

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani extended his heartfelt congratulations to newly elected Iranian President, Masoud Pezeshkian. In a felicitation message, he expressed the hope that the historic ties between Pakistan and Iran would further strengthen under the new leadership, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration between the two nations in promoting regional stability and prosperity.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 164

Regd. No. 241

MUHARRAM 01 1446 -- MONDAY, JULY 08 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



GAZA STRIP: A father holds her daughter in his lap as Palestinians assess the damage following an Israeli strike in Al-Zawayda in the central Gaza Strip on Sunday.

Ceasefire proposal

Hamas says it's waiting for Israeli response

GAZA (Reuters): Hamas is waiting for a response from Israel on its ceasefire proposal, two officials from the Palestinian group said on Sunday, five days after it accepted a key part of a U.S. plan aimed at ending the nine-month-old war in Gaza.

"We have left our response with the mediators and are waiting to hear the occupation's response," one of the two Hamas officials told Reuters, asking not to be identified.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was scheduled to hold consultations on Sunday on the next steps in negotiating the three-phase plan that was presented in May by U.S. President Joe Biden and is being mediated by Qatar and Egypt.

It aims to end the war and free around 120 Israeli hostages being held by Hamas.

Another Palestinian official, with knowledge of the ceasefire deliberations, said Israel was in talks with the Qataris.

"They have discussed with them Hamas' response and they promised to give them Israel's response within days," the official, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters on Sunday.

Netanyahu has said that

negotiations would continue this week but has not given any detailed timeline.

Hamas has dropped a key demand that Israel first commit to a permanent ceasefire before it would sign an agreement. Instead, it said it would allow negotiations to achieve that throughout the six-week first phase, a Hamas source told Reuters on Saturday on condition of anonymity because the talks are private.

A Palestinian official close to the peace efforts has said the proposal could lead to a framework agreement if embraced by Israel and would end the war.

U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns will travel to Qatar this week for negotiations, a source familiar with the matter said.

The conflict was triggered nine months ago on Oct. 7 when fighters led by Hamas, controlling Gaza, attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking around 250 hostages, according to Israeli figures.

More than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military onslaught, according to Gaza health officials, and the coastal enclave has

largely been reduced to rubble.

On Sunday, an Israeli airstrike killed Ehab Al-Ghussein, the Hamas-appointed deputy minister of labor, and three other people at a church-run school in western Gaza City sheltering Christian and Muslim families, Hamas media and the Civil Emergency Service said.

The Israeli military said that after it took steps to minimize the risk of civilians being harmed there, it struck militants who were hiding in the school, as well as a facility in the vicinity where weapons were being made.

Ghussein's wife and children had been killed in an Israeli strike in May.

The U.N. agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, called the situation increasingly tragic, saying in a post on X, "families continue to face forced displacement, massive destruction and constant fear. Essential supplies are lacking, the heat is unbearable, diseases are spreading".

In Israel, protesters took to the streets across the country to pressure the government to agree to the Gaza ceasefire deal, which would bring back 120 hostages still being held in Gaza.

Two killed as mortar shell hits house in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): A mortar shell struck a house from nowhere in the village of Zadkani in Dera Ismail Khan, resulting in the deaths of two young girls on the spot.

In the incident, two women and another girl of the same family were also hurt on Sunday morning.

The grieving family members have placed the bodies on the road in protest and blocked the Daraban Domanda Highway.

The channel reported that, due to protest, traffic on the road was badly affected. Since filing this report, negotiations have yet to take place with the authorities to resolve the situation.

Pakistani scientist to be Saudi citizen

RIYADH (INP): A Pakistani scientist, who was raised and graduated from a medical university in England, has been named among the first recipients of Saudi citizenship, according to a list published by the financial news portal Argaam.

As part of its Vision 2030 initiative, Saudi Arabia has opened up its citizenship to highly skilled professionals in an effort to attract and retain exceptional global talent to enhance the kingdom's economic and social development.

A royal decree was issued in November 2021, allowing individuals in specialized fields such as science, medicine, culture, sports, and technology to apply for Saudi citizenship.

One of the individuals mentioned in the list is Dr Mehmoed Khan, who earned his medical degree from the University of Liverpool Medical School in England.

Khan has had a distinguished career, holding senior corporate roles, including Vice Chairman and Chief Scientific Officer of Global Research and Development at PepsiCo, as well as President of the Global R&D Center at Takeda Pharmaceuticals.

Despite growing up in England, Khan has expressed his pride in his Pakistani heritage, stating, "I grew up in England. I haven't had the chance to grow up in Pakistan."

He is currently the CEO of the Revolution Foundation, a nonprofit organization in Riyadh that provides funding and investments in biotechnology to stimulate health sciences.

In addition to his corporate roles, Khan has also managed academic programs, such as the Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Nutrition Trials Unit at the Mayo Clinic.

The Frontier Post

ISLAMABAD (INP): Punjab Police raided the residence of National Assembly opposition leader Umar Ayub in an attempt to arrest him, but he evaded capture as he was not present at home. In a message on social media website X, Umar Ayub revealed that the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Sargodha had issued a bailable warrant for his arrest.

PM: Country's ports being developed for regional corridor

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday that the government was taking steps for the development of seaports for the provision of shortest corridor to the regional countries, especially to the Central Asian States.

He said with a spur in sea trade by the Central Asian States, China and other countries of the region via Pakistani ports, the country could earn worth billions of dollars as foreign revenue every year.

The prime minister expressed these views during a visit to Hutchison Port, South Asian Pakistan Terminal where he was given a briefing, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

On the occasion, he directed the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to prioritize installation of latest scanners on Pakistani ports.

The prime minister said that the customs authorities in collaboration with the ports authorities should ensure immediate steps for complete utilization of the sea ports in Pakistan.

The prime minister was



briefed that process for installation of latest scanners on ports by the FBR, was in the final stages which would enable rapid scanning of containers in the shortest time with the assistance of latest gadgets and artificial intelligence.

The prime minister said for the progress of the country, it was imperative that its ports were also developed.

He said for increasing country's exports, the government was taking measures on priority basis.

Federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaulah Tarar, Jam Kamal Khan, Qaiser Ahmed

Shaikh, Ahad Khan Cheema, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, chairman FBR and other relevant officials accompanied the prime minister.

The prime minister was apprised that Hutchison Port, South Asian Pakistan Terminal was amongst the few global terminals located in deep seas which was being automatically operated upon.

The terminal had been equipped with latest technology and scanners and its operations were of the international standards.

The prime minister was

further informed that port had the capacity to handle the shipment of 35,00,000 containers annually.

The prime minister appreciated the latest operations of the port.

PM directs enhancing seaports' efficiency to tap full potential

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed the relevant authorities to take special initiatives to tap full potential of maritime trade and to spur the economic growth.

The prime minister chaired a meeting here regarding Karachi Port

Continued on Back Page

President for promotion of national unity

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed upon the nation to nurture the qualities of affection, forbearance and tolerance by shunning all differences and play role for strengthening of national unity and interfaith harmony in the country.

In a message on the advent of new Islamic year 1446 Hijrah, the president felicitated the nation on the arrival of new Islamic year and prayed for the peace, stability, progress and prosperity of the county, President Secretariat Press Wing, on Sunday, said in a press release.

The president said that Muharram-ul-Haram signified special importance in

the Islamic history, adding that prayers and the worship of Allah Almighty in this month had been of great significance.

This month called for avoidance of sins, following the Islamic teachings and devotedly worshipping of the Creator, besides reminding about holding of introspection of the Islamic teachings, he added.

President Zardari said that Muharram-ul-Haram also reminded them of the unprecedented sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his faithful companions and gave a lesson for the real objective of struggle in life which was linked with sacrificing everything in the path of religion.

Hazrat Imam Hussain

(RA) and his companions laid down their lives while facing the atrocious and evil forces of cruelty and in this way, they had always been referred as beacons of determination and sacrifices, he added.

The president said this month gave them lesson to stand against forces of cruelty by raising standards of righteousness while facing ordeals of life.

The president said the new Islamic month provided them an opportunity to transform their lives in accordance with the Islamic teachings and stressed upon the need to discern between the virtue and evil and create awareness and understanding of Islamic teachings.

PM pays tributes to Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid tributes to Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on the 25th anniversary of his martyrdom day.

In a statement issued by the PM Office, the prime minister said Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed showed great courage and

bravery and sacrificed his life for the country's security.

He said Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed's great sacrifice symbolized Pakistan armed forces' unwavering resolve and dedication to protecting the country.

The prime minister said that Havaladar Lalak Jan Shaheed and his family were a source of pride for the entire Pakistani

nation. He also saluted the passion and sense of duty of every Pakistani soldier who was dedicated to protecting the country's borders, from the deep seas of the Arabian Sea to the harsh cold of Siachen.

He vowed that the Pakistani nation would never forget the great sacrifices of its martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for the country.

Ukrainian drone triggers warehouse explosions

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): A village in a border region of western Russia was evacuated Sunday following a series of explosions after debris from a downed Ukrainian drone set fire to a nearby warehouse, local officials said.

Social media footage appeared to show rising clouds of black smoke in the Voronezh region while loud explosions could be heard in succession.

Gov. Aleksandr Gusev said that falling wreckage triggered the "detonation of explosive objects." No casualties were reported, but residents of a nearby village in the Podgorensky district were evacuated, he said. Roads were also closed with emergency services, military and government officials working at the scene.

A Ukrainian security official told The Associated Press that a strike had been carried out on a warehouse storing ammunition in the village of Serhiivka in the Voronezh region.

"The enemy stored surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, shells for tanks and artillery, and boxes of cartridges for firearms," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give the information to the media. "It is from this warehouse that the occupiers supply ammunition to their troops in Ukraine."

