and their properties. They weren’t remotely careful about what they wished for and their beloved Labour’s wealth swoop feels like being bitten on the bum by a goat.

Sorry, Nige, but being an MP is a whole other world of dross and detail. Picture the poor man holding his surgeries on a Friday morning, when Mrs Kelly complains about the damp patch in her council flat and he realises that what Clacton wants is not national sovereignty but potholes filling. And he’ll face the squirming misery of revealing his outside earnings and the names of his financial backers. Parliamentary procedure won’t favour him a spotlight in the chamber – he’ll sit uncomfortably, squished between the Greens and Scot Nats, and before long, he’ll be wishing he was bag-carrying for Trump, will cry foul and Clacton will have a by-election.

David Lammy, so much holier than thou he makes the Pope look like a verger, will take to high office like a Byzantine potentate. We, who are most humble and sinful and so ignorant, can do little in his grand wake but offer up ourselves as sacrificial lambs. That is until he makes some horrendous, sorry hilarious, gaffe – offering boots on the ground in Ukraine, disparaging the US President, caught out muttering why he must tolerate Sir Keir as leader when of course it should be and doubtless one day will be him – and he gets sacked as Foreign Secretary and is forced to spend his days chewing on sackcloth/pre-

senting a news channel show on YouTube.

Of similar entertainment value will, of course, be Angela Rayner. In private she’s a hoot: warm, funny, cool, self-effacing. But her public persona is the Lefty firebrand on a student march. Standing on the Government side of the Despatch Box, defending government policy and, sometime soon, running out of Blame-The-Last-Government road, she’ll have to quell her natural instinct to shout “Tory Scum!”. Along with Wes Streeting, when 40,000 new appointments each week in the NHS don’t materialise, she’ll wish she was back jeering on the opposition benches.

It was the only actual, admitted and championed new revenue stream. Shake that money tree and Labour could recruit those 6,500 teachers. Sir Keir said he would get the ball rolling “straight away”, ie, next week, but there are more pitfalls ahead than potholes in Clacton. For example, the cancelled bursaries, of access denied to state schools, the sudden transformation of private schools to special-needs institutions, the brandishing of human rights lawyers, the logical campaign to levy VAT on university fees, the spectacle of thousands of families moving to the state sector (and at last enjoying holidays and new cars).

Watch as that Lefty pipe of sewage has an existential crisis. Now that Labour has triumphed and so many Tory beasts have left the jungle, who will social media junkies fulminate against? Imagine the agony they face, waking up and finding they can’t send an abusive message to their gleefully most loathed Tory minister. What to do instead? “Fab job on Today Wes/Nice speech Rachel/Good legislating Angela...” Perhaps they’ll bottle that hate and ferment some carrots as peace and love engulfs our great nation.

The Telegraph

Less overtime boosts consumption

Du Fenglian & Song Qi

A recent study on time spent on paid work conducted by Inner Mongolia University shows that the Chinese people devote relatively more time to paid work, highlighting the strong sense of responsibility ingrained in East Asian culture and China’s effective protection of labor rights. Meanwhile the study also highlights the huge untapped potential for consumption growth.

The study, which compares the utilization of time by people in 15 countries, shows there are significant differences in the time people in different countries spend on paid labor. And based on the data for 2017 and 2021, the study found that the Chinese people spend more time on paid work (including work, work-related activities, and household management activities) than their counterparts in other countries.

The average daily time people in China spent on paid work in 2017 and 2021 was 5.51 hours per day, that is 1.71 hours per day more than the average of the sample countries. The amount of time Chinese people spend on paid labor and other activities is similar to that of people in Japan and South Korea, suggesting that cultural factors play a key role in determining how much time a per-

son in a certain country spends on a specific activity in a day.

Compared with 2017, the average daily working time decreased by 0.55 hours per day, and overtime work rate decreased by 4 percentage points in 2021, while the severe overtime work rate increased by less than 1 percentage point. That means the overtime work phenomenon has been mitigated.

The comparative study of time utilization by couples in 2017 and 2021 shows men spent much more time on paid work than women, but spent much less time than women on unpaid work. This shows the pattern of “men working outside, women working inside” division of labor still exists.

In 2017, men on average spent 2.2 hours more than women on paid work per day, while in 2021 the gap between men and women in terms of time spent on paid work decreased to 1.86 hours a day, indicating a reduction in gender disparity in paid work. Besides, the practice of nonstandard working hours significantly increased in 2021, with more and more workers choosing to work before 7 am or after 8 pm, indicating greater flexibility in working

hours.

That the Chinese people now spend more time on paid labor shows strong labor rights protection. And the more paid work time than leisure time leads to a higher social accumulation rate and better prospects for future development.

Workers who spend less than 8 hours a day on paid labor have an average of 4.61 hours of social leisure time. For those working 8-11 hours a day, the average social leisure time has decreased to 2.42 hours, and for those working more than 11 hours, the average social leisure time is only 1.17 hours on average. Working time has a crowding-out effect on leisure time, with more severe overtime work having a stronger crowding-out effect.

A simple regression estimate conducted to explore the magnitude of the crowding-out effect of working time on consumption shows that an increase of every 10 minutes of working time reduces total consumption time by 0.32 minutes. Moreover, the crowding-out effect of working time on online shopping and banking service consumption is less pronounced. So employers should introduce flexible paid leave policies, such as moderately increas-

ing the number of paid leave days for workers based on their seniority, performance, years of service and other factors. By moderately increasing paid leave days, enterprises can help raise the workers’ consumption level, thereby facilitating the growth of the service industry.

Flexible work arrangements allow workers to independently schedule their work hours, better balance work and life, increase workers’ efficiency and enhance their satisfaction level while raising the competitiveness of the company. The duration and timing of work should be fixed through negotiations between employers and employees, albeit employers can set the schedule for core working hours, and employees can decide the starting and closing time of the work schedule.

Online and remote working arrangements help workers decide their working hours, improve their work output and increase the efficiency for both the company and employees. Furthermore, employers can set the number of days for remote work based on job requirements, evaluate performance and achieve maximized efficiency for both the employer and employees, boosting productivity, raising efficiency, and facilitating high-quality development.



Turnover tax imposed on petroleum dealers reversed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Reforms Group of the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) has successfully convinced the government that imposing a 0.5 percent advance turnover tax on petroleum retailers was a misinterpretation of the law.

The delegation of dealers held marathon meetings with top government functionaries and convinced them that 0.5 per cent advance turnover tax was double taxation as the outlets were already paying advance fixed withholding tax at Rs1.04 per litre as final income tax.

Dealers supported the new taxation measure introduced by the government to boost revenue and cover its financial shortfall as chal-

lenging revenue collection targets will help it clinch an IMF bailout but clarified that filling stations could not survive the blow, said Hassan Shah, Spokesman of PPDA.

Dealers met with Minister of State for Finance & Revenue Ali Pervez Malik, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Petroleum Secretary Mr. Momin Agha, Chairman OGRA, MD PSO and other officials, he added.

Dealers told government officials that imposing turnover tax through the Finance Act 2024-25, passed by the Parliament and endorsed by the President of Pakistan, has left this anomaly, which must be resolved, he informed.

The new turnover tax would strangle petroleum

retailers as petrol pumps were already operating at meagre margins, and record inflation had made the retail business unviable, dealers said.

Hassan Shah said that on July 05, the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) asked the FBR to clarify the applicability of section 236H of the Income Tax Ordinance.

In his reply to the Ministry of Energy, Secretary Income Tax Policy of FBR Muhammad Sajid Ahmad, in office memorandum (C.No.1(6)S(ITP)/2019/12 3126-R), clarified that tax collection under section 236H does not apply to dealers/retail outlets as their income falls under Final Tax Regime.

According to Hassan Shah, about 95% of dealers across Pakistan paid no

attention to the senseless strike call by some Karachi-based dealers known for their links with the Oil Marketing Companies. The government officials involved in the matter were very pleased with the positive attitude of the dealers.

Hassan Shah said, "We found the minister and all the officials of ministry, OGRA, FBR very patient, tolerant and cooperative and we hope that they will cooperate with us in future as well."

The advance tax issue has been resolved amicably, and the petroleum fuel merchants will continue to strive to obtain their rights by engaging in dialogue with the official circles, said Shah, adding that conversations are always better than political demonstrations.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of PPDA Reforms Group Nauman Butt with Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervez Malik after successful meeting to resolve issue of advance tax.

PBC holds mango festival in Dubai

KARACHI (PPI): Pakistan Business Council (PBC) organized a Pakistan Mango Festival and culture promotional event in Dubai, which was joined by the Minister for Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives Sindh Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, nominated Consul General of Pakistan in Dubai, ambassadors, foreign representatives, investors including a large number of Pakistanis living in Dubai.

According to a statement issued today, speaking at the event, the Sindh Cultural Minister Shah appreciated the efforts of the organizers and said that we appreciate interest of investors in the tourism sector and we are proud of the keen interest of investors in Tharparkar Desert Safari.

Shah said that there are not only several important, religious, cultural and historical places full of sight-seeing, but also there are excellent opportunities for investment in the tourism sector.

He invited foreign investors to easily invest in Pakistan, we will provide all investment facilities and the best environment.

Shah expressed his gratitude to the Pakistani community living in Dubai for their initiatives for the development of Pakistan and said that he is happy that the Pakistani community living in abroad is always concerned about the development of their country.

Gold rate surges further

LAHORE (APP): Gold prices in Pakistan continued increasing in markets of the country on Saturday in line with an increase in the international rate.

According to All Pakistan Gem and Jewellers Association (APGJA) sources, gold price per tola stood at Rs246,400 after a single-day gain of Rs2,000.

The 10-gram gold was sold at Rs211,247 after it registered an increase of Rs1,740. All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association (APGJSA) said Saturday.

Meanwhile, already on Friday gold price per tola increased by Rs1,100 in Pakistan.

‘Rs2 trillion unfair capacity charges paralyzed economy’

KARACHI (PPI): SM Tanveer, the patron of the United Business Group (UBG) and former Provincial Minister of Punjab, today expressed grave concern over the unprecedented price hikes in electricity, petrol, gas, and essential food items, which have made it difficult for the middle class and the poor to afford basic necessities.

The federal budget for the current fiscal year has forced industries to shrink, with reports indicating that many are shutting down shifts. In Karachi, one factory administration has even advised employees to seek employment elsewhere. Tanveer emphasized that this situation is detrimental to the national economy, urging the government to collaborate with all industrial and export sectors to resolve these issues.