The official also said that Ukraine's State Security Service was behind a drone attack on an oil depot in Russia's Krasnodar region the previous day. Russian emergency services had reported that falling drone debris had started a fire at the site, which was successfully extinguished Sunday morning.

Russia's Ministry of Defense did not address either strike in their morning briefing, but said that air defense systems had destroyed a Ukrainian drone over the Belgorod region.

The strikes come after a Ukrainian military spokesperson told AP on Thursday that Kyiv's troops had retreated from a neighborhood on the outskirts of Chasiv Yar, a strategically important town in Ukraine's Donetsk region that has been reduced to rubble under a monthlong Russian assault.



ISTANBUL (AP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated his willingness to restore ties with Syria and extended an "invitation" Sunday to bring back relations to "how they were in the past."

Over 12 years ago, diplomatic ties between Ankara and Damascus were cut off when protests turned into a civil war in Syria. Turkey supported armed opposition groups in the northwest that aimed to oust Syrian President Bashar Assad from power. Before that, Erdogan and Assad enjoyed close ties, even vacationing together with their families in southern Turkey in 2008. Last week, both indicated their readiness to end tensions and normalize diplomatic relations.

"Yesterday, we were not enemies with Syria. We met with Assad as a family," Erdogan told journalists Sunday on a flight from Berlin, where he watched

Turkey play the quarter-final of the European Championship's soccer tournament.

"We talk about mediation everywhere, so why not with the one on our border?" Erdogan added in comments reported by the state-run Anadolu news agency. This comes as the Turkish government has been facing increased pressure to repatriate millions of Syrian refugees amid a steep economic downturn and rising anti-refugee sentiment.

A week ago anti-Syrian riots broke out in Kayseri, central Turkey, following reports that a Syrian refugee had allegedly sexually harassed a 7-year-old Syrian girl. Residents of Melikgazi overturned cars and set shops ablaze, calling on Syrians to leave the country.

Last year, the Turkish and Syrian foreign minis-

ters met in Moscow alongside counterparts from Russia and Iran, marking the highest-level contact between Ankara and Damascus since the start of the Syrian war. But those talks and a previous meeting involving the two countries' defense ministers did not bear fruit. Signs of détente between Erdogan and Assad, including plans to open a crossing between Syrian government-held areas and those held by opposition groups in Aleppo province, have led to rising tensions in towns controlled by the Turkish-backed opposition.

The Idlib-based "Salvation Government" of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham — a formerly al-Qaida-linked insurgent group that controls parts of northwestern Syria — issued a statement on July 1 calling on Turkey to "assume its legal and moral responsibilities to protect Syrian refugees."



PARIS: Voters arrive at a polling station during the second round of legislative elections in Paris, France, on Sunday.

CM Maryam directs WASA to remain alert amid rains

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has put the administration on high alert in view of possible rains across the province.

The chief minister directed to undertake preventive and essential administrative measures in view of urban flooding. The CM directed the DG Khan administration to take necessary measures in view of the likely danger of the hill torrents. She directed the commissioners, deputy commissioners and WASA officials to remain proactive to ensure prompt water drainage.

She said that diligent efforts being made for timely water drainage in Lahore are praiseworthy. The relevant officers should remain in the field till complete water drainage. The administration and WASA officials should remain vigilant and proactive in this regard. All resources should be utilised for water drainage. Rain water should not remain accumulated and stagnant at any place for long. Implementation on the PDMA's SOPs should be ensured effectively in order to cope up with the flood situation.

The CM added that it is the foremost responsibility of the government to protect the life and property of the citizens and it will be ensured under any circumstance. Life and property of the people of the catchment areas should be ensured as well. Pre-emptive measures should be taken for the protection of livestock in rural areas.

She said provision of timely assistance and relief to the affectees should be ensured in the flood situation. The Assembly Members should effectively oversee rescue and relief operations in the possible flood situation. An awareness should be imparted among the citizens with regard to preventing themselves from the electrocution incidents.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif appealed to citizens to disallow young children going near bare electric wires and poles. She directed to undertake timely rescue and relief activities in case of an emergency.

Food minister reviews prices of flour in Lahore's markets

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin on Sunday visited different markets of the provincial capital to review the prices of flour. The provincial minister during three-hour visit to markets of rural and urban areas visited Mozang Road, Shadman Market, Wahdat Road, Allama Iqbal Town, Yatimkhana Multan Road and Thokar Niaz Beg. He also checked flour prices in the markets of Makkah Colony, RA Bazar and adjoining areas.

Bilal Yaseen imposed fine on two renowned superstores for not displaying flour prices besides issuing a warning to the concerned food controller and directing them to display flour prices at all stores. He said that the stores and flour dealers should clearly display the prices, the holidays of the officers of the food department have been canceled in all districts, the stores and dealers who artificially increase the price of flour were being fined.

The food minister further said that if expensive flour was found in any area, strict action will be taken, on the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz. He said food of the poor will be made cheaper in any case and there was no place for the officers or staff who will not work in his department.

9 arrested for overpricing essentials

LAHORE (APP): In a significant move to enforce official prices, Price Control Magistrates have conducted inspections at 2,862 locations, leading to the arrest of 12 individuals for overpricing fruits, vegetables, and other essential items.

Lahore Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafia Haider told media on Sunday that 11 cases have been registered for violations of government-set prices. Furthermore, fines totaling Rs 400,000 have been imposed for 95 instances of non-compliance.

The DC emphasized that Price Control Magistrates are actively ensuring adherence to official rates. Supervision of the auction process in fruit and vegetable markets is also underway to prevent any malpractices. Administrative officers are ensuring the sale of fruits, vegetables, and bread at government-approved prices. All stalls and shops are being instructed to prominently display the rate list, and strict action is being taken against those failing to comply.

Operation against electricity theft in full swing

LAHORE (INP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has netted a significant number of electricity thieves in a recent 24-hour operation. Over the course of a single day, LESCO identified a total of 441 individuals engaged in stealing electricity.

Following investigations, cases were registered against 127 of the apprehended individuals. The confiscated connections included a mix of domestic (419), commercial (11), and agricultural (10) consumers.

LESCO disconnected all the illegal connections

and imposed hefty fines on the offenders. A combined total of 4 lakh 8 thousand 497 units of electricity were charged as a detection bill, amounting to a staggering Rs. 1 crore 20 lakh 56 thousand 416.

This recent operation is part of LESCO's ongoing anti-electricity theft campaign, which has been active for the past 282 days. In this period, LESCO has identified a staggering 11,120 individuals involved in power theft. Altogether, cases have been registered against a significant portion (87,596) of these individuals, with

34,165 arrests made.

The campaign has resulted in the detection of a massive 11 crore 33 lakh 81 thousand 431 units of stolen electricity. The cumulative value of this stolen power is estimated to be a staggering Rs. 4 billion 7 crore 86 lakh 21 thousand 862.

LESCO's continued efforts highlight the significant challenge of electricity theft in Pakistan. The company's recent success demonstrates their commitment to tackling this issue and ensuring fair electricity distribution for honest consumers.

Minister meets scholars to discuss security

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique held a detailed meeting with a delegation of scholars at the Home Department here on Sunday. Key issues, including security arrangements for Muharram, were discussed extensively.

The minister welcomed the scholars and assured them that their good wishes would be conveyed to Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He emphasised that the Punjab government had implemented foolproof security measures for Muharram,

with continuous monitoring of the routes for congregations and processions. "I am hopeful that the days of Muharram will pass peacefully," he stated.

He announced that security arrangements would be reviewed across all divisions at the start of Muharram, and all officials concerned have been instructed to personally visit licence holders during the period.

Home Secretary Noor-ul-Amin Mengal, Secretary Auqaf Tahir Raza Bukhari, Additional IG Chaudhry Sultan, Special Secretary, Additional Secretary Zahid Parvez, and Deputy Secretary Maham Asif

Malik were also present.

The delegation included Secretary Shia Ulema Council Punjab Qasim Ali Qasmi, General Secretary Shia Ulema Council Allama Dr. Shabbir Hasan Meesmi, Sagheer Abbas Virk, Allama Hafiz Kazim Raza Naqvi, Safdar Hussain Jafri, Syed Ishfaq Hussain Kazmi, Maulana Nair Abbas Kazmi, Maulana Liaqat Sial from Jhang, Dr. Syed Hasnat Ahmad, Adnan Kazmi, Hasnain Kazmi, Syed Mardan Ali Zaidi, Ejaz Hussain Mehdi from Faisalabad, Syed Ghazanfar Abbas Tirmazi, Syed Zahid Ali Bukhari, and others.

PTI launches tree plantation drive in Karachi

KARACHI (PPI): PTI Sindh has initiated a tree plantation drive in Karachi as part of its plan to plant 200,000 saplings across Sindh.

The campaign was inaugurated at Ismail Guljee Park in Saddar Town. The inauguration ceremony was attended by PTI Sindh Additional General Secretary Rizwan Niazi and other leaders. Speaking to the media, PTI Karachi President Raja Azhar emphasized the urgent need for tree planting to tackle the severe heat waves. He criticized the Sindh government for neglecting Karachi and stated that the tree plantation drive was essential for the city's survival.

Azhar noted that their founding party chairman Imran Khan had initiated the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme, and following his vision, they

had started the tree plantation drive in Karachi.

He pointed out that while Karachi supported the entire country, it was often neglected when it came to development. The Sindh government had also ignored Karachi in the annual budget, he noted. He invited Karachi stakeholders to join the plantation campaign.

PTI Sindh Additional General Secretary Rizwan Niazi, speaking to the media, mentioned that they had announced the start of the tree plantation campaign across Sindh, including Karachi, in a press conference last Sunday, so today, they had formally launched it. He added that they had started the plantation campaign in Karachi and urged other organizations to join in so as to make Karachi a green and vibrant city once again.

Saddar Town Chairman and PTI leader Mansoor Sheikh stated: "Karachi is known as the city of lights, and until tree plantation is carried out, the city's lights cannot be fully restored." He emphasized that Saddar Town will become the most developed town in Karachi. He mentioned that they had built Karachi's first plastic road in Saddar Town and were providing free Wi-Fi in various parks and food streets to encourage people to visit these parks.

PTI Women Wing Karachi President Fizza Zeeshan discussed their extensive plan to plant trees in all districts of Karachi. She emphasized the need to continue the plantation drive to combat global warming, noting that cutting down trees prevents the purification of carbon dioxide in the air.



LAHORE: A beautiful view of clouds hovering over the skies of the Provincial Capital. —APP Photo

16,000 police officials to perform duty

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Islamabad police on Sunday devised a special security plan for Muharram-ul-Haram.

The plan was chalked out at a high level meeting chaired by IG Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi in Islamabad. From 1st Muharram to 2nd Rabi-ul-Awwal, 181 processions and 965 majalis will be held in Islamabad during which over 16,000 police officials will perform security duties.

The processions will be monitored by Safe City cameras while armored vehicles will be deployed to deal with any emergency situation. Strict checking will be done at the entrance and exit points of the city.

All roads and streets in the route of the procession will be closed with barbed wire and special checking will be done and disposal squad will clear the route of the procession before its start.

All gatherings and processions will be video recorded by drone cameras. Locals and non-locals will be allowed to enter the procession after thorough search.

Entry of vehicles and motorcycles will be completely prohibited in the procession. People joining the processions and majalis will be checked by metal detector while walk-through gates will also be installed at entrances and exits.

Earlier, the police also held meetings with scholars of different schools of thought, members of the peace committee and intellectuals before the meeting.

Teenage housemaid tortured by employers

LAHORE (INP): A teenage housemaid severely tortured by employers over suspicion of robbery was hospitalized in critical condition.

According to details, 13-year-old Tehreem was serving as housemaid with Hassam and his wife in Defence 'B' area of Lahore. The couple over doubt of stealing the valuables from house brutally tortured her resulting in fracture in nose and hand fingers.

The torture victim girl was shifted to hospital and police after registering a case against the employer couple started investigations.

Mohsin Naqvi takes notice of overbilling complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday took strict notice of the increasing complaints of overbilling of protected consumers and ordered legal action against the officers and staff involved in it.

The Minister issued directions to all Directors of FIA to immediately redress the injustice being faced by consumers using up to 200 units.

He has strictly prohibited the inclusion of protected consumers in the non-protected category, terming it a criminal act that will not be tolerated.

Mohsin Naqvi ordered FIA to review the entire situation and take action against those responsible without any discrimination, in light of the facts.

He reiterated that adding protected consumers in the list of non-protected con-

sumers is unacceptable under any circumstances.

He further said that the overbilling has put an additional burden of millions of rupees on consumers, and protected consumers who are already facing difficulties have been further affected.

He emphasized that the overbilling complaints and injustices faced by protected consumers must be addressed immediately.

National Highway choked by protest

KARACHI (INP): A family is protesting on the National Highway near Ghaghir toll plaza for the past 22 hours, demanding justice for the death of their relative in a police firing incident in Karachi's Steel Town area.

The protest has caused severe traffic congestion, stranding thousands of people on the highway between Karachi and Thatta.

The incident occurred on July 5 when a 60-year-old woman was killed and her 19-year-old daughter injured in a shooting while traveling in their car on the

National Highway near Gulshan-e-Hadid. Police claimed the family was caught in crossfire between police and fleeing suspects, alleging that the suspects fired at the family's car.

However, the family vehemently denies this claim, accusing the police of directly firing upon their vehicle, mistaking them for criminals. They maintain that the suspects' car was ahead of theirs, and photos circulating on social media show the family's car with damage from a rear-end collision. Eyewitnesses say the

victims car was travelling ahead of the suspects' car.

The protesters, who have been on the highway since 2 PM Saturday, are demanding the registration of a case against the SSP, SHO of Gulshan-e-Hadid, and the police team involved in the incident. They refuse to disperse until their demands are met.

The protest has caused immense inconvenience to commuters, with many stranded for hours without food or water. The traffic police are diverting traffic to alternative routes, but the congestion remains severe.

Gaza's students in Pakistan to be facilitated

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has said that it will facilitate the students of Gaza in Pakistan in completion of medical and dental education.

In a statement issued on Sunday, President PMDC Prof Dr Rizwan Taj said that the decision in this connection was made by the PMDC Council on the request of Pakistani High Commissioner in London to adjust the students of Gaza in Pakistan keeping in view the Gaza's current situation.

He said that the decision will Gaza students to continue their medical education in Pakistan on humanitarian grounds, ensuring that their studies are not interrupted due to the challenging circumstances in their home country.

It should mentioned here

that the High Commission proposed that the students will be coming in batches of 20-30, with an expected number of 100 students and upon completion of their clinical placement in Pakistan, these students will graduate from universities of Gaza for clinical rotations in Pakistani medical colleges and attached teaching hospitals in the public sector, as a special case.

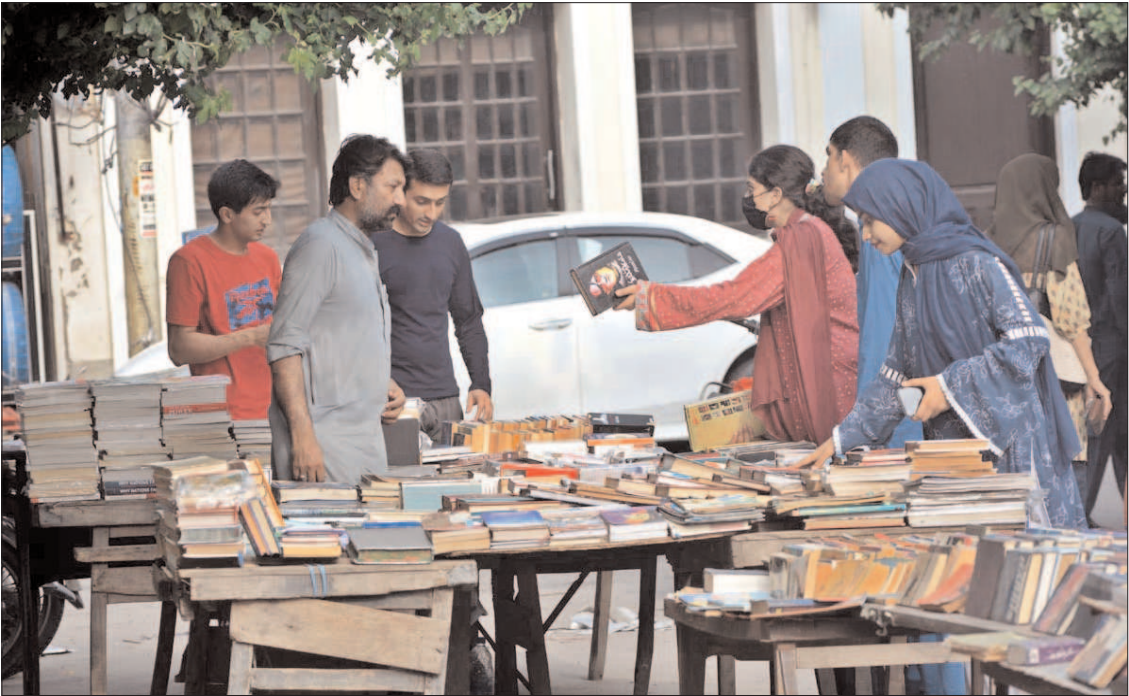
Prof Dr Rizwan Taj said that a committee will be constituted headed by President PMDC to smoothly execute induction of these students into Pakistani medical education system in the corresponding years.

He said that Gaza students will have the opportunity to learn in a well-equipped environment, which might be lacking in

Gaza due to ongoing conflicts and resource constraints. Exposure to various medical specialties during their education in Pakistan will allow students to pursue specific areas of interest, he added.

The PMDC President said that due to the ongoing conflict many students were facing disruptions in their education. By providing them with the opportunity to study in Pakistan, PMDC wants to help them to achieve their goals in medical education, he maintained.

Dr Rizwan Taj said that providing these opportunities to Gaza students will also open doors for their personal and professional growth. It will empower them to make meaningful contributions to their communities and beyond, he added.



LAHORE: Women selecting and purchasing old books from a roadside stall at Mall Road in the Provincial Capital. —APP Photo

Under-trial prisoners now receive daily lunch boxes: IG

LAHORE (APP): The experiment of providing lunch boxes with bottled cold water to under trial prisoners at the time of their departure from jails for appearing before trial courts proved most successful which has now been extended to whole of Punjab.

Inspector General of Prisons Punjab Mian Farooq Nazeer, in an exclusive interview with APP here on Sunday, said initially it was launched as a pilot program in few jails that aimed to ensure that prisoners, who often endure long and stressful journeys to court, have access to basic nourishment and hydration.

The program's success has now led to its extension across the entire Punjab province. He said now nearly 42,863 under trial prisoners housed in

various 43 jails across the province are being provided with lunch boxes daily. He added this initiative addresses a critical need, as under-trial prisoners frequently face long waits and challenging conditions during transit and court appearances.

Prior to this program, many prisoners suffered from hunger and dehydration, which could exacerbate the stress and fatigue associated with their legal proceedings. By providing a nutritious meal and cold water, the program significantly improves their well-being ensuring they are better equipped to endure the rigors of the judicial process. He said this initiative highlights a commitment to humane treatment and respect for the basic rights of all individuals, regardless of their legal

status. This humane approach fosters a more compassionate and just society, recognizing that under-trial prisoners are still facing a trial should not be subjected to inhumane conditions.