During a meeting with a large delegation of UBG members in Karachi, which included Ahmed Chinoy, Sheikh Umar Rehan, Mian Zahid Hussain, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Nadeem Kushti Wala, Ali Haider, Rafiq

Godil, Saeeda Bano, Maryam Chaudhry, FPCCI Vice Presidents Amanullah Paracha, Zaki Ijaz, former Vice President Khurram Ijaz, and others, Tanveer highlighted the severe impact of the federal budget on various sectors. He pointed out that the textile sector, garment industry, petroleum dealers, flour mills, pharmaceuticals, travel agents, and rice exporters are all fearful. The alarming reports of industrial shutdowns due to exorbitant electricity rates suggest an impending wave of unemployment.

Tanveer noted that the industry is shrinking, exports are declining, and cement sales dropped by 12.58% in June 2024. The construction sector is already distressed due to reduced business activity. He urged the government to take necessary steps to reduce construction costs and called the budget extremely disappointing for exporters who generate the most foreign exchange for the country.

Reiterating his demand, Tanveer called for the

immediate cancellation of agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), which are being paid despite not generating or supplying electricity. He advocated for obtaining electricity from cheaper sources without any capacity charges, stating that the Rs2 trillion unfair capacity charges have paralyzed the economy.

Tanveer further criticized the excessive taxes imposed on industries in the budget, which they cannot afford. The collection of heavy taxes along with high electricity bills has troubled small traders as well.

In recent days, a significant number of industries in Karachi have started shutting down because they cannot operate profitably under the burden of expensive electricity, gas, interest rates, and production costs coupled with excessive taxes. He urged the government to adopt austerity measures, reduce public expenditures and privileges, and reflect these measures in the federal budget.

Govt should revisit IPPs contracts: President ICCI

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) are rendering irreparable damages to country's economy making it indebted and lives of countrymen problematic, restless and miserable.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he demanded of the federal government to revisit all contracts with IPPs and focus on cheaper sources of energy without capacity charges as crippling impacts of high tariff of electricity was resulting in widespread industrial closures and substantial job losses.

Ahsan Zafar said that contracts with IPPs were major reason of power crisis in the country besides power theft due to which masses and business community have to face the consequences in the form of non-availability and expensive electricity. The federal government should formulate a strategy to deal with IPPs and ensure affordable electricity prices for industries and domestic users in the

national interest. ICCI President blamed 1994 Power Policy for trapping Pakistan's energy sector in unfavorable contractual agreements with IPPs, leading to a spiraling circular debt that reached PKR 2.64 trillion by February 2024 and the dollar-linked guarantees benefit IPPs at the expense of the government and the public.

Any depreciation of the Pakistani rupee translates to higher returns for IPPs, further straining the national budget.

He said that the total capacity production of the IPPs is 48000 MW and yesterday's (Friday) production was 20,000 MW whereas the demand was 22,000 MW and the question is as to where the rest of the production is being used, adding that country's total defence budget is Rs.2150 billion but astonishingly Rs. 2500 billion have been earmarked for the IPPs.

He went on to say that during last two days Rs.10/- per unit has been increased for domestic consumers and Rs. 18/- for commercial units. Moreover, the peak

hours' time has been enhanced by two hours which led to Rs. 12 billion burden on the consumers. Consumers have to pay Rs.1500 billion due to the fixed tax from Rs. 200 to Rs.1000. Furthermore the consumers are paying Rs. 2 billion due to the overbilling.

He warned that the recent surge in electricity prices could lead to social unrest and businesses frustration. To address this situation, the ICCI proposes a comprehensive review of IPP agreements, price reevaluation within legal boundaries, and stricter oversight to prevent overbilling.

He demanded that all those who entered into these agreements and benefited from them should be investigated and punished as per the law so the supply of cheap and quality electricity to the people and the business community can be made possible.

Court Notice

In the Court of District Judge /Zilla Qazi Buner at Daggar Civil Appeal No. 107/CR.

Institution 18/10/2023. Date of hearing 9/7/2024. Saifor Khan VS Ghulam Ghani etc, Notice to No 3.Anwar Khan s/o Manjaraf Khan resident of Ghotangay Buner. 5.Shawazir Khan.6.Shat Khan

7.Yunas Khan sons of Sarfaraz Khan resident of Baba Khel Anghapur tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8 am dated 9/7/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte.Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

15th report on Pakistan Consumer Confidence Index issued

— overall CCI saw a slight decline vis-à-vis last quarter

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dun & Bradstreet Pakistan and Gallup Pakistan have recently launched the fifteenth edition of the 'Pakistan Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) Q3 FY2023-24'. This publication systematically evaluates consumers' confidence in the economy and their personal financial situation from January 2024 to March 2024.

The CCI report assesses sentiments across four key areas: Household Financial Situation, Country's Economic Situation, Unemployment Situation, and Household Savings. This index offers insights into both 'Current Sentiments', reflecting economic shifts experienced in the past six months, and 'Future Expectations', predicting changes for the next six months. By providing a holistic view of consumers' outlook nationwide, it serves as a valuable resource for comprehending the economic terrain and its anticipated trajectory.

Ravish Hasan, Associate Regional Director - Marketing of Dun & Bradstreet Pakistan stated, "The Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) report holds considerable significance for a multitude of stakeholders, encompassing Policy Makers, Development Financial Institutions, and

businesses spanning diverse sectors. We have witnessed a minor decline in the overall CCI since last quarter, however, there is a significant improvement in the index from the same time last year which highlights the overall improvements made across the key areas captured in the report. This serves as an indicator that the country needs to continue its effort towards economic prosperity and providing a growth friendly environment to all stakeholders."

Bilal Ijaz Gilani, Executive Director Gallup Pakistan, while commenting on the findings of the report, added, "CCI for the current quarter shows a minor decline. This decline comes after two quarters of improvement in consumer perception about the economy. This quarter's report is a reminder to us that growth in the economy needs to be sustainable and achieved on stable basis which can only come from major reforms that reinvent the economic wheel. Otherwise, we would continue to see small cycles of recovery followed by cycles of decline."

In this survey a telephonic discussion was conducted with 2,008 respondents during March 2023 and thus relates to Third Quarter of Fiscal Year 2023-24 (FY2023-24).

The Consumer Confidence Index ranges from 0 to 200, with 100 as the neutral value. A score of less than 100 indicates pessimism and above 100 indicates optimism. The current quarter's Consumer Confidence Index is 77.7 points, compared to 79.7 points in the previous quarter and 65.1 in the same time last year. The overall consumer confidence remains pessimistic quarter over quarter but has improved substantially year over year.

More than half of the consumers were hopeful that their household financial situation would either stay the same or improve in the next six months. While almost half of the consumers expected the country's economic situation to improve or remain the same in the next six months.

Employment Opportunities and Prices of Daily Essentials were the biggest concerns for consumers. Four out of five consumers surveyed felt that the Unemployment Situation has gotten worse in the last six months; however, they were relatively more optimistic about the future.

Overall Sentiments of consumers declined across Punjab, Sindh and KPK, whereas Balochistan saw a 24.7% increase. Punjab and KPK saw a modest decline in overall senti-

ments of 1% and 1.5%, respectively. Consumer confidence in Sindh saw the biggest decline of 11.7%. Consumers in Punjab remain the most optimistic, followed by Balochistan, KPK and Sindh.

Consumers' sentiments largely remained the same due to economic and political stability during the time captured in the CCI. With the elections held in March 2024 and the expectations of better economic growth going forward, consumers were more hopeful of the future prospect with the Future CCI score being 91.9, which is 44.7% higher than the Current CCI score of 63.5.

D&B Pakistan is part of the Dun & Bradstreet Worldwide Network. Dun & Bradstreet, a leading global provider of business decision-making data and analytics, enables companies worldwide to improve their business performance.

Dun & Bradstreet's solutions and business intelligence generate insights that empower customers to accelerate revenue, lower costs, mitigate risk, and transform their businesses. Since 1841, companies of every size have relied on Dun & Bradstreet to help them manage risk and reveal opportunity.

PARC introduced high-yielding pulses seed varieties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali Saturday said that the Variety Evaluation Committee of the Council during current year has approved 10 high yielding pulses varieties to boost output of pulses in the country.

Talking to APP here on Saturday, he said that the pulses play a crucial role in global food security and nutrition of the country, adding that Pakistan needs 1.56 million tons of pulses annually.

We have become self-

sufficient in mung production during 2021-22 which was 0.263 million tons against the total requirement of 0.180 million tons, he added.

These ten high-yielding pulses varieties poised to revolutionize the pulses output, adding that now the country is focusing on increasing the production of other pulse crops, such as chickpea, lentil and mash bean.

Out of the recommended 10 pulses varieties that included 05 chickpea and 01 mung bean variety of NIAB, Faisalabad, 01 lentil and 01 mung bean

variety of Pulses Research Program, NARC, Islamabad, he said adding that 01 mung bean variety by Pulses Research Institute, AARI, Faisalabad and a mung bean variety of NIFA, Peshawar.

This achievement is due to the consistent backup support by PSDP, Pulses Project "Promoting Research for Productivity Enhancement in Pulses" to its research components throughout the country, he added.

The Chairman said that high yielding, disease and climate resilient vari-

eties play an important role in improving pulses productivity. However, he was of the view that as the pulses gene pool has widened, therefore, all pulses scientists across the country are urged to focus on strengthening the pulses foundation seed production including BNS, Pre-basic and basic seed.

Moreover, there were a need to a strong nexus among researchers and extension workers so that more seed can be produced to shrink the gap between pulses production and requirement in the country.

FCCI: Extensive tree plantation imperative to overcome ill impacts of climate change

FAISALABAD (APP): Extensive tree plantation is imperative to check the increasing temperature in addition to overcoming the ill impacts of climate change on the inhabitants of the city, said Dr Sajjad Arshad, Senior Vice President, Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FCCI).

Addressing a delegation of traders, he said that Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) had been mandated for massive tree plantation but unluckily its focus was on tax collection instead of enhancing tree cover and maintaining the greenery.

He said that the business community was fully convinced to cooperate

and collaborate with Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) so that planted saplings could grow into fully mature trees.

Dr Sajjad Arshad said that there was ample space along canals and water-courses where trees could be planted with a maximum survival rate.

He suggested that the Punjab government legislate that at least one tree is planted against each marla of houses in all public and private sector residential colonies and buildings. "In this connection, the developers or management of housing colonies may be given responsibility for the implementation of this law", he said and added that it would help increase

the overall tree cover in the district.

He also expressed concern over unabated use of agricultural land around Faisalabad city and said that it was one of the reasons for increase in temperature.

He said that trees could play a major role in absorbing the heat of cement used in building construction as "we now are living in a concrete jungle."