Regarding the quality of food, Mian Farooq Nazeer said the diet plan of prisoners is made out after thorough consultation with the food and nutrition department of Agriculture University Faisalabad, fully ensuring human body required calories per day. He added that best branded products are used in preparing food and excellent quality chicken of approved weight is cooked six days in a week and served to all 60,288 prisoners. He said all range DIGs and Superintendents Jail conduct surprise visits to kitchens for ensuring strict compliance.

Muqam hosts luncheon in honour of UN High Commissioner for Refugees

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam on Sunday hosted a luncheon reception in honour of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in Peshawar at his residence.

Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam warmly received United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi

on his arrival at the venue. The Federal Minister welcomed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan acknowledge UNHCR's continued support for Afghan refugees issues in Pakistan for the past 45 years.

The Federal Minister said that Pakistan hosts millions of Afghans, providing protection, livelihood, education and health facilities.

United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees Mr. Filippo Grandi apprised the Federal Minister on UNHCR's ongoing projects for afghan refugees. He said that the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan for such a long time was the most remarkable example of hospitality. Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam also presented a gift and shield to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other members of delegation on this occasion.

The high level delegation was comprised of Ms.

Hai Kyung Jun, Regional Director UNHCR Regional Office, Bangkok, Mr. Herve De Villeroche, Special Advisor on Development, UNHCR Geneva Headquarters, Mr. Ewan Watson, UNHCR Head of the Global Communication Service, Ms. Philippa Candler, Representative, UNHCR Islamabad, Mr. Kofi Ohenenana Dwomo, Head of UNHCR, Peshawar and Mr. Sumair Gul, First Secretary / Director Humanitarian issue Pakistan Mission Geneva.



Peshawar: All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) office holders in a group photo after the KP Chapter pivotal meeting.

APNS discusses challenges faced by print media in KP

Meeting offers prayers for departed soul of Rehmat Shah Afridi

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chapter held an important meeting at the office of Daily Wahdat. The meeting was chaired by APNS Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chairman, Pir Syed Haroon Shah. The meeting commenced with a special prayer for the forgiveness and blessings of the late senior journalists from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Hafiez Alfai and Mr. Rahmat Shah Afridi.

Following the prayer, a

platform was provided to address the significant challenges faced by print media publishers across the province.

Emphasis was placed on ensuring that key issues affecting the newspaper industry reach the relevant authorities, particularly focusing on the prompt payment of dues owed by the Department to the print media.

Chairman APNS Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pir Syed Haroon Shah, highlighted the need to identify sustainable and comprehensive solutions to these

issues and to foster a conducive environment for the development of regional newspapers.

The meeting was attended by APNS Khyber Pakhtunkhwa members, including Pir Haroon Shah, Chairman APNS; Syed Qaiser Rizvi, Chief Editor of Daily Jiddat; Javed Khan of Daily Mashriq; Ashraf Dar, Chief Editor of Daily Awam-un-Nas; Javed Afridi, Chief Editor of Daily Payam Khyber; Azmat Khan Dawoodzai, Chief Executive of Daily Peghamat; Bilal Afridi of Daily Frontier Post; Sardar

Naem, Chief Editor of Daily Qaed; Masood Khan, Chief Editor of Daily Riyasat; Liaquat Yousafzai, Chief Editor of Daily Surkhsh; Bari Malik, Chief Editor of Daily Watan; and Zahid Khan of Daily Sarhad.

The discussion also covered important topics such as the recovery of dues and the restoration of the PID regional newspapers quota. To address these issues, the APNS Khyber Pakhtunkhwa delegation, led by Chairman Pir Haroon Syed Shah, will hold meetings with high-ranking officials.

Monsoon Alert Floods, glacier bursts likely in 11 districts of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a monsoon alert, warning of potential floods and glacier bursts in eleven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The PDMA has instructed all district administrations in the province to remain vigilant, reported a private

news channel. According to the PDMA alert, thunderstorms and heavy rains are expected in the mountainous areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

There was also a possibility of dusty winds and floods in low-lying areas. Districts that may be affected include Swat, Chitral Lower, Chitral Upper, Dir Upper, Dir

Lower, Charsadda, DI Khan, Nowshera, Tank, and Shangla.

The PDMA highlighted that rising temperatures and melting glaciers could lead to flooding. Despite the alert, the situation is currently normal in all districts of KP. PDMA said that to mitigate potential disasters, control rooms will be established in the affected districts.

Dr Habib takes part in Science Diplomacy Course

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Habib Jan and Dr. Ali Talha Khalil Represent Pakistan at Prestigious Science Diplomacy Course in Trieste, Italy. Dr. Habib Jan, Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, recently participated in the esteemed Science Diplomacy course held in Trieste, Italy.

This prestigious training was jointly organized by UNESCO TWAS (The World Academy of Sciences) and AAAS (The American Association for the Advancement of Science).

This year, the course featured pairs from each participating country, with one individual from an academic science background and the other from a policy-making background.

Dr. Habib Jan was paired with Dr. Ali Talha Khalil, an Assistant Professor from the Pathology Department at LRH, and together they represented Pakistan.

Among more than 800 applications worldwide, they were selected through a rigorous open selection process, with all expenses covered by TWAS.

The Science Diplomacy course provides participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the intersection of science and international affairs or relevant policy-making.

Dr. Habib Jan and Dr. Ali Talha Khalil are now equipped to leverage their expertise to foster international collaboration and contribute to global scientific and policy initiatives.

DG Capital Metropolitan govt visit Supreme Command Post

PESHAWAR (APP): Director General Waheedur Rehman Sunday visited the Supreme Command Post and reviewed the arrangements wherein he issued instructions for timely completion of all arrangements for a peaceful Muharram-ul-Haram.

Arrival of Peshawar

Muharram Al Haram Director General Capital and Metropolitan Government Peshawar Wahidur Rehman besides visiting the Supreme Command Post, also reviewed the overall arrangements being made for the peaceful Muharram-ul-Haram.

He was given a briefing regarding steps being taken for ensuring security in the area besides providing information regarding the finalization of the arrangements, upon which Director General Wahidur Rehman issued instructions to complete all the arrangements well in time.

Kundi, Jan Sher discuss promotion of sports

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday paid a visit to the residence of former world squash champion Jan Sher Khan to discuss the promotion of sports in the province.

The meeting was attended by former British Squash Champion Atlas Khan, former world number ten player Amjad Khan, assistant coach, and squash coach Muhammad Wasim, Director General Sports.

Highlighting the invaluable contributions of Jan Sher Khan and his family in promoting Pakistan's name worldwide, Governor Faisal

Karim Kundi emphasized the importance of fostering sporting activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"Our province's youth are actively participating in sports, thanks to our heroes who continue to shine the name of our country," said Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

He said that efforts are underway at Governor's House to enhance sports activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, aiming to nurture talent and provide ample opportunities for youth engagement in sports.

He said that discussions also encompassed initiatives for the promotion of various

sports, including squash, in the province.

Jan Sher Khan praised Governor Kundi's initiatives for sports development.

He said that there is no shortage of talent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He further stressed the need for governmental measures to oversee the development and support of squash players at the provincial level.

The visit concluded with a mutual agreement to continue efforts towards bolstering sports activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, reaffirming the commitment to nurture a vibrant sports culture in the region.



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: According to ETEA officials, the entry test for BS Engineering and non-Engineering programs was held on July 7, 2024, in six centers across Pakistan, including Islamabad, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Mardan, Kohat, and Swat.

All centers had strict security arrangements. Considering the severe heat, the test was conducted in air-conditioned halls, where students took the test in a peaceful environment.

Candidates expressed satisfaction with the excellent arrangements made by ETEA and thanked the government. ETEA sources said

that not only were the results uploaded on the website within four hours of the test's conclusion, but also the answer keys and scorecards. Candidates can check their results and verify their scores through self-scoring.

According to initial results, Mahd Nazeer secured the top position in

the province with 90 marks, followed by other top performers, including Anas Khan, Aina Khan, Saad Muhammad Khan, Feroz Hussain Shah, Jamsheer Khan, Samiullah, Obaid Shokat Abbasi, Hasnain Nawaz, Iman Tahir Swati, Moomina Khan, and Abbas Alamgir.

It is worth noting that online registration for the second test will begin on ETEA's website tomorrow, and candidates who appeared in the first test are also eligible to participate in the second test.

The better scores from both tests will be acceptable for admission to universities and colleges. The results will be valid for admission to 2000 seats in public sector engineering universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and various universities and colleges across Pakistan."

Embracing nature's splendor: Monsoon magic at Mahodand lake

KALAM, Jul 07 (APP):As the monsoon season breathes life into the valleys of Upper Kalam, a mesmerizing transformation unfolds over Mahodand Lake in the Osho Valley.

The alternating dance of sun and clouds casts an enchanting spell, turning this serene lake into a coveted haven for tourists and families alike. Nestled amidst towering deodar trees and abundance of trout fish, Mahodand Lake with 2 kilometer length and 9,400feet height of sea level emerges as a jewel of nature, its bluish-white waters swelling with the monsoon rains.

Visitors flock here, eager to immerse themselves in the lake's tranquil beauty and partake in leisurely boating adventures. The lake's surroundings burst into a riot of colours, with vibrant seasonal flowers and roses sprawling across the landscape, creating a feast for the eyes and soul.

This season is cherished as an unparalleled opportunity to visit one of the country's most beautiful tourist destinations. The atmosphere is imbued with a palpable sense of ecstasy, courtesy of the frequent moderate to erratic rains that grace the region.

"I came to Kalam Valley with my family after five years to enjoy its mesmerizing natural beauty and cold weather on the week-

end," said Gulzar Rehman, former Conservator of Forest while talking to APP.

"Every raindrop adds to the magic, enhancing the lush greenery and the lake's emerald allure," he said, adding Mahodand Lake is renowned not just for its stunning vistas but also for its freezing waters and abundant trout fish besides exploring it through boating of Rs 200 trip," said Gulzar while enjoying trout fish as his children playing football around him amid great fun and laughter at Mahundhand with cold breeze and waterfall emanating from snow-clad Osho mountains.

Adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are particularly drawn to this beautiful destination known for its breathtaking natural beauty, taking advantage of the open access road and improved transportation facilities. The enhanced infrastructure and Swat motorway have made it easier for tourists to indulge in various adventure sports in Upper Swat, further elevating the lake's appeal.

"In this season of monsoon, Mahodand Lake stands as a testament to nature's splendor. It invites all to experience its ethereal beauty, to breathe in the fresh, rain-kissed air, and to create unforgettable memories in one of Pakistan's most enchanting locales,"

he said.

Saad Khan, the spokesman of the Tourism and Culture Authority told APP that elaborate arrangements were made for the accommodation and facilitation of tourists and adventure sports lovers during the current season in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Under Development of Ecotourism Project (ETP), he said that camping pods with facilities of two to four beds alongwith wash washrooms and kitchens were established at various scenic places including Malakand and Hazara divisions.

Besides establishment of camping pods at Gabeen Jabba near Mahudhand Lake and Sharan near Saiful Malook Lake, he said 10 more camping pods were installed at different tourist places to provide affordable accommodations to tourists' families.

These camping pods were established at Sharan Kaghan, Mansehra, Mahaband Buner-Swabi, Allai Batagram, Bamburait Chitral, Tandiani Abbottabad, Bisigram Swat, Yakhtangi Shangla, Saheed e Sir and Malka Swat and Sheikh Badin in DI Khan. Bishigram, Shran, Yakhtangi, Shaheed e Sir and Malka camping pods have already been opened for tourists.

"Each pod has two to four beds for families, a washroom and a small



kitchen with foolproof security arrangements by tourism police," he said, adding Rs3500 to Rs5000 per day/night stay was being charged against Rs12,000 to Rs15,000 per room by private hotels at Khagan, Naran and Galiyat valleys.

As many as 10 more camping pods at Jargo and Sulatan in Swat, Lashkargha Broghal Valley and Surlaspur Shandor Valley Upper Chitral, Kumrat Valley in Upper Dir, Laram Top and Shahi Bin Shahi in Lower Dir, Lilowani Alpuri in Shangla Samanah Top in Orakzai/Hangu and Kalam Swat.

One of the key initiatives that have been undertaken is to increase the presence of security personnel in

tourist spots. This has made tourists feel safer and more secure, increasing the number of tourists visiting northern KP.

Tourism police force comprises well-trained officers equipped to handle any situation that may arise while tourists are visiting the northern KP to beat the sizzling heat in plain districts of Pakistan. These officers are fluent in several languages, including English, to make communication with foreign tourists easier.

A mobile application called the "Tourist Safety App," has been launched enabling tourists to quickly and easily contact the tourist police in case of an emergency. Furthermore, the government has invested heavily in improving the

infrastructure, including the road network, transportation, and accommodation facilities.

The construction of new hotels, resorts, and rest houses has made it easier for tourists to find suitable accommodations while enhanced road networks had reduced load on the established tourism stations.

Muhammad Ali Syed, General Manager, Tourism and Culture Authority said that waterfalls of Lamchar, Sajkot, Noori, Chajjian Haripur, Jarogo Swat, Lanchar Dir and Umbrella Abbottabad were being developed to promote ecotourism. Tourism spots, jeep tracks and roads to link waterfalls of Abbottabad, Haripure and Mansehra were being developed.

To reduce tourists' load at Galiyat, Kaghan, Naran, Kalam, Malam Jabba and Dir, jeepable tracks were being constructed in 15 areas with an estimated cost of Rs500 million, adding camping pods were also established near it while local communities were encouraged to reserve at least one rooms for tourists to bolster income of rural population.

Similarly, over 19 PTDC hotels/motels including at Gharam Chesma, Pir Maflash, Boni, Kalash in Chitral, Oshu Kalam, Mankiyal, Saidu Sharif, Miandum in Swat, Balakot Mansehra, Ayubia Abbottabad were opened for tourists.

Omaid Khattak, GM Investment, KP Tourism Authority said Integrated Tourism Zones (ITZs) at Ghanool Mansehra, Mankiyal Swat, Madaklasht Chitral and Thandiyani Abbottabad would be constructed with assistance of the World Bank.

Ghanool Mansehra would be established on 59.6 acres, Mankiyal Swat on 29.5 acres, Madaklasht on 540 Kanal and Thandiyani on 640 Kanal of land respectively.

As a pilot project, ITZ Ghanool with a proposed cost of Rs5.5 billion and Mankiyal with an estimated cost of Rs2.9 billion to be developed first to promote sustainable tourism. Rules

and regulations for Mankiyal and Ghanool ITZs were prepared that would be completed on the patterns of ITZs of Malaysia and Indonesia. These ITZs are expected to create 200,000 direct and indirect job opportunities and USD 2.8 billion investment.

The feasibility of the Cable Car project from Dir Upper to Madaklasht Chitral has been completed and it would be financially supported by the World Bank through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated tourism project (KITE).

Four colonial era tracks' developments including Thandiyani-Nathiagali having 8, 200 feet in height, 40km in length and 1500 old trees belt, Thandiyani-Biringali track, Dagri Bangla-Meera Jani-Nathiagali track and Kaghan- Mahnoor track starting from Shinkyari to Kund Bangla and onward to Shaheed Pani-Nadi Bangla to Musa Ka Musallah were in pipeline.

These positive measures of the government would help increase tourism revenue besides promoting the soft image of Pakistan being a tourism loving country.

The experts underlined the need for showcasing these treasures through short videos and pictures on social media to attract foreign tourists imperative for bolstering rural economy.



In brief

Six injured in car-Bike collision

SHAHKOT (INP): Six passengers were injured on Sunday when a car and bike collided in shahkot, a private news channel reported. According to details, the incident took place GT road pawan stop when can and bike coming from opposite side were collided. After receiving information the rescue team reached at the spot and shifted the injured to the nearby Hospital.

38 outlaws arrested

KASUR (INP): The police arrested 38 outlaws, recovered cache of arms, ammunition, drugs and stolen motorcycles during crackdown against criminals in different areas. According to details, the police on directives of DPO Kasur Muhammad Issa Khan launched massive crackdown against the drug peddlers in Dussehra Ground, Naya Bazaar, Dingipura, Basti Sabri, Rukanpura and Rasoolpura areas of Kasur. The operation was participated by DSP City Saifullah Bhatti, SHO Muneer Hussain, SHO Fahad Raza, heavy contingent of police contingent from different police stations and Elite force personnel. The security personnel checked 65 houses and queried over 90 people during the operation. The grand operation led to arrest of 38 outlaws including drug peddlers, elements involved in illegal weapons possession, gambling and other crimes. The police recovered eight pistols, a Rifle, a revolver, ammunition, 10 kg hashish, 1.5 kg opium, 104 litres noxious liquor and Rs31,000 stake money. Separate cases against the detainees were registered at respective police stations and investigations were kicked off.

Couple dies, three injured

BALAKOT (INP): Two including husband and wife died while three children were injured when a car skidded off road and fell into a gorge near Babusar Top on Sunday. According to details, a car with five family members hailing from Lahore onboard which was on visit to scenic valley got out of control near Babusar Top and plunged into a ravine. A couple died in the accident while their three children were seriously injured. The local people and authorities through joint efforts pulled up the bodies and injured from ravine and shifted them to hospital.

Mother, child die in Chiniot

CHINIOT (INP): Two including mother and child died due to negligence of medics at District Headquarter (DHQ) Hospital Chiniot. Heirs hold protest against the doctors and demanded justice. According to details, wife and child of Abid Hussain, media coordinator Rescue 1122 Chiniot were shifted to DHQ Hospital Chiniot for treatment. However, the hospital staff paid no heed towards providing treatment to mother and son due to which both expired. Abid Hussain and other heirs of the deceased held protest demonstration outside DHQ Hospital demanding strict action against the medics responsible for the death of the two. Husband of the deceased woman alleged that the hospital staff neither cooperated with them nor provided treatment to mother and child. The protestors demanded Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to take notice of the incident and direct action against the responsible.

Maj. Gen. Bhatti stresses for peaceful Muharram



F.P. Report

KOHAT: All the sects should show patience, solidarity and brotherhood during the upcoming Muharram ul Haram and jointly work to thwart the nefarious intentions of the evil elements. These views were expressed by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 9 Div Kohat Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti while addressing the separate settings of the local elders and youth at Governor's Cottage Parachinar.

Deputy Commissioner Kurram Javedullah Mehsud in his address explained in detail about the arrangements so far made for peaceful holding

of Muharram ul Haram.

On this occasion Commander 73 Brigade Brigadier Shahzad Azim, District Police Officer Kurram Nisar Ahmed Khan, Commanding Officer 55 Baloch Colonel Yousaf, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Yousaf Karim, Assistant Commissioner Upper Kurram Hafeezullah and elders of the area were also present.

The GOC said that the sacrifices made by the martyrs of Karbala for the sake of religion is a living example for all of us.

Therefore, we not only have to show brotherhood, peace and tolerance among ourselves during Muharram ul Haram only

but show the same for the whole year. We have to thwart all the negative plans of anti-state elements with full force, he added.

GOC Kohat said that the sacrifices of the security forces for maintenance of peace is crystal clear, so for the peaceful holding of Muharram, we should have to fully cooperate with all the institutions of the state for national cause.

On this occasion, the elites and youth of the area informed the honorable guest about all their problems and reiterated their complete cooperation with all the institutions during Muharram ul Haram this year as well.