He further suggested that new housing colonies might also be directed to allocate open spaces with maximum living trees. "The violator of this law could be fined on a monthly basis", he said and added that it was impera-

tive to check the impact of climate change.

Dr Sajjad said that the PHA should also launch a study in collaboration with academia to assess the shortage of trees in Faisalabad and prepare a comprehensive plan to overcome this shortage within minimum possible time.

In this connection, different government departments, private sector and conscious circles of civil society might be involved by entrusting them responsibility to plan and look after a specific number of new plants during the upcoming monsoon season, he added.

He said that zero tolerance policy might be

adopted so that Faisalabad could be saved from severe environmental changes.

He said that most of the Miyawaki forests established in Faisalabad city were in bad shape and the department might be taken to task for it.

He also proposed linear plantation along major city roads by involving the business community for its post planting protection and care.

Vice President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FCCI) Hajji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli, Executive Member Shafique Hussain Shah, Sheikh Muhammad Fazil and Rana Habib-ur-Rehman were also present during this meeting.



In brief

Tennis camp ends amidst great fun

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wheel-Chair Tennis Development Coaching Camp concluded here at the synthetic Tennis Courts of the Peshawar Sports Complex on Saturday. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tennis Association under the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Development Initiative Coaching Camp organized the camp, wherein more than 30 wheel-chair players including male and female participated. Haji Malik Umar Daraz Khalil, who was the chief guest on this occasion, distributed certificates to the players participating in the camp along with Badminton Association General Secretary Haji Amjad Khan, Senior Vice President of Table Tennis Association, Kifayatullah, Vice President of KP Tennis Association, Umar Ayaz Khalil, Malik Imtiaz Khalil, Maulana Tariq, Maulana Humayun, Arshad Hussain and Muhammad Farooq. A month-long coaching camp organized under the auspices ITF Wheelchair Tennis Department program in which 30 wheelchair players from different parts of KP participated. Along with them, Level-2 coaches Nauman, Shehryar Khan, Zakir Ullah, Roman Gul, Shakirullah also supervised this camp. Among the female players participating in the camp are Tajmina, Gul Meena, Rubina, Hasna, Sana, Gulnaz, Bina, Lubna, Gulshan, Mahnoor, Jannat Ul Mawa and male players include Engineer Irfan Khan, Akmal Khan, Zakirullah, Ehsan, Abdullah Jan, Salman Khan, Abdullah, Mubeen, Habib-ur-Rehman, Irfan Khan, Zakir Khan, and Shams Smith.

Kabaddi C'ship from July 12

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Inter-Departmental National (Asian Style) Kabaddi Championship 2024 will kick off from July 22, at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex. According to Secretary General, Pakistan Kabaddi Federation (PKF), Muhammad Sarwar Rana a total of seven teams from various departments from all over the country will take part in the championship. The teams include Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Wapda, Higher Education Commission, Railways and Police, he said. He said the managers meeting will be held on July 11 while the final match will be played on July 14. Rana said the players who will perform well in the championship will be included in the national team. The selected team will participate in the Asian Indoor Games to be played in Thailand in November this year, he said.

Marsch's Canada beat Venezuela

TEXAS (Agencies): Canada are through to the Copa America semi-finals after beating Venezuela 4-3 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in Texas. Ismael Kone converted the decisive spot-kick after Wilker Angel's effort had been saved by goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau. Venezuela striker Salomon Rondon had earlier scored a stunning 65-yard lob to cancel out Jacob Shaffelburg's early strike as the sides could not be separated after 120 minutes. Tournament debutants Canada will now face world champions Argentina in New Jersey on Tuesday in a repeat of the tournament opener, which holders Argentina won 2-0. "We're going to face the best team in the world in the semi-finals. We're excited about it," said Canada coach Jesse Marsch, who was only appointed in May.



LONDON: Iga Swiatek of Poland plays a forehand against Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan in her Ladies' Singles third round match.

PCB allocates Rs. 12,800mln for upgradation of stadiums

LAHORE (APP): The Board of Governors (BoG) of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Saturday approved Rs. 12,800 million for upgradation of the cricket stadiums in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, to be held in Pakistan. The BoG took important decisions for development of domestic and women cricket in the country during its 72nd meeting at the Board Room of the National Cricket Academy (NCA) Gaddafi Stadium, here on Saturday. The meeting was chaired by Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi. The BoG also approved enhancing the annual budget for women cricket from Rs. 70 million to Rs. 240 million, besides raising the central contracts of the women cricketers.

The meeting also set

aside Rs. 450 million for the promotion of domestic cricket in the country. It was also decided that the PCB will look after 12 cricket grounds across the country besides providing funds for the upkeep and salaries of staff of 100 cricket grounds in Pakistan. The meeting was briefed on the preparation for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 to be held in Pakistan next year. The Chairman PCB emphasized the need of completing the upgradation work on the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, National Bank Cricket Stadium Karachi and Pindi Stadium Rawalpindi ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, adding that the international standards will be met in the upgradation. Mohsin Naqvi said that the upgradation of the stadium will ensure better facilities for the cricket fans. He

directed to work on new venues for the domestic tournaments.

The Chairman apprised the BoG of various initiatives to strengthen domestic and women cricket. Various proposals were reviewed for the betterment of domestic cricket in the country.

Chief Operating Officer (CEO) PCB and Secretary BoG Salman Naseer and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) PCB Javed Murtaza briefed the BoG on the salient features of the budget.

The BoG members including Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhter Zaman, Sajjad Ali Khokhar, Zafarullah, Tanvir Ahmed, Tariq Sarwar, Dr. Anwar Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Ismail Qureshi, Meraj Mehmood, Usama Azhar and PCB's Director Domestic Cricket Abdullah Khurram Niazi attended the 72nd meeting.

End beckons again for Cristiano Ronaldo after Portugal Euros exit



HAMBURG (Agencies): Time is up — again — for Portugal's ageing superstar Cristiano Ronaldo after an inglorious Euro 2024 exit with a quarter-final defeat against France.

France ousted the 2016 winners 5-3 on penalties after a goalless quarter-final in Hamburg on Friday and Ronaldo was ineffectual at best, damaging to his own side's aspirations at worst.

In the 2022 World Cup when former coach Fernando Santos dropped Ronaldo to the bench for the team's 6-1 demolition of Switzerland, a bright Portugal future shimmered on the horizon.

However, his successor Roberto Martinez has backed the 39-year-old, now playing in Saudi Arabia at Al-Nassr, to the hilt and beyond.

Maintaining the former Real Madrid and Manchester United forward as their figurehead, Portugal swept through Euros qualification with a 100 percent record and were among the favourites in Germany.

However, they have badly under-performed with Ronaldo failing to find the net in five appearances this summer. The striker is without a goal in his last nine major tournament matches. Despite boasting strong options to replace him, including Liverpool's Diogo Jota and Paris Saint-Germain's Goncalo Ramos, Martinez refused to take Ronaldo off against France.

Didier Deschamps substituted Les Bleus icon Kylian Mbappe as he struggled to make an impact but Ronaldo remained even as the game passed him by.

In Portugal's Last-16 win over Slovenia, Cristiano Ronaldo missed a penalty in extra-time and burst into tears, a distracting sideshow, but Martinez praised the forward's emotional reaction after the game as a sign of his passion.

However many suspect those tears were not for Portugal but for himself, as he failed to break the record for the oldest player ever to score at a European Championship.

Ronaldo also ended his run of scoring at every major international tournament he has competed in, and could not extend his record of 14 Euros goals.

He took 23 shots without success in Germany, and perhaps the most damning was a glittering opportunity in extra-time against France. Spritely winger Francisco Conceicao cut the ball back to the forward, a few yards out from goal, but somehow he fired his team's clearest chance high over the bar.

It was the kind of chance that Ronaldo has dispatched a hundred times in his career. Ronaldo's presence heavily conditions the way Portugal plays.

His team-mates, including creative geniuses Bruno Fernandes and Bernardo Silva, often resort to crosses to try and find him.

Cristiano Ronaldo no

longer has the pace to consistently break in behind the defence, limiting the passing options of the team's playmakers.

Martinez not only did not seem powerful enough to leave Ronaldo out of his plans altogether but could not even bring himself to substitute the forward at the tournament, except for in the shock 2-0 defeat by Georgia. Ronaldo started that match even though Portugal were guaranteed to win the group, while virtually every other regular was rested.

The coach said after elimination by France that no decision had been made over Ronaldo's future at international level.

"We just finished the game, everything is still too raw, we're suffering a defeat as a team, there's no individual decisions at this point," Martinez told reporters. One of the reasons the Spanish coach may not feel powerful enough to cut the cord is the 'cult of Cristiano' which is evident among the team's supporters. Adults stalked the streets of Frankfurt, Leipzig and Berlin this summer relentlessly yelling Ronaldo's "Siuuuuuu" celebration, for hours on end.

To attend a Portugal match is to swim in a sea of maroon Ronaldo '7' shirts, with some fans wearing masks of their talisman's face. Even opposition fans come to watch the Ronaldo circus, though there is more sulking and pouting than goals now.

Murray's Wimbledon career over as Raducanu pulls out of mixed

LONDON (AFP): Andy Murray's iconic Wimbledon career ended with a whimper on Saturday when his mixed doubles partner Emma Raducanu pulled out of the event, denying the former champion one last appearance at the All England Club.

Murray was due to have a final Wimbledon swansong with fellow Briton Raducanu after losing in the men's doubles with his brother Jamie on Thursday. The 37-year-old is set to retire following the Paris Olympics, which start on July 26.

Murray, a two-time Wimbledon champion, and Raducanu, who won the US Open in 2021, were scheduled to play Zhang Shuai and Marcelo Arevalo in the fourth match on Court One on Saturday. But Raducanu withdrew several hours before the match in a bid to ensure she did not aggravate a wrist problem.

"Unfortunately I woke up with some stiffness in my right wrist, so therefore I have decided to make the very tough decision to withdraw from the mixed doubles tonight," she said in a statement. "I'm disappointed as I was really looking forward to playing with Andy but got to take care."

Murray was reportedly disappointed to be denied one more match on the Wimbledon grass. Writing on X, Murray's mother Judy described the news that Raducanu had pulled out as "astounding". Murray produced some of the most memorable moments in

recent Wimbledon history, leaving a legacy that the Princess of Wales was quick to salute on Saturday.

"An incredible Wimbledon career comes to an end. You should be so very proud Andy Murray. On behalf of all of us, thank you! C," she wrote on X. Murray became the first British man to win Wimbledon in 77 years when he beat Novak Djokovic in the 2013 final. Emulating Fred Perry's success was a cathartic moment for Murray after his loss to Roger Federer in the Wimbledon final 12 months earlier.

He erased that tear-stained defeat by beating Federer to win a gold medal in the London Olympics at Wimbledon just weeks later. Murray lifted the Wimbledon trophy again in 2016, defeating Milos Raonic in the final to clinch what would prove to be the last Grand Slam title of his career. 'It's time now'

Playing in a golden era for men's tennis, Murray -- who reached 11 Slam finals -- was denied more silverware due to Federer, Djokovic and Rafael Nadal's stranglehold on the sport's major prizes. Injuries also played a major role in the former world number one's decline in recent years. After having a metal hip inserted in 2019, suffering ankle damage and undergoing surgery to remove a cyst from his spine -- which ruled him out of the singles at this year's Wimbledon -- Murray has been on a farewell tour of the grass-court Grand Slam.

Murray and brother Jamie were defeated 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 by Rinky Hijikata and John Peers of Australia in the first round of men's doubles. The Scot, a three-time Grand Slam winner, was given an emotional Centre Court send-off in front of his wife Kim and two of his children following that defeat.

He gave a tearful on-court interview in which he insisted there would be no change of heart about his decision to retire imminently. "I know that it's time now. I'm ready for that," he said. Murray will head off on a family holiday before preparing for the final event of his career at the Olympics, where he is entered in the singles event and the doubles with Dan Evans.

After beating ninth seed Maria Sakkari on Friday, Raducanu is due to play New Zealand qualifier Lulu Sun in the Wimbledon fourth round on Sunday. She is aiming to reach the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam for the first time since her remarkable run at the US Open three years ago.

Raducanu, who has struggled with injuries since her triumph in New York, was seen practising at the All England Club on Saturday prior to the announcement of her mixed doubles withdrawal. She had said the scheduling "was not ideal" after her mixed doubles match with Murray was given a late slot on Saturday, which would have offered little recovery time before facing Sun in the singles.

World Cup winners India slump to Zimbabwe loss in first T20

HARARE (AFP): India captain Shubman Gill said his much-changed team let themselves down in the field and with the bat when they crashed to a shock 13-run defeat to Zimbabwe on Saturday in their first T20 international since winning the World Cup just a week ago.

The hosts struggled to 115 for nine after being sent in to bat at the Harare Sports Club, with leg-spin and googly bowler Ravi Bishnoi taking a career-best four for 13. But India, fielding a youthful team that did not include any of the side that won the World Cup in Barbados last Saturday, were bowled out for 102 in reply.

The loss ended a streak of 12 successive T20I wins by India. "We bowled pretty well but we let ourselves down in the field. Everyone looked a bit rusty," said Gill at the post-match presentation.

"We spoke about taking time and enjoying our batting but it didn't pan out that way." India lost their first four wickets for 22 runs inside the first four overs, with new caps Abhishek Sharma (0) and Riyan Parag (2) among the failures. It became 43 for



Sikandar Raza wheels away in celebration.

five when Dhruv Jarel was caught at cover and India's hopes effectively ended when Gill was sixth out, bowled by opposite number Sikander Raza hitting across the line for 31 with the total on 47.

"It would have been best for us if I stayed to the end," said Gill. "I was very disappointed with the way I got out." Off-spinner Raza, who took three for 25, was named man of the match, said he was happy with the win but

disappointed about his team's batting.

"This isn't a wicket where you get bowled out for 115. Credit to the bowlers of both sides but clearly an indication we need to up our skills. Our catching and ground fielding was amazing."

In a low-scoring match, an unbeaten last wicket stand of 25 between Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Clive Madande (29 not out) and Tendai Chatara, who faced nine balls but

did not score a run, proved crucial. Chatara then played a key role with his fast bowling, taking three for 16, including two of the four wickets that fell in the first five overs of India's innings.

Washington Sundar gave India hope after they lost their ninth wicket with the total on 86.

Sundar, who earlier took two for 11 in four overs of off-spin bowling, made 27 before he was last man out.

Russell beats Hamilton to take Silverstone F1 pole with Norris third

SILVERSTONE (Agencies): The home crowd had three reasons to cheer when George Russell narrowly beat Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton to take pole position for the British Grand Prix, and Lando Norris was third quickest for McLaren on Saturday.

It was all about the Brits at Silverstone, with Formula 1 leader Max Verstappen taking a rare back seat and qualifying in fourth for Red Bull.

"The crowd gives us so much energy. I don't think Silverstone could have dreamt of (this)," a jubilant Russell said. "Three Brits in the top three, we love the support and we can't wait for the race tomorrow."

Russell is perfectly poised to aim for a second straight F1 win following his victory at the Austrian GP last weekend. Mercedes is showing signs of closing the gap in terms of speed, and team principal Toto Wolff clenched his fist after his drivers secured a 1-2.

"What a feeling. This is just mega," Russell said. "The car at the moment is feeling so, so good. We are riding this wave and absolutely buzzing."

Russell arrived at the track wearing an England soccer shirt ahead of the national team's European Championship quarterfinal against Switzerland later Saturday, and said his own



nerves were on edge.

"Probably the most pressure I've ever felt in a qualifying session," he said, praising the crowd for uplifting him. "I wasn't feeling that confident with myself."

Hamilton just missed out on a record-extending 105th F1 pole by .171 seconds while Norris was .211 seconds behind Russell, who secured his second pole of the season and third of his career. "Three Brits in the top three is incredible," said Hamilton, who has won at Silverstone a record eight times. "This is huge for us (Mercedes). The car felt great."

Sergio Perez's poor run of form for Red Bull continued. He went off track at Copse corner and into the gravel during Q1 — the first part of qualifying — prompting team principal Christian Horner to

shake his head. Perez's car was removed by a crane as the Mexican driver looked on.

Since being given a two-year contract extension last month, Perez has not finished higher than seventh in three races and faces a difficult task to score points from 19th spot. When qualifying resumed dark clouds were forming over the six-kilometer (3.7-mile) circuit.

Verstappen uttered an expletive over the team radio after momentarily sliding off track and riding over some gravel. He was way off the pace in Q1, which was led by Hamilton, and again in Q2, which Norris led. Verstappen missed out on a ninth pole of the season. But he praised his team for fixing damage to the car floor from going over the gravel. "I gave it everything.

Guys, thank you very much," the Dutchman said on radio. "We'll go at it tomorrow." It was a frustrating day for Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who failed to make it into Q3, the top 10 shootout, and starts 11th.

"I had huge problems with balance," said Leclerc, who won the Monaco GP from pole in May. McLaren's Oscar Piastri goes from fifth followed by Haas driver Nico Hulkenberg, with Carlos Sainz Jr. (Ferrari), Lance Stroll (Aston Martin), Alex Albon (Williams) and two-time F1 champion Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin) rounding out the top 10.

French driver Esteban Ocon qualified in 18th and called qualifying "embarrassing" for the Alpine team. He is leaving at the end of the year and reportedly could join Haas.



In brief

Zabiullah gang apprehended

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a successful operation on Saturday, police have arrested the leader of the notorious Zabiullah gang, along with two accomplices, for their alleged involvement in vehicle theft. The police also recovered a stolen Toyota Corolla worth millions of rupees from their possession. Those arrested were identified as Zabiullah, Abrar and Hafeez. Saddar Barooni police have registered separate cases against them and further investigation was in progress. SHO said that the suspects have been shifted to jail for an identification parade. This process is expected to lead to the recovery of more stolen property as investigations in progress. SP Muhammad Nabil Khokhar praised the police for their efforts, stating that the arrested suspects will face trial with solid evidence. He also affirmed that operations against organized criminal will be continued without any discrimination.

Police conduct training

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, a training session for Punjab Food Authority (PFA) officers was held at Police Lines Headquarters here on Saturday. Among others, Public Prosecutor Zaigham Abbas Cheema, Director North PFA Khattak Samit and police officers were present on the occasion. During the training, officers received lectures on prosecution, FIR registration, and investigation. They were also trained on identifying and addressing flaws in prosecution practices. The session focused on the importance of collecting and securing evidence. DSP Admin Shahida Yasmin emphasized that securing the crime scene and using modern scientific methods in investigations are crucial for ensuring justice. Effective investigations play a key role in punishing offenders and providing justice to citizens, she added.

RCB intensifies cleaning drive

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has intensified cleaning of drains in different parts of the cantonment areas. RCB has asked residents to cooperate with field workers who are engaged with heavy machinery round the clock. According to the details, Syed Ali Irfan Rizvi, RCB CEO has instructed to conduct a swift drain cleaning campaign on the eve of heavy rains during the monsoon. He has appealed to the citizens to avoid throwing garbage and construction debris into the nullahs, refrain children from visiting deep drains and to cooperate with the RCB teams. The cleaning operation has been completed in the areas including Allama Iqbal Colony, Trench Bhatta Puli, Faisal Colony, Miran Bakhsh Colony, Jaba Puli, Adra, Aslam Market and Jan Colony, while work has been intensified in areas including Peshawar Road Lane No. 4 to 7, Habib Colony, Chak Madad Khan, Sulaiman Abad, Dhok Banaras, and Gawalmandi nullahs. Moreover, a control room has also been set up in RCB in view of the recent rains. To deal with any kind of emergency, the staff of the cant board remained in the control room for 24 hours. The holidays of the related staff have been canceled. The spokesman RCB informed that SENTRY Supervisors and other relevant staff would be present in their respective areas to avoid any kind of emergency. All resources are being utilized to keep the situation under control, he added.

Ramos discusses matters of mutual interests with Mohsin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Speaker of New York State Assembly Phil Ramos and his delegation on Saturday met with Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi at the Ministry of Interior.

Both sides discussed matters of mutual interests including education, health and increasing cooperation in policing and economic sectors. Both sides also agreed to send qualified Pakistani nurses to New York for employment after completing the necessary process and the procedure will be finalized soon in this regard.

Deputy Speaker New York Assembly Phil Ramos told Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi that there is a shortage of qualified nurses in America and Pakistan has a lot of potential in this regard.

Expressing his views Minister Mohsin Naqvi said he will take necessary steps to recruit qualified Pakistani nurses in New York. The meeting also decided that a workable plan will be developed to utilize the opportunities to

increase cooperation in the education, health and economic sectors.

The Deputy Speaker of the New York Assembly invited Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to visit New York. He said that the Pakistani community in America is doing significant services in every field. The people of both countries will benefit from the promotion of bilateral cooperation, said Deputy Speaker New York Assembly Phil Ramos.