Mardam commissioner visits Imambargah

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardam Division Muhammad Ayaz made a special visit to the main Imambargah and procession routes of Mardan city to review the security arrangements during Muharram.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Fayyaz Khan Sherpao, DPO Zahoor Babar Afridi accompanied him on this occasion. Local police officers including SP HQ Rizwan Habib and DSP City Ijaz Khan were also present on the occasion.

DPO Mardan briefed the Commissioner Mardan

Division regarding the security arrangements of the Imambargah and procession passages. Commissioner Mardan expressed satisfaction over the security arrangements and assured cooperation from the district administration and related institutions.

JUI-F flays torture of inmate in jail

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Volunteers of Jamiat Ullama-e-Islam Fazal Rehman (JUI-F) condemned torture of under-trial prisoner Khalid Khan by police in Peshawar jail and demanded of provincial government to conduct fair enquiry of the matter. It is to be mentioned here Khalid Khan had shot and killed one, Tahir Naseem in a courtroom in Peshawar on July 29, 2020 who was on trial for blasphemy. In a protest rally organized under the banner of JUI-F Landi Kotal chapter Tehsil Chairman Bara Mufti Kafeel, General Secretary JUI-F, Khyber Said Kabeer, Maulana Shamsuddin, Ameer Landi Kotal Qari Mujahid, President Anjuman-e-Tajeran Landi Kotal Bazaar Yawaz Shinwari, councilors, religious scholars and scores of locals participated in it. Addressing on the occasion Mufti Kafeel, Qari Mujahid, Maulana Zaid and others categorically criticized the jail administration for the ill-treatment and torture incident towards what they said Ghazi, Khalid Khan who had performed a noble and religious duty by killing the apostate.



QUETTA: View of the open manhole in front of civil hospital which may cause any serious incident. — INP photo

Coal, mineral projects start changing lives in Thar deserts

THAR (APP): After decades' long life full of disparity and deprivation, Thar residents are finally seeing a ray of hope and some pleasant changes in their lives after exploration of coal and variety of other minerals.

Tharparker, a desert area of Sindh province, with a population of over 1.7 million people had been rich in natural resources like coal, granite, clay and salt. But this unexplored treasure of nature lagged the local people behind in socio-economic uplift as compared to residents of other parts of the province.

For a long time, they did not have even access to clean drinking water, basic healthcare and quality education. Majority of the population had never irrigated their agricultural land due to non-availability of water and frequent droughts as the only water resource depended on for agriculture and drinking, was the rain water.

However, the life started changing gradually after projects for coal extraction

by the federal and provincial governments like construction of roads and other infrastructure. The work was started on couple of blocks that resulted in construction of roads and employment opportunities for local people.

"The region was beleaguered with dearth of water, transport, healthcare and other basic amenities when we were at school level," stated Fakir Saleem, a journalist from the area. "We passed decades of deprivation till year 2002, when for the first time we felt, our destinies were going to change."

With the start of multiple projects like Thar coal exploration and mining of other minerals from our area raised hopes for a change. "Now infrastructure is being developed, roads are constructed while projects are also on way to address persisting water shortage issue."

"We have definitely witnessed some change but much was needed to provide drinking water to people in the area, mitigate

environmental effects and avert threats of drought and famines," Fakir Saleem said.

In the past, economy of this region solely depended on agriculture and livestock but now people have also access to employment and other opportunities to earn a better living.

People of Thar deserts usually leave their homes along with livestock to riverine areas for feeding their animals and earn some livelihood by working at fields during harvesting season. Almost 35 to 40 percent population opts for seasonal migration during summer where the burning sand and delayed rains make their lives miserable.

Besides living in rural areas, Thari people are known for their carpet industry, intricate embroidery and shawls. They have talent, skills, energy and commitment. But, their skills were wasted due to resource limitations and lack of marketing structures and planning.

"After a long time, life has now started moving,

though slowly," remarked Sain Dino, an 80 years old resident of Mithi. "Some public and private sector projects coming to this region have started changing our lives."

"With the construction of roads and other infrastructure for coal mining has also made way for basic amenities to reach this area," he stated. "Now, we are seeing projects for water availability, electricity and solarization in our area."

Life in the desert comes with challenges like water scarcity, limited access to healthcare and education and impact of climate change on traditional livelihoods. As it is water scarce area, seasonal rain water is collected in tanks, ponds and reservoirs to use for drinking and other domestic purposes.

However, in recent years, efforts have also been made to improve water availability by laying water pipelines and installing RO plants by the Sindh Government while Gorano Dam reservoir,



built by Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company working in Thar Coal Block 2 near Islamkot, also irrigate agricultural lands in Thar.

"Before the road was built, it used to take a day to travel from Mithi to Nangar, but now the journey is completed within two hours," informed Wali Muhammad from Nangarparkar. "Now the children of poor people are also imparted education with many among them proceeding abroad for higher studies on scholarships."

He said Thar people have great potential to excel in different arena of life if their skills are fully utilized to benefit them as well as national economy. "Some of Thari crafts and skills may become extinct unless special efforts are made to preserve them," he said. "We need to appreciate and think about preserving the age-old skills passed down by successive generations for centuries by promoting and valuing traditional skills of women of Thar."

Thari people also have rich cultural heritage with vibrant music, dance and art forms. The region is also known for its colorful attire, intricate embroidery and lively folk music and dance performances.

Being yet another area rich in Nature's bounties, Thar and its people need special attention of the governments to protect their heritage and skills as well as explore their abilities to excel and prosper like people in other parts of the country.



GILGIT: Tourist capturing the moment with their cell phone at Nalter Valley, a popular tourist destination, as a large number of other people have also arrived to visit the area. — APP photo

JI to hold public meetings

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Jamaat-e-Islami begins to hold various public meetings in different parts of Mardan district to mobilize its workers and general masses to attend and actively take part in large number in the JI set-in scheduled on July 12 in Islamabad.

The Jamaat-e-Islami (Mardan Chapter) district Ameer Ghulam Rasool along with other party leaders including Fazal-e-Rabani advocate, Mian Nadar Shah, Saeed Akhtar advocate and Manzoor-ul-Haq announced it in a press conference held here on Sunday.

On the occasion, the JI district Ameer told journalists that following the instructions of central Ameer of JI Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, they were going to accelerate their mobilization efforts and activities to take a large number of people to JI set-in against the price-hike, excessive and heavy electricity bills to be held on July 12 on the current month. He not only condemned the bomb blasts of Bajaur and Jalala Bridge but also declared that these terrorists' activities were being carried out by anti-state elements.

He demanded of the government to announce Rs.02 million and Rs.01 million for martyrs and injured persons respectively as compensation amount.

Mr. Ghulam Rasool alleged that both the leaderships of Pakistan Muslim League-N and Pakistan People Party were imposed over the nation on shape as the "Packy Dakoo".

He lamented that PTI leaders and party-workers had only been struggling for release of Imran Khan, adding that they did not care for resolution of problems and issues of poor countrymen. While talking to media-persons the other JI leaders who spoke on the occasion, alleged that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Ali Ameen Gandapur were acting as like film actors. They blamed that the KPK chief minister was only making filmi dialogues because he had no plan and agenda for solution of problems of people.

Chanzeb hails CM's Mansehra visit as milestone

F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: Chief Minister's Mansehra visit a milestone for development and awakening of public consciousness at the national level. Zahid Chanzeb Our leader Imran Khan must be released immediately, else our peaceful democratic struggle will end with sacking mandate-thief rulers.

Tourism Advisor Peshawar- July 7Zahid Chanzeb, Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture, has said that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's visit to Mansehra and his address to the grand rally there will prove to be a milestone to the development of Mansehra in addition to raising public awareness at the national level.

He said that even the Pharaohs of the time got scared and canceled the permit of PTI rally in

Islamabad, but our democratic struggle has started.

If the puppet and mandate-thief rulers do not come to their senses and failed to release our leader Imran Khan immediately, our peace march will result in their sacking and they will not find a place to hide. He expressed this while talking to a delegation of local leaders on the occasion of his public Contact campaign in Mansehra.

Zahid Chanzeb said that he sincerely thankful to the people of Mansehra for the full participation of the people in the Mansehra rally, who have certainly demonstrated their strong political consciousness at the national level.

The Advisor Tourism said that our party PTI believed in the supremacy of constitution and law while our leader Imran Khan has taught us peaceful political struggle instead of taking law into

our hands which should not be considered as our weakness.

He regretted that the central government has made it its mission to impose new taxes on the people and plunder public money with both hands so that they can fill their personal wallets and flee abroad in the shortest possible time.

But, he maintained, they should remember that their political tricks and gimmicks will not be successful this time, so they should read the writing on the wall and release Imran Khan as well as return the stolen mandate of his party Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI).

Also, the puppet rulers should think of relief instead of increasing the problems of the people, otherwise public flood will reach Islamabad and despotic rulers will have to suffer the public anger, he concluded.

Govt trying to eliminate terrorism: Tarar

M. Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Federal Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar said that granting of permission or no to hold public meeting at Tarnol area of Islamabad is purely a administrative discretion and Tarnol area has been declared most sensitive according to the reports of Islamabad administration and secret agencies whereas all administration remains high alert during holy month of Muharram and political parties should take such decision which are in the interest of workers and the Country.

While talking to media at Hafizabad, he said that government and law enforcement agencies were struggling to eliminate terrorism and Pakistan was frontline state and effects of Afghan war were still existing.

He said that reserved seats were constitutional rights of only those parties who returned to won election and reserved seats could be allotted to political

parties which submitted their lists according to time frame of election commission.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has fundamental right to move from one political party to another party and it is not matter of stated, he added.

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Madam Sundas Irshad visited different areas of the city Hafizabad after rain, on Saturday.

She reviewed arrangements made by the Municipal Committee for derange of rain water standing at different places in the city.

She also inspected monsoon emergency relief camp established on the directions of the Chief Minister of the Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. MC Hamadullah and Chief Officer Ansar Mehmood Sahi and other officers were also accompanied by the DC.