Federal Minister emphasized that historical relations between Pakistan and America are deep and long-standing, spanning several decades. He said that there are vast opportunities for collaboration in the areas of health, Education and economic development.

During his tenure as Chief Minister, he paid special attention to the nursing department in Punjab and doubled the number of nursing students, Mohsin Naqvi told Phil Ramos adding that a plan has been made to increase the number of nurses in Islamabad as well.

He assured Phil Ramos that immediate steps will be taken to send qualified Pakistani nurses to New York. Naqvi informed Phil Ramos that during his recent visit to New York, positive discussions were held between the Islamabad Police and the New York Police Department to enhance cooperation and a delegation of Islamabad Police will visit New York soon.

"We will take immediate steps by identifying new areas to further enhance mutual cooperation", Mohsin Naqvi assured Phil Ramos and said that he will personally monitor the actions taken at every place and at every level for the participant. The delegation attended the meeting included New York Assembly member Alec Cransey, American Pakistani Public Affairs Chairman Dr. Ijaz Ahmed, President New York Chapter Tariq Khan, President Imtiaz Rahi, Director Dr. Parvez Iqbal, Former Executive Director Athar Tirmizi and Texas Vice President Dr. Khalid Mehmood.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Deputy Speaker of New York Assembly Philip Ramos. —APP Photo

ANF recovers 13 kg drugs in operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations across the country managed to recover 13 kg drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that 185 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel sent to the UK at a courier office in Lahore. In second operation, 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two suspects arrested in Hayatabad Peshawar.

In third operation, 8.4 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on RCD Road Hub while an accused was also arrested. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Pakistani delegation visits UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Pakistani delegation led by Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui is on visit to the United Kingdom to strengthen academic collaborations.

The visit aimed at fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing between Pakistani and British educational institutions. During the visit, the delegation will engage in deliberations with renowned academicians and education experts to learn about best practices in education.

The discussions will focus on exploring opportunities for mutual cooperation, exchange programs, and capacity building initiatives. The minister emphasized the importance of this visit, stating, "We are committed to improving our education system and providing quality education to our students. This visit will enable us to learn from the expertise of Cambridge University and other UK institutions, and to share our own experiences and best practices".

Members of the Peace Committee Punjab including Pir Muhammad Usman Noori, Maulana Ali Naqshbandi, Maulana Imran Hanafi, Mufti Muhammad Ikram, Maulana Babar Rahimi, Maulana Muhammad Aslam and Abdul Ghaffar Qadri were present on the occasion.

The conference was also attended by the Ulema-e-Akram of all schools of thought, Deputy Commissioners, CPOs,

Murree to have status of district soon, Azma Bukhari

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Information and Broadcasting Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari has said that soon Murree will be given the status of a district. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is focusing on the grand development plan of Murree by introducing innovative development projects.

She informed that a specialized hospital would be built in Murree. The provincial information minister affirmed to take all measures for the welfare of journalists belonging to Murree. Talking to the media during her visit to Murree Press Club on Saturday, the Information Minister said that Maryam Nawaz put a special focus on the development of

Murree soon after assuming her office. Murree is the second home of Chief Minister, she added.

The Information Minister further said that the government was working under a great vision of CM Punjab for Murree's infrastructure, development and promotion of tourism.

The performance of Basic Health Units and THQ Hospital will be further improved and cardiology labs will be established, she said. She assured to talk to the Chief Minister about the welfare of Murree journalists, the new press club building and other issues related to media in Murree.

Press Club Murree's body should compile a list

of registered journalists and send it to me, she asked the journalists while announcing that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz would give houses to the journalists of Murree.

The minister further assured that she would discuss with media owners the matter of non-payment of salaries to the journalists.

"I wish to inaugurate the new building of Press Club Murree during my next visit", she said. The minister observed that more work was needed to be done on illegal constructions and traffic problems in Murree. She directed the administration and the traffic police to formulate the traffic plan on a season basis to avoid traffic jam.

Commissioner, RPO organized conference

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak and Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi, Babar Sarfaraz Alpa here on Saturday organized an

'Itehad Bain-ul-Muslimeen' conference to promote interfaith harmony. Leader of the convoy, Aman Committee Punjab, Mufti Ramzan Sialvi participated in the conference as chief guest.

Members of the Peace Committee Punjab including Pir Muhammad Usman Noori, Maulana Ali Naqshbandi, Maulana Imran Hanafi, Mufti Muhammad Ikram, Maulana Babar Rahimi, Maulana Muhammad Aslam and Abdul Ghaffar Qadri were present on the occasion.

The conference was also attended by the Ulema-e-Akram of all schools of thought, Deputy Commissioners, CPOs,

DPOs and officials of other related departments from Rawalpindi Division.

Mufti Ramzan Sialvi said that on the instructions of the Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, they reached Rawalpindi with a message of peace. "Our aim is to promote love, peace and interfaith harmony during Muharram," he added.

Rawalpindi division has always been a peaceful area and credit goes to Rawalpindi administration and Ulema-e-Akram, Mufti Ramzan Sialvi said adding, the scholars played their key role in making Muharram-ul-Haram, Milad-ul-Nabi (peace be upon him) and other religious gatherings peaceful.

The scholars of all schools of thought spread the message of peace in Muharram, Arif Wahidi added. He further said martyrdom of Hazrat Imam

Hussain (RA) is an important lesson and path to follow by every Muslim.

The Commissioner said, the scholars have always played an exemplary role for the establishment of peace. Engineer Aamir Khattak said that all possible facilities would be provided for peaceful Muharram processions in Rawalpindi division.

Foolproof security arrangements would be made to maintain the atmosphere of peace during Muharram, the RPO said.

The RPO said those spreading religious hatred on social media would be dealt with iron hands. In the conference, a resolution was presented against the atrocities committed on Palestinian people. At the end of the conference, a special prayer was made for the martyrs of Palestine and the development and prosperity of Pakistan.

WAPDA generates 34.436 bln units in FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 22 Hydel Power Stations of WAPDA cumulatively provided 34.436 billion units of electricity to the National Grid in 2023-24, which is 3.266 billion units more than that of fiscal year 2022-23.

WAPDA achieved this additional hydel power generation because of the improved hydrology and effective operation and maintenance of its Hydel Power Stations, said a press release.

This increase in hydel generation by WAPDA to the tune of 3.266 billion units helped save national exchequer an amount of Rs. 143.7 billion, if the same quantum of electricity had to be generated through imported furnace oil.

It is pertinent to note that

the cumulative installed generation capacity of WAPDA Hydel Power Stations, including Neelum Jhelum, stands at about 9,500 MW. Hydel generation is the most economical electricity, generated in the country.

The tariff for fiscal year 2023-24 determined by NEPRA for WAPDA hydel electricity is Rs. 3.81 per unit, which constitutes about 30% of the total electricity provided to the National Grid. Therefore, it plays a vital role for lowering the overall tariff for the consumers.

According to the data, Tarbela Hydel Power Station generated 13.424 billion units, Tarbela 4th Extension 4.672 billion units, Ghazi Barotha 6.556 billion units, Mangla 5.276 billion units, and Neelum-Jhelum Hydel Power Station generated 762

million units. While, rest of the generation i.e. 3.747 billion units - was contributed by other hydel power stations of WAPDA.

WAPDA is vigorously implementing a least-cost energy generation plan to enhance share of hydel electricity in the National Grid. A number of mega projects are under construction in Water and Hydropower Sectors including Diamer Basha Dam, Mohmand Dam, Dasu Hydropower Project and Tarbela 5th Extension etc. scheduled for completion in a phased manner.

These projects will increase the WAPDA hydel generation in next four to five years from 9,500 MW to 20,700 MW with an addition of about 11,200 MW clean, green and low-cost hydel electricity.

CDA chief visits summer camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Saturday visited the summer camp organized at F-7/4 Model College for Girls and met senior officers of the Ministry of Education and other departments.

Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that a state-of-the-art art autism center will be established in the city for children suffering from autism.

In context, suitable place will be identified and allotment of land will be made for the center.

The Chairman said that a technical committee consisting of students under the Principal of Model College for Girls has been formed for the establishment of autism center.

The committee comprising upon the students of the summer camp will conduct research according to the international models of the Autism Center and the students themselves will give a

briefing to the CDA board on their research. CDA will implement these recommendations and finalize the plan.

Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that the purpose of conducting research by the students is to develop the tendency of research in students as the students participating in the summer camp have the enthusiasm of research so they will be able to express their best skills by doing research. He said that this will increase the habit of research in children.

Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that there is a dire need for an autism center in Islamabad so that children with autism can also play their role in the development of the country like other children.

The Chairman also appreciated the initiative of Federal Education for organizing the summer camp and gave a motivational lecture to the participants of the summer camp.

IRSA releases 344,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 344,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 528,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1503.82 feet and was 105.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 288,400 cusecs and 141,500 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1189.60 feet, which was 141.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 57,770 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 217,400, 168,100, 111,700 and 45,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 91,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 59,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Special Secretary inspects cleanliness work of Nullah Lai

RAWALPINDI (APP): Special Secretary Housing and Urban Development Punjab, Tayyab Fareed here on Saturday visited Gawalmandi area and inspected the cleanliness work of Nullah Lai.

During the visit, the Secretary also reviewed the Monsoon preparations of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi.

On the occasion, the Special Secretary said that all the departments concerned need to be alert after the recent forecast of the Meteorological Department.

He said that WASA Rawalpindi had made extensive preparations for Monsoon, including timely cleaning of major drains and sewage lines of the city along with Nullah Lai.

Next two months are very important and there is need to be alert all the time, he said and instructed the departments to make coordinated efforts to provide relief to the citizens. Machinery and staff should be deployed particularly in low-lying areas of the city to deal with any kind of emergency situation, he directed.

The Special Secretary Housing further informed that the Punjab government had provided funds timely for the annual cleanliness project, due to which WASA had completed the arrangements in

Rawalpindi on time.

He expressed the hope that the citizens would not face any kind of problem this year during heavy rains. Special Secretary Housing said that Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak is monitoring the whole process and all the institutions are working under a comprehensive strategy.

Earlier, Managing Director (MD) WASA, Muhammad Saleem Ashraf while giving a briefing said that WASA had completed the preparations before the Monsoon.

He said that the Punjab government had released the funds for the cleanliness work of 11 drains of the city. The cleaning work of Nullah Lai had been completed from Katarian Bridge to Murree Road, however machinery was working to clear the blockages in Nullah Lai after heavy rains last night and this process would continue during Monsoon, he added.

Similarly, the cleaning process of the major drains across the city was also completed before Eid Al-Azha, along with this, WASA Rawalpindi had used modern winch machines for cleaning the sewage lines and this work had also been completed on time, he informed.

Section-144 had been imposed to discourage throwing of garbage and

solid waste in Nullah Lai and cases were also registered against several violators.

The MD further informed that during Monsoon rain, emergency is enforced under which the leaves of all the field staff are canceled and the staff remain present in the field round the clock. Five Monsoon Emergency Relief Camps had been established in the city at Liaquat Bagh, Gawalmandi Nullah Lai bridge, Commercial Market, Sadiqabad and Khayaban-e-Sir Syed. Heavy machinery and field staff to remain present in all emergency relief camps, he added.

WASA would use heavy machinery including jetting and sucker machines, de-watering sets, winch machines and water bowlers to clear stagnant rain water during heavy rains from different city areas particularly low-lying.

MD WASA said that all machinery of WASA is operational and training of staff has been completed. WASA Rawalpindi is doing its best to ensure that the citizens do not face any problem during Monsoon, he informed.

DG, RDA, Kinza Murtaza, Chief Engineer RDA, Anwar Baran, Director Sewerage Sadoun Basra and others officers were also present on this occasion.

Four children killed in blast

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): Four children were killed and a 19-year-old boy injured when an old mortar shell they were playing with exploded in central Logar province, police said on Saturday. Police spokesman Maulvi Ahmadullah Anas said the explosion happened in Musa Qala area of Pul-i-Alam city. Four children were killed and a 19-year-old boy was injured in the incident. "The shell went off when the children started playing with it," he added.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Hajj 29 1445 — Sunday, July 07, 2024

32 Corps vehicles repaired

KABUL (Pajhwok): Thirty-two military vehicles have been repaired and reactivated by technical teams of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). MoD announced in a statement on Saturday that technical experts from the 3rd brigade of the 205th Al-Badr Corps had fixed the military vehicles. According to the statement, cited by Bakhtar News Agency, the restored vehicles included a dozen international trucks, five Humvees, as many dumper and an armoured tanks.

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

IEA calls govt inclusivity an internal issue

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has dismissed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) call for the establishment of an inclusive government in.

IEA spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, reacting to the SCO statement, said government inclusivity was Afghanistan's internal issue.

TOLONews quoted him as asking the largest regional security entity to discuss ways of regulating its relations with Afghanistan.

Mujahid told the private broadcaster: "The issue of an inclusive government is an internal matter; Afghans will make decisions in consideration of their national interest in any case."

He suggested neighbours and other countries,



should discuss issues related to their relations and interaction with Afghanistan.

Mujahid's comments came in response to Chinese President Xi Jinping's speech at SCO summit, where he said they

were working to encourage the caretaker government to set up an inclusive political structure.

He also stressed coordination and cooperation with Afghanistan's neighbours to boost humanitarian support for the country.

Private cars banned to operate as taxis

KABUL (TOLONews): Traffic authorities said that from now on, private vehicles will not be allowed to operate as taxis unless they have a taxi permit.

The General Director of the Traffic Department told TOLONews that private vehicles must obtain a taxi license.

Haseebullah Mukhtar, the General Director of the Traffic Department, stated: "We have two types of vehicles. One is private vehicles that are currently allowed to operate until they go through the taxi licensing process. For vehicles imported by companies, we are trying to get the procedure approved by the leadership. After that, whether private or company-owned, they will not be allowed to operate without a permit."

Some drivers who use private vehicles in the city are asking the interim government to reconsider this decision.

Bashir Ahmad, 36, who has been driving in a corner of the capital for over three years, finds this decision by the interim government concerning.

He says that he works from morning until night to support his family of seven, yet still faces economic challenges.

Bashir Ahmad told TOLONews: "There are no other jobs. People are forced to rent a car or hire one to make a living."

Other drivers say they face many economic challenges and cannot afford to get a taxi license.

They urge the Islamic Emirate officials to allow their private vehicles to work in the city.

Obaidullah, a driver, said: "Our request is to be allowed to work. We don't have the money to buy another car. We bought this one to work and support our families."

Meanwhile, some citizens are working with their private vehicles in the city due to the lack of jobs, thus supporting their families.

4 killed, 15 wounded in accidents

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): At least four people have been killed and 15 others wounded in four separate traffic accidents in central Kapisa and southern Ghazni provinces, local officials said on Saturday.

Kapisa police spokesman Abdul Fatah Fayeaz told Pajhwok Afghan News an accident took place on Friday afternoon when a vehicle veered off the road and flipped over in Alasai district.

He said four people, including a woman, lost their lives and six others, including children, were wounded in the incident in Chaikhel area.

He added the injured were evacuated to Kabul for medical treatment and are said to be in critical condition.

Separately, nine individuals were wounded as a result of three separate traffic accidents in Ghazni, police spokesman Abu Khalid Sarhadi told Pajhwok.

The first accident occurred when two vehicles collided on the Kabul-Kandahar highway on Friday.

He said five people, including two women, were injured in the collision.

Four people were wounded in two other mishaps elsewhere in the province. He blamed the accidents on rash driving.

Contract extended for repairs to railway with Uzbekistan

KABUL (TOLONews): The deputy of the Railway Authority of the Ministry of Public Works announced the extension of the contract for the reconstruction of the Haritan-Mazar-Sharif railway with Uzbekistan.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, the spokesman of the ministry, said that the contract for the reconstruction of this line has been extended for six months, and Uzbekistan has emphasized bilateral cooperation to connect Central and South Asia with railways.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Public Works said in this regard: "The contract for the repair of the Hairatan-Mazar-e-Sharif Railway project was extended for another six months, so that the remaining works of the railway can be completed, and the two sides discussed rail transfers, bilateral cooperation and important issues between the two countries."

The deputy of railways of the Ministry of Public Works, in a meeting with the Uzbekistan delegation on bilateral railway cooperation, said providing scholarships for improving the capacity of employees of the Railway Administration, and the start of the technical survey of the Trans-Afghan project were



discussed.

The Chamber of Industries and Mines emphasized the cooperation of regional countries and the private sector with the Islamic Emirate as important to implementing major railway projects in the country.

Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, the first deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "The countries of Central Asia also believe that if the project of railways is to be worked on, we hope that it will be with the cooperation of the private sector, capital, and the

integrated region. We will start the railways of Afghanistan so that shortly we will benefit from it," he said. Experts said the reconstruction and expansion of the railway will be effective in the transfer of commercial property and the growth of the country's economy.

Abdul Shakur Hadahwal, knowledgeable about economic issues, said: "Afghanistan is said to be the most important factor in the economic growth of Afghanistan if the economy expands rapidly."

Abdul Zahoor, an expert

on economic issues, said: "If there are many facilities, it has a direct impact on the economy of Afghanistan. There are special ways to discuss this in Afghanistan. If it is properly managed, the costs will be reduced."

Earlier, the deputy of Railways said that in the current year, the three major railway projects of Afghanistan, including the Kandahar-Spin Boldak, Andkhoi-Sheberghan railway, and also the technical review of the Trans-Afghan railway project will be completed in this year.

45 development projects launched in Farah: Officials

FARAH (TOLONews): Local officials in Farah have announced the launch of 45 development projects at a cost of \$20 million since the beginning of the current solar year in the province of Afghanistan.

According to the officials, 9 of these projects have been completed, and the work on the remaining 36 projects is ongoing.

Jamaluddin Jalali, the head of Farah's economy, stated: "Since the beginning of the current solar year, we have launched 45 development projects at a cost of more than 20 million dollars in Farah

province. Of these, 9 projects have been completed and 36 major and minor projects are underway."

Engineer Abdul Saboor Siddiqui said: "The projects being implemented in Farah province must be continuously monitored."

Meanwhile, a water storage dam in the Shebkooch district of Farah province was inaugurated at a cost of over 4 million afghani. The dam is 38 meters wide and 4 meters high and can store 8,000 cubic meters of water.

Mohammad Nasim Sarhang, the head of Farah's rural development

and rehabilitation, said: "This water storage dam in Shebkooch district of Farah province has been constructed at a cost of over 4 million afghani from the budget of Islamic Emirate. The dam is 38 meters wide and 4 meters high, with a storage capacity of 8,000 cubic meters of water."

Residents of Farah are calling for more development projects to be initiated.

Gul Ahmad, a resident of Farah, said: "We are pleased with the launch of this project, but we demand more development projects in Farah

province."

Amanullah, another resident of Farah, added: "The government has built roads for us, and more efforts should be made to repair and reconstruct damaged roads. With the completion of these projects, our convenience will increase."

The Bakhshabad dam project is one of the largest development projects in Farah province, which is currently under construction. This dam will have the capacity to store 1,360 million cubic meters of water and generate 27 megawatts of electricity.

Volume of imports from Pakistan declined, says Customs official

KABUL (Ariana News): Nangarhar Customs officials say the volume of imports from Pakistan has decreased and that Afghanistan's exports have increased.

They said due to some problems in the process of exports and imports, therefore, Kabul has no choice but to use alternative ways to import goods, and this has caused the volume of imports from Pakistan to decrease. "Traders mostly import their goods from Chabahar port. Imports from Pakistan have decreased, but our exports have increased," said Mohammad Khalid Omar, head of Nangarhar Customs.

Khalid Omar, however, stressed that the decrease in imports and increase in exports has not caused a change in Nangarhar customs revenue.

Meanwhile, the drop in imports from Pakistan has caused the business of some drivers who work on the Torkham-Kabul route to decrease.

The decline in imports from Pakistan has caused the work of some drivers who work on the Torkham-



Kabul route to decrease.

"I used to commute three times a month, now once," a truck driver said.

A number of business-

men, however, said that export and import problems should be resolved through dialogue with Pakistan.

Economic experts also

said that raises tariffs on Afghanistan's export goods, and this causes traders to suffer huge financial losses from time to time.

Sugar, fuel and gold prices up in Kabul marts

KABUL (Pajhwok): The prices of sugar, fuel and gold increased during the outgoing week in Kabul, market sources said Saturday.

Fuel prices up
A worker at the Ahmadyar pump station told Pajhwok Afghan News the prices of one litre of petrol went up from 60afs to 62afs and diesel from 58afs and 60afs.

Mohammad Sharif, a liquefied gas seller in Kolola Pushta neighborhood, sold a kilo of the commodity for 48afs against last week's 46afs.

Food items
Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders' Association, said the rate of a 49-kilogram sack of sugar surged

from 2,900afs to 2,980afs. But the prices of a 49-kilogram sack of Kazakhstani flour and a 16-liter tin of Malaysian cooking oil stayed stable at 1,500afs and 1,420afs respectively.