DC directed the

Municipal Officers to start water drainage work immediately soon after rain so that people could not face any hurdle.

She said that monsoon emergency relief camps were setup to address complaints of people without any delay and she warned the officers concerned that any delay in drainage of rain water would not be tolerated.

HAFIZABAD: The People's Party observed black day against Zia-ul-Haq to topal the democratic government and usurpation of power. In this regard, the main event was held at the residence of the District Secretary General of the People's Party Muhammad Arshad Mehind Advocate.

Muhammad Arshad Mehind Advocate, former President Bar Khalida Shahid Advocate, People's Party Candidate for Constituency PP-38 Pir Syed Waseem-ul-Hasan Naqvi and other district leaders addressed the participants.



Biden’s TV interview appears to have failed to quell Democrats’ concerns about his fitness



NEW YORK (APP): US President Joe Biden’s Friday night TV interview does not seem to have quelled the demands within the Democratic Party to withdraw his candidature after last week’s halting debate performance against Donald Trump, his Republican rival in the November presidential election.

Some Biden allies came to the president’s defence, applauding his performance in his sit-down with ABC News’ George Stephanopoulos.

But after the interviewed aired, Congressperson Angie Craig, a Democrat, became the fifth House Democrat asking Biden to step aside in a statement Saturday.

She joined a growing number of people within his party asking he reevaluate his campaign, including Texas Congresspersons Lloyd Doggett, Arizona Congress person Raul Grijalva, and Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey. Discussions about the future of Biden’s candidacy are expected over the next days and weeks.

Democratic Senator Mark Warner is organizing a group of

Democratic senators to ask Biden to drop out, according to media reports.

“Given what I saw and heard from the President during last week’s debate in Atlanta, coupled with the lack of forceful response from the President himself following the debate, I do not believe that the President can effectively campaign and win against Donald Trump,” Craig said. “This future of our country is bigger than any one of us. It’s up to the President from here.”

One of Biden’s most ardent supporters, Congressperson Jim Clyburn, also a Democrat, said the threat former President Donald Trump poses is why the party should rally behind the president right now.

“He clearly laid out the truth tonight — under Trump, all of our progress will be stymied and our democracy would be at risk,” Clyburn said in a social media post Friday evening.

“Joe Biden is who our country needs and his presidency has laid a foundation upon which we can continue our pursuit of a more perfect union.”

Democratic Congressperson Judy

Chu told Politico, an online news service, after the interview aired that she found the president’s answer about whether he would agree to take a cognitive test unnerving. Biden said he didn’t need one and serving as president while running for reelection is its own sort of cognitive test.

“I found the answer about taking a cognitive test every day to be unsettling and not particularly convincing, so I will be watching closely every day to see how he is doing, especially in spontaneous situations,” Chu said.

David Axelrod, a former senior adviser to former President Barack Obama, was one of the first Democrats to say there would be discussion about Biden’s future in the race following his performance in the first presidential debate. After Biden dismissed his low poll numbers in the interview with Stephanopoulos, Axelrod took to X, formerly Twitter, to respond.

“The president is rightfully proud of his record. But he is dangerously out-of-touch with the concerns people have about his capacities moving forward and his standing in this race,”

Axelrod said. “Four years ago at this time, he was 10 points ahead of Trump. Today, he is six points behind.”

Political consultant Bill Burton, who served as a deputy press secretary in President Barak Obama, penned a CNN opinion column published Saturday arguing Vice President Kamala Harris is the “only viable alternative” for Democrats so late in the race. Ms. Harris is the first woman, first Black person and first person of Asian descent to be elected vice president.

“If you think our ticket has problems in the Black community right now, imagine pushing our nation’s first Black woman vice president aside for the fantasy of riding a blank slate to victory,” Burton said.

Democratic Senator Chris Coons, representing Biden’s home state, is sticking with the president. He shared a clip from the interview and praised Biden, saying he has made “remarkable progress” and would deliver more in his next term.

“I can’t wait to help him continue to take the fight to Trump and win in November,” Coons said.

Meanwhile, Biden, 81, is spending Saturday at his family home in Delaware before two public events on Sunday.

During the 22-minute primetime interview, Biden rejected suggestions allies may ask him to stand aside, saying “it’s not going to happen.”

A n c h o r Stephanopoulos pressed the president on his capacity to serve another term.

“I don’t think anybody’s more qualified to be president or win this race than me,” Biden said.



TRIESTE, ITALY: Pope Francis attends a mass at Piazza Unita d'Italia in Trieste, Italy, on Sunday.

2 months after Israel invaded to root out Hamas Rafah is a dusty, rubble-strewn ghost town

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP): Two months ago, before Israeli troops invaded Rafah, the city sheltered most of Gaza’s more than 2 million people. Today it is a dust-covered ghost town.

Abandoned, bullet-ridden apartment buildings have blasted out walls and shattered windows. Bedrooms and kitchens are visible from roads dotted with rubble piles that tower over the Israeli military vehicles passing by. Very few civilians remain.

Israel says it has nearly defeated Hamas forces in Rafah — an area identified earlier this year as the militant group’s last stronghold in Gaza.

The Israeli military invited reporters into Rafah on Wednesday, the first time international media visited Gaza’s southernmost city since it was invaded May 6. Israel has barred international journalists from entering Gaza independently since the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 that sparked the war.

Before invading Rafah, Israel said Hamas’ four remaining battalions had retreated there, an area of about 25 square miles (65 square kilometers) that borders Egypt. Israel says hundreds of militants

have been killed in its Rafah offensive. Scores of women and children have also died from Israeli airstrikes and ground operations.

The military says it has been necessary to operate with such intensity because Hamas turned civilian areas into treacherous traps. Eight soldiers were killed last month by a single blast.

“Some of these tunnels are booby-trapped,” the military’s chief spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said during Wednesday’s tour as he stood over a shaft that led underground. “Hamas built everything in a civilian neighborhood among houses, among mosques, among the population, in order to create its terror ecosystem.”

An estimated 1.4 million Palestinians crammed into Rafah after fleeing fighting elsewhere in Gaza. The U.N. estimates that around 50,000 remain in Rafah, which had a pre-war population of about 275,000.

Most have moved to a nearby Israel-declared “humanitarian area” where conditions are grave. Many are clustering in squalid tent camps along the beach with scant access to clean

water, food, bathrooms and medical care.

Efforts to bring aid into southern Gaza have stalled. Israel’s incursion into Rafah closed down one of two major crossings into the south of Gaza. The U.N. says little aid can enter from the other main crossing — Kerem Shalom — because the route is too dangerous and convoys are vulnerable to attacks by armed groups searching for smuggled-in cigarettes.

On Wednesday, a line of trucks on the Gaza side of Kerem Shalom was visible, but the trucks were hardly moving — a sign of how Israel’s pledge to keep the route safe in order to facilitate the delivery of aid inside Gaza has fallen flat.

U.N. officials say some commercial trucks have braved the route into Rafah, but not without hired armed guards riding atop their convoys.

Israel says it is close to dismantling the group as an organized military force in Rafah. In a reflection of that confidence, soldiers brought journalists in open-arm military vehicles down the road that leads into the heart of the city.

Along the way, debris

lying by the side of the road made clear the perils of aid delivery: carcasses of trucks lying baking in the hot sun; dashboards covered in fencing meant to protect drivers; aid pallets lying empty.

The longer the aid delivery is frozen, humanitarian groups say, the closer Gaza comes to running out of fuel, which is needed for hospitals, water desalination plants and vehicles.

“The hospitals are once again short on fuel, risking disruption of critical services,” said Dr. Hanan Balkhy, the World Health Organization’s regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean. “Injured people are dying because the ambulance services are facing delays due to fuel shortages.”

As the humanitarian situation worsens, Israel is pushing ahead with its offensive. Combat in Rafah is ongoing.

After journalists heard nearby gunshots on Wednesday, the soldiers told the group they would not be visiting the beach, as had been planned.

The group departed the city soon after, with clouds of dust kicked up by vehicles temporarily obscuring the mass of destruction behind them.

What is the NATO military alliance and how is it helping Ukraine?

BRUSSELS (AP): President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts are meeting in Washington this week to mark the 75th anniversary of the world’s biggest security organization just as Russia presses its advantage on the battlefield in Ukraine.

The three-day summit, which begins Tuesday, will focus on ways to reassure Ukraine of NATO’s enduring support and offer some hope to its war-weary citizens that their country might survive the biggest land conflict in Europe in decades.

Much of what NATO can do for Ukraine, and indeed for global security, is misunderstood. Often the alliance is thought of as the sum of all U.S. relations with its European partners, from imposing sanctions and other costs on Russia to sending arms and ammunition.

But as an organization, its brief is limited to the defense by military means of its 32 member countries — the sacred Three Musketeers-like vow of all for one, one for all — and a commitment to help keep the peace in Europe and North America.

That also means not being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia. Here’s a look at NATO and how it’s aiding Ukraine:

What is NATO?

Founded in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed by 12 nations to counter the

threat to European security posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Dealing with Moscow is in its DNA.

NATO’s ranks have grown since the Washington Treaty was signed 75 years ago — to 32 countries after Sweden joined this year, worried by an increasingly aggressive Russia.

NATO’s collective security guarantee — Article 5 of the treaty — underpins its credibility. It’s a political commitment by all member countries to come to the aid of any member whose sovereignty or territory might be under attack. Ukraine would meet those criteria, but it is only a partner, not a member.

NATO’s doors are open to any European country that wants to join and can meet the requirements and obligations. Importantly, NATO takes its decisions by consensus, so every member has a veto.

Who’s in charge?

The United States is the most powerful member. It spends much more on defense than any other ally and far outweighs its partners in terms of military muscle. So Washington drives the agenda.