Also a 24-kilogram bag of Pakistani rice was sold for 2,600afs, a kilogram of African black tea for 400afs and the same amount of Indonesian green tea for 350afs, the same rates as last week's.

Hamid Sufizada, a retailer at Dehna-i-Bagh Market, put the retail price of a 49-kilogram bag of Kazakh flour at 1,550afs, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice at 2,650afs and a 49-kg sack of sugar at 3,030afs.

A 16-litre bottle of cook-

ing oil accounted for 1,470afs, one kilogram of black tea for 400afs and the same quantity of green tea for 450afs, he added.

Gold prices up
Mohammad Fawad, a jeweler in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold went up from 4,350afs to 4,400afs and the same amount of the Russian variety from 3,450afs to 3,500afs.

Afghani vs dollar
Haji Hussain, owner of Sadaqat Money Exchange Service, said one US dollar was traded at 71.20afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees consumed 250afs.

Last week, one US dollar was accounted for 71afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees

Azizi calls for Uzbekistan to invest in Afghanistan



KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi in a meeting with the Minister of Mining Industry and Geology of Uzbekistan has called for the country's investment in Afghanistan's oil, gas, and copper mines.

According to a statement released by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce on Saturday, Azizi said that Uzbekistan should invest in the oil and gas mines in northern Afghanistan as it is advantageous in terms of

proximity and providing easy access to markets in the region.

He also proposed to Uzbekistan to invest in copper mines in Ghazni and Herat provinces and to establish mineral processing factories in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Bobir Farkhadovich Islamov, the Minister of Mining Industry and Geology of Uzbekistan called for an investment support agreement between the two countries.

He also mentioned the

establishment of two large factories in the field of copper processing in Uzbekistan, and said that these factories have an urgent need for raw materials, which will be met by the exploration and extraction of copper from Afghanistan.

In the meeting, it was decided that an official delegation from Uzbekistan will travel to Afghanistan to carry out survey and technical work in coordination with the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan.

Deportation of nearly 12,000 Afghan migrants

KABUL (Khaama Press): Recently, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation released statistics showing that nearly 12,000 Afghan migrants were deported from Iran and Pakistan over the past four days.

Today, the ministry stated in a newsletter that 11,997 Afghan migrants were expelled by the governments of Pakistan and Iran and have re-entered the country.

According to the newsletter, the expelled individuals entered the country between July 3rd and July 6th through the borders of Torghundi, Spin

Boldak, Islam Qala-Herat, and Abreshim-Nimruz.

Despite international reactions, the trend of deporting Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan continues amid a humanitarian crisis.

The forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan has exacerbated the dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Many of these deportees face uncertain futures, returning to a country plagued by conflict, economic instability, and a lack of basic services.

The sudden influx of

returnees has already overwhelmed communities and humanitarian organizations struggling to provide support.

International human rights groups and organizations have condemned the mass deportations, citing concerns about the safety and well-being of the Afghan deportees.

They argue that such actions violate international law, particularly concerning the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the forced return of refugees to a country where they could face persecution or serious harm.

New polio vaccination campaign to be started

KABUL (Khaama Press): The organization known as Afghanistan Polio-Free has announced that a polio vaccination campaign is set to begin in several provinces of the country in two days.

The organization stated in a message on Saturday, July 6th, that the polio vaccination campaign will commence on Monday, July 8th.

Afghanistan Polio-Free has not provided details on which provinces the campaign will be conducted in or the number of children expected to receive vaccinations.

Previously, the Ministry of Public Health of had announced that over 10 million children across the country have received the



polio vaccine.

This comes as five cases of polio have been reported in the provinces of Nuristan, Kandahar, Herat, and Ghazni since the beginning of the current solar year.

It is noteworthy that Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only two countries

in the world where polio has not yet been eradicated.

Meanwhile, the upcoming polio vaccination campaign underscores ongoing efforts to combat the disease in Afghanistan, highlighting the critical importance of immunization initiatives to protect children's health nationwide.

PTI calls off Islamabad rally, files contempt plea against administration

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday called off its Islamabad rally and moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking contempt of court proceedings against those responsible for the suspension of the no objection certificate (NOC) in this regard.

The former ruling party had announced to hold a rally on Saturday in the Tarnol area in the outskirts of the federal capital and had filed a petition in the IHC seeking permission for its rally. In response, IHC's Babar Sattar on June 26 directed the party and the city's administration to amicably sort out the issue after which the deputy commissioner allowed the PTI to hold its rally.

However, Islamabad Chief Commissioner later suspended the NOC citing the beginning of the month of Muharram and security concerns along with complaints lodged by the local people. The chief commissioner, in a letter dated July 5, said that the police on Wednesday confirmed recovering a heavy cache of weapons and ammunition.

Stressing that an intelligence-based operation (IBO) was still underway in Tarnol, the official highlighted insufficient manpower to secure a local Imam Bargah and the rally at the same time, particularly in Muharram. The intelligence agencies, he added, had shared information about the presence of security threats in the area during this month.

Apart from the security threat, he said residents of Tarnol also conveyed their concerns over permission for the public gathering in the area. Hence, Randhawa said he deemed it "expedient in the public interest to suspend the NOC till Chehlum". In its petition filed in the IHC, the party said the Islamabad DC apprised the court on July 4 that the NOC had been issued. Nevertheless, the plea added, the PTI leaders got to know about the NOC's suspension through the Islamabad Police's post via its official handle on social media platform X.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad Police has raided the PTI's (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) rally venue, removing the stage containers, barbed wire, and other equipment.

This action came after the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad canceled the NOC (No-Objection Certificate) for the PTI's rally. The police stated that since the NOC had been canceled, the venue was being cleared.

The Islamabad administration has said that no arrests have been made so far, but strict legal action will be taken if anyone tries to take the law into their own hands. On the other hand, the PTI has decided to go ahead with the rally despite the NOC being canceled. PTI leader Umar Ayub said they are making preparations and the rally will be held no matter what.

He alleged that the current government is panicking and trying to block the path of a popular political party. This is a major setback for the PTI, as the NOC for their rally in Islamabad today has been suspended. According to the Islamabad administration, the decision to suspend the NOC was made to ensure the safety and security of the citizens, considering the Muharram-related security concerns. A meeting chaired by the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad was held, where the decision to cancel the NOC for the rally was made.



KYIV: Local residents reacting as they refuse to be evacuated, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in the town of Toretsk, near a front line in Donetsk.

Arif Alvi returns to dentistry

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: After completing his term as the 13th President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi has returned to his dental practice, marking his re-entry into the professional field he had been associated with for decades.

The news was confirmed by his son, Awab Alvi, through a post on the social media platform X, where he shared a picture of Dr. Alvi attending to a patient at the Alvi Dental Hospital. "Welcoming my father back to our family clinic, Alvi Dental Hospital, is a moment of immense pride and joy," Awab Alvi wrote in his post. The image accompanying the announcement shows Dr Arif Alvi treating a woman, signifying his seamless transition from the highest office in the country back to his original vocation.new

Dr. Alvi, who boasts over 55 years of experience in dentistry along with two master's degrees, is resuming his duties at the clinic with the same dedication and expertise that defined his earlier career. His son highlighted that Dr. Alvi is now regularly engaged in consultations and treatments, bringing his wealth of knowledge back to the dental community.

Dr. Arif Alvi's career in dentistry is distinguished by his profound contributions and the establishment of a reputable practice. His return to the field, after serving as Pakistan's president for five years, underscores his enduring commitment to his profession. It is pertinent to recall that Dr. Alvi stepped down from his presidential post in March this year following the election of a new president after the general elections. Prior to his presidency, Dr. Alvi had dedicated his life to the field of dentistry, making significant strides in both his professional and public service roles.

Memon launch of taxi service in Sindh

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh's Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon announced the launch of Pakistan's first electric vehicle (EV) taxi service including a special pink EV taxi service dedicated to women.

This initiative by the Sindh Government's Transport Department aims to provide a modern and eco-friendly transportation option for the public. The introduction of EV taxis and pink EV taxis marks a significant step towards sustainable transportation in Pakistan. The pink EV taxis will specifically cater to female passengers, ensuring a safer and more comfortable travel experience.

These services are expected to roll out soon, offering a cleaner and more efficient alternative to conventional taxis. This initiative aligns with the government's commitment to improving public transport and promoting environmental sustainability. The new EV taxi services will not only reduce carbon emissions but also provide reliable and safe transportation options for all citizens, with special consideration for women's safety and convenience.

Biden dismisses calls to quit in key TV interview

WASHINGTON (AFP): US President Joe Biden fended off questions about his mental fitness and electability in a TV interview on Friday meant to draw a line under a disastrous debate performance that triggered calls for him to quit his re-election bid. With rebellion brewing among some nervous Democratic voters, lawmakers and donors, the one-to-one with the ABC network was hyped as the most consequential of the 81-year-old president's long career.

But the 22-minute sit-down appeared to provide little reassurance, as Biden blamed sickness for his sub-par performance and repeatedly dismissed polling and fears within his party that the debate had gravely wounded his prospects. "I was sick, I was feeling terrible [...] I just had a really bad cold," said the president, in his first unscripted remarks of any length since last week's showdown with Republican rival Donald Trump.

The interview was intended to help Biden weather the storm, but his hoarse voice and meandering answers drew immediate Democratic fire for appearing "out of touch." Asked if staying in the race might jeopardize Democrats holding on to the White House, Biden said: "I don't think anybody's more qualified to be president or win this race than me."

He dodged calls to have doctors assess his mental acuity, saying that the duties of the presidency mean "I have a cognitive test every single day. Every day I have that test, everything I do." The Trump campaign mockingly posted on social media that "Biden sounds great" as the broadcast went out, before concluding the president "is in denial and in decline." The interview came after Biden was hesitant and often incoherent during the debate against Trump in Atlanta, leading to panic within his party and calls for him to pull out of the race.

The Biden campaign has pushed back hard on any suggestion he may withdraw and, just hours before the ABC interview,

released an aggressive campaign travel schedule for the rest of July. Appearing at a campaign rally in Madison, Wisconsin, the president delivered an energetic stump speech, unequivocally declaring, "I'm staying in the race. I'll beat Donald Trump."

Post-debate polls have shown a widening deficit in Trump's favour and at least four Democrats in Congress have called on Biden to step aside, as have major newspapers, donors and a raft of Democratic-supporting political commentators. Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Mark Warner and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries were both planning crisis talks with lawmakers in the coming days, US media reported.

In Friday's interview, ABC host George Stephanopoulos repeatedly referenced the growing Democratic clamour for a conversation on picking a new candidate, asking Biden if he would step down if convinced he couldn't beat Trump. "Well, it depends. If the Lord Almighty comes down and tells me that, I might do that," he said. Biden added that he had not watched the debate afterwards, saying "I don't think I did, no." And he dismissed the idea that his poor performance was a sign of a more serious health problem.

"It was a bad episode, no indication of any serious condition. I was exhausted. I didn't listen to my instincts in terms of preparing and — and I had a bad night," Biden said. David Axelrod, a top aide in Barack Obama's White House and an occasional thorn in the side of the Biden administration, said the interview showed a president "dangerously out of touch" with concerns over his fitness for office. "Four years ago at this time, he was 10 points ahead of Trump [in polls]. Today, he is six points behind," Axelrod posted on X. The White House has announced Biden will visit Pennsylvania this weekend before holding a press conference during the NATO summit in Washington next week.

5 journalists killed in Israeli bombardment across Gaza

Hamas accepts US proposal on talks

CAIRO (Reuters): Hamas has accepted a US proposal to begin talks on releasing Israeli hostages, including soldiers and men, 16 days after the first phase of an agreement aimed at ending the Gaza war, a senior Hamas source told Reuters on Saturday.

The militant Islamist group has dropped a demand that Israel first commit to a permanent ceasefire before signing the agreement, and would allow negotiations to achieve that throughout the six-week first phase, the source told Reuters on condition of anonymity because the talks are private. A Palestinian official close to the internationally mediated peace efforts had said the proposal could lead to a framework agreement if embraced by Israel and would end the nine-month-old war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

A source in Israel's negotiating team, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Friday there was now a real chance of achieving agreement. That was in sharp contrast to past instances in the nine-month-old war in Gaza, when Israel said conditions attached by Hamas were unacceptable. A spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. On Friday his office said talks would continue next week and emphasized that gaps between the sides still remained.

eldest son of Al Jazeera's Gaza bureau chief, Wael Dahdouh, was among those killed by an Israeli missile strike in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, in January. Hamza was in a vehicle near al-Mawasi, an Israel-designated "safe zone" that its forces have repeatedly attacked. He was with another journalist, Mustafa Thuraya, who was also killed in the attack.

An earlier Israeli attack had wounded Wael and killed his cameraperson Samer Abudaqa during a reporting assignment in southern Gaza in December. The Guardian newspaper reported in June that at least 23 members of the Al-Aqsa network, a media channel linked to Hamas, were killed by Israeli strikes since October. Gaza's Ministry of

Health said on Saturday that 87 people were killed across the enclave over the last 48 hours, including the five journalists, bringing to at least 38,098 the number of people killed in the last nine months.

More than 87,700 people have been injured in Israel's military offensive during the same period, the ministry said. Reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud noted the "surge in air attacks across the central area, the southern part of the Gaza Strip, and also in Gaza City's Shujayea neighbourhood in the north". In eastern Khan Younis and Rafah city, at the southern edge of the Strip, bodies were being taken out of the hospital morgue for burials. — Aljazeera

Ex-judge makes startling claims about ex-LHC CJ

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Justice (ret'd) Shahid Jameel Khan, who resigned from the Lahore High Court (LHC) in February, has alleged that former LHC chief justice Ameer Bhatti was using his position to politically benefit his son-in-law, Ali Afzal Sahi, who is associated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Months after handing in his resignation, Khan sat down for a bombshell interview with host Azaz Syed for his social media talk show, "Talk Shock", in which he exposed his fellow judges. "The decline of the judiciary in Punjab began during the tenure of Justice Sardar Shamim as LHC chief justice, who was close to the PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz) and was readjusted after retirement," Justice (ret'd) Khan claimed in the interview.

"Justice Aalia Neelum, who has been appointed as chief justice of the high court, is a good judge and cannot be approached by anyone," he added. While talking about Bhatti, Khan alleged that Sahi had invited him to his residence via phone call during which the former CJ's son-in-law told the former judge that he had become a provincial minister and had also been allotted a government house.

Khan said he declined the invitation as Sahi was a political party's minister and part of the government but he revealed about 25 of his fellow judges accepted the invitation and attended the event. He further disclosed that during and after Bhatti's tenure, cases related to the establishment and intelligence agencies were often given to a particular judge, and it was generally perceived that he provided them relief.

He said Bhatti was an approachable judge and met with everyone which, he said, should not be the case with any judge. Justice (ret'd) Khan said that the former CJ met PTI leader Shehzad Akbar and told him that good news was not being broadcast. He said he used to express these concerns openly to the then chief justice's face at that time as well. He was of the view that judicial interference occurs when you allow it.

He disclosed that Sabir Mithu, a relative of former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, attempted to influence him in a sugar case, even attempting to contact his brother and mother after he became a judge. Khan revealed that Mithu had informed him about General Bajwa's appointment to succeed General Raheel Sharif, before it was officially announced.

When Mithu tried to influence him, their acquaintance ended. During the interview, the former judge discussed various incidents involving chief justices and fellow judges, shedding light on some judges' characters. He also explained the reasons for his resignation and addressed a video in which Muhammad Khan Bhatti mentioned his name. Before this interview was aired, efforts were made to contact the individuals mentioned for their comments and to record their stance regarding the interview.

Peace vital for progress, development: Governor

E.P. Report

MINGORA: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Saturday said that establishment of durable peace was vital for sustainable economic progress and development besides promotion of tourism in the province.

Taking to reporters here, the Governor said that All Parties Conference (APC) was aimed to evolve a broad based political consensus against the menace of terrorism.

He said the leadership of all political parties were invited to present their viewpoint at APC in the wake of announcement of Azm e Istehkam operation. The Governor referred to the recent deplorable incidents of terrorism including the killing of former Senator Hidayatullah at Bajaur blast and two persons at Takhtbhai Mardan as well attacks on security personnel at Khyber's Takht Bag and said that tourists and investors would only come to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa when there was complete peace and

economic stability.

He said the opposition leadership including Maulana Fazlur Rehman have expressed concerns over rising incidents of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Governor said that punishment and reward system for officials was vital for better service delivery of the public sector departments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a gathering of party workers and members of the local government at the residence of former MNA Dr. Haider Ali in Khwazakhela, Swat also vowed to consistently represent the rights of public and the province in opposition to the decision to impose taxes on Malakand Division.

He emphasized the need for political parties to make decisions with confidence to eliminate lawlessness. Governor Kundi criticized the current political atmosphere, stating that the same party that had guaranteed peace for armed groups today questions their settle-

ment in the province. He further underscored that accountability should start with the party that made promises of population increase and ignored the province's welfare.

Former provincial president Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, former federal minister Najmuddin Khan, former MNA Swat and PPP leader Dr. Haider Ali also addressed the gathering. Governor Kundi said that the KP government weeping over an empty treasury after plundering for ten years. He added that under the NFC Award, FATA was to receive one hundred billion annually, which was not received.

The Governor said that PPP opposed imposition of taxes on FATA and PATA. He said that work will start on Chakdara-Chitral road soon. He said that the Governor House is open for all and he will share their problems with center. The Governor Faisal Karim Kundi also visited the residence of Malik Akram Khan Divisional President PPP Malakand and met with different delegations.

Rwanda deportation plan ‘dead, buried’: Starmer

LONDON (Reuters): Britain's new Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Saturday he would scrap a controversial plan to fly thousands of asylum seekers from Britain to Rwanda in his first major policy announcement since winning a landslide election victory. The previous Conservative government first announced the plan in 2022 to send migrants who arrived in Britain without permission to the East African nation, saying it would put an end to asylum seekers arriving on small boats.

But no one was sent to Rwanda under the plan because of years of legal challenges. At his first press conference since becoming prime minister, Starmer said that the Rwanda policy would be scrapped because only about 1% of asylum seekers would have been removed and it would have failed to act as a deterrent. "The Rwanda scheme was dead and buried before it started. It's never been a deterrent," Starmer said. "I'm not prepared to continue with gimmicks that don't act as a deterrent."

Starmer won one of the largest parliamentary majorities in modern British history on Friday, making him the most powerful British leader since former Prime Minister Tony Blair, but he faces a

number of challenges, including improving struggling public services and reviving a weak economy. At the press conference in Downing Street, Starmer answered about a dozen questions and was repeatedly asked about how and when he would start delivering on his promises to fix the nation's problems, but he gave few specifics about what he planned.

Asked if he was willing to take tough decisions and raise taxes if necessary, Starmer said his government would identify problems and act in areas such as tackling an overstretched prisons system and reducing the long waiting times to use the state-run health service. "We're going to have to take the tough decisions and take them early, and we will. We will do that with a raw honesty," he said. "But that is not a sort of prelude to saying there's some tax decision that we didn't speak about before." Starmer said he would set up and chair different "mission delivery boards" to focus on so-called missions or priority areas such as the health service and economic growth.

The question of how to stop the asylum seekers crossing from France was a major theme of the six-week election campaign. While supporters say it would smash the model of people traffickers, critics

have argued the Rwanda policy was immoral and would never work. Last November, the UK Supreme Court declared the policy unlawful, saying Rwanda could not be considered a safe third country, prompting ministers to sign a new treaty with the East African country and to pass new legislation to override this. The legality of that move was being challenged by charities and unions in the courts.

The British government has already given the Rwandan government hundreds of millions of pounds to set up accommodation and hire extra officials to process the asylum seekers, money it cannot recover. Starmer has said his government would create a Border Security Command that would bring together staff from the police, the domestic intelligence agency and prosecutors to work with international agencies to stop people smuggling. Sonya Seats, CEO of Freedom from Torture, one of the many organisations and charities which have campaigned to stop the Rwanda plan, welcomed Starmer's announcement on Saturday. "We applaud Keir Starmer for moving immediately to close the door on this shameful scheme that played politics with the lives of people fleeing torture and persecution," she said.

Accountability Court orders to advertise Maqbool sons Director as PO in BRT scam

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Accountability Court Peshawar Judge Muhammad Younas ordered to initiate proceedings for declaring a contractor Masood Shah as proclaimed offender in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scam while directed the relevant authorities to publish advertisements in newspa-

pers and affix a notice on his residence, directing him to appear in court.

National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had filed a petition against Masood Shah, stating that he had absconded to abroad and evading arrest. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Deputy Prosecutor General Azim Dad and Special Prosecutor

Muhammad Ali appeared before the court and argued that Masood Shah had failed to respond to multiple notices and summons.

The court has directed the authorities to publish advertisements in major newspapers and affix a notice on Shah's residence, declaring him a proclaimed offender.