NATO’s day-to-day work is led by its secretary-general — former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, until he is replaced on Oct. 1 by outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte.

NATO’s top civilian official chairs almost week-

ly meetings of ambassadors in the North Atlantic Council at its Brussels headquarters. He chairs other “NACs” at ministerial level and summits of heads of state and government. Stoltenberg runs NATO HQ. He does not order the allies around. His job is to encourage consensus and speak on behalf of all 32 members.

NATO’s military headquarters is based nearby in Mons, Belgium. It is always run by a top U.S. officer. The current supreme allied commander Europe is Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli.

What is NATO doing to help Ukraine?

Even though most allies believe that Russia could pose an existential threat to Europe, NATO itself is not arming Ukraine. As an organization, NATO possesses no weapons of any kind. Collectively, the alliance provides only non-lethal support — fuel, combat rations, medical supplies and body armor, as well as equipment to counter drones or mines.

But members do send arms on their own or in groups.

NATO is helping Ukraine’s armed forces shift from Soviet-era military doctrine to modern thinking. It’s also helping strengthen Ukraine’s defense and security institutions.

In Washington, NATO leaders will endorse a new plan to coordinate the delivery of equipment to

Ukraine and training for its armed forces. The leaders will renew a vow that Ukraine will join the alliance one day, but not while it’s at war.

Why is NATO stationing more troops on its European borders?

While some allies have left open the possibility of sending military personnel to Ukraine, NATO itself has no plans to do this.

But a key part of the commitment for allies to defend one another is to deter Russian President Vladimir Putin, or any other adversary, from launching an attack in the first place. Finland and Sweden joined NATO recently over concern about this.

With the war in its third year, NATO now has 500,000 military personnel on high readiness to counter any attack, whether it be on land, at sea, by air or in cyberspace.

The alliance has doubled the number of battle groups along its eastern flank, bordering Russia and Ukraine. Allies are almost continuously conducting military exercises. One of them this year, Steadfast Defender, involved around 90,000 troops operating across Europe.

Isn’t the U.S. doing the heavy lifting?

Due to high U.S. defense spending over many years, America’s armed forces benefit not only from greater troop numbers and superior weapons but also from significant transport and logistics assets.

Other allies are starting to spend more though. After years of cuts, NATO members committed to ramp up their national defense budgets in 2014 when Russia annexed Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula.

The aim was for each ally to be spending 2% of gross domestic product on defense within a decade. A year ago, with no end to the war in sight, they agreed to make 2% a spending floor, rather than a ceiling.

A record 23 countries are expected to be close to the spending target this year, up from only three a decade ago.

Israeli protesters urging Gaza deal block roads

JERUSALEM (Reuters): Protests aimed at pressuring the Israeli government to reach a hostage deal with Hamas began across the country on Sunday, with demonstrators blocking roads and picketing at the homes of government ministers.

Protests began at 6:29 am (0329 GMT), corresponding to the time of Hamas’ Oct. 7 assault on Israel, according to Israeli media.

The demonstrators took to the streets, blocking rush hour traffic at major intersections across the country. They briefly set fire to tires on the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway before police cleared the way.

Efforts to secure a hostage deal between Israel and Hamas in Gaza after nine months of war have gained momentum in recent days, with officials expressing optimism but saying gaps remain between the sides.

Gaza health authorities say more than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed in the offensive launched in response to Hamas’ attack on southern Israel, in which 1,200 people were killed and over 250 taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies.

Small groups with megaphones and banners also protested outside the houses of a number of ministers and coalition lawmakers.

“Total failure! Total failure!” a small crowd yelled outside the house of cabinet minister Ron Dermer, a member of Netanyahu’s inner circle.

At Kibbutz Or Haner, near the border with Gaza, protesters hung a black balloon for every person killed in the attack and a yellow balloon for every hostage still held in Gaza.

Some Israelis disagree with the protesters’ aims, and are pressing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government to spurn a deal and keep fighting until all the country’s objectives have been met.

Heavy rains trigger landslides in Nepal, 11 killed, 8 missing

KATHMANDU (Reuters): Heavy rains triggered landslides and flash floods killing at least 11 people in the last 36 hours in Nepal and blocking key highways and roads, officials said Sunday.

Eight people were missing, either washed away by floods or buried in landslides, while 12 others were injured and being treated in hospitals, police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki said.

“Rescue workers are trying to clear the landslides and open the roads,” Karki told Reuters, adding heavy equipment was being used to clear debris.

In southeastern Nepal, the Koshi River, which causes deadly floods in the eastern Indian state of Bihar almost every year, was flowing above the danger level, a district official said.

“The flow of Koshi is rising and we have asked residents to remain alert about possible floods,” Bed Raj Phuyal, a senior official of Sunsari district where the river flows, told



Reuters. He said at 0900 hours (0315 hours GMT) water flow in Koshi River was 369,000 cusecs per second, more than double its normal flow of 150,000 cusecs.

Cusec is the measurement of the flow of water and one cusec is equal to one cubic foot per second.

Authorities said all 56 sluice gates of the Koshi Barrage had been opened to drain out water compared with about 10-12 during a normal situation.

Authorities said the flows of Narayani, Rapti and Mahakali rivers in the west were also rising.

In hill-ringed Kathmandu, several rivers have overflowed their banks, flooded roads and inundated many houses.

Local media showed people wading through waist-deep water or residents using buckets to empty their houses.

At least 50 people across Nepal have died in landslides, floods and lightning

strikes since mid-June when annual monsoon rains started.

Hundreds of people die every year in landslides and flash floods that are common in mostly mountainous Nepal during the monsoon season which normally starts in mid-June and continues through mid-September.

In the northeastern Indian state of Assam, floods have killed dozens and displaced thousands of people in the past few days.



The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

NATO should reject Biden course

ALTHOUGH former Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte will not replace Jens Stoltenberg as NATO secretary-general until October, the NATO summit in Washington from Tuesday to Thursday will serve to show the organization the route along which Washington expects it to follow under its new leadership.

That US President Joe Biden, in an exclusive interview with ABC aired on Friday, bragged about his being able to hold NATO together and keep the Pacific Basin in a position to checkmate China, as a proof of his diplomatic achievements, indicates the route Washington is charting for NATO with Rutte at the helm. "I'm the guy that put NATO together, the future. No one thought I could expand it. I'm the guy that shut Putin down. No one thought could happen.

I'm the guy that put together a South Pacific initiative with AUKUS. I'm the guy that got 50 nations out — not only in Europe, outside of Europe as well to help Ukraine ... Who's gonna be able to be in a position where I'm able to keep the Pacific Basin in a position where we're at least checkmating China now?" said Biden.

That Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand are also invited to take part in the NATO gathering in Washington, as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed in a conversation at the Brookings Institution last week, confirms the United States is now welding together the US' NATO and "Indo-Pacific" security alliances.

Since its founding in 1949, NATO had not mentioned China at all in its Strategic Concept, its main political document, until two years ago during the Madrid Summit, thanks to the Biden administration's hyping up of the China threat. And almost all of its member states, including the US, the Netherlands and Norway, respectively Rutte's and Stoltenberg's home countries, have stable relations with China featuring sizable economic and trade cooperation.

Yet over the past more than three years, the Biden administration has coaxed and cajoled the US' European allies and Asia-Pacific partners to jump on its anti-China bandwagon without allowing them to care about the costs involved in turning their long-term partner into a rival. The rise of the far right in European political circles and the forthcoming US presidential election in November will be what most of NATO's European leaders have on their minds as the flag of "shared values" is raised above the Washington meeting.

With the possibility of Donald Trump reentering the White House, the Biden administration's zero-sum game may be transformed again into an America-first art of the deal. So it is likely the attendees will adopt a nod-in-agreement, wait-and-see approach to any bid by Biden trying to squeeze any more vitality juice out of the organization to perk up his election campaigning.

Meanwhile Beijing will be hoping that under the leadership of Rutte, NATO will do more to show the sincerity of the claims made by Stoltenberg, when he met with Wang Yi in September 2022, that NATO does not see China as a rival, values maintaining and strengthening contacts with it, and will stick to its established geographical scope. With NATO's self-vaunted role of champion of the West and seemingly insatiable desire for eastwards expansion having been the cause of much bloodshed and suffering under Stoltenberg's willingness to be a yes-man to the US, it is to be hoped that Rutte will be able to instill more practical common sense into the organization so that it rejects the course Biden has charted for it.

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Is anyone surprised by Netanyahu's partial deal or no deal?

Yossi Mekelberg

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rarely gives interviews to domestic media outlets. In the twilight of his political life, he prefers those journalists who pander to him, and let him embark on a free flow of propaganda without any critique. Israel's Channel 14 television is known for this practice, and could be easily be renamed the Bibi News Channel, as it conveys to the public the messages of the one who increasingly sees himself as the supreme leader, and not an elected prime minister who is accountable to the Israeli public or scrutinized by the Knesset.

Consider Netanyahu's so-called "interview" on this channel in which he stated, without being challenged, that in the negotiations with Hamas, he would only accept a partial ceasefire deal, but would not end the already nine-month-long war in Gaza. That statement has three major implications. First, it undermines the viability of the US-backed ceasefire proposal. Second, it was as good as saying that he is ready to give up on at least some of the 120 hostages still in captivity. And, finally, since US President Joe Biden presented the three-part plan as an Israeli proposal, it also means that Netanyahu has reneged on what he had agreed with Washington, and by that risks widening the rift with the Biden administration.

It would be disingenuous of anyone to suggest that they were surprised by the Israeli prime minister's behavior, as we have all been accustomed, although appalled, by the way he conducts public affairs — in this case prioritizing his political survival over the release of the hostages, and prolonging a conflict in which it is obvious, including to his military high command, that destroying Hamas is not an achievable objective. In taking this approach, he is also increasing the likelihood of war with Hezbollah on the country's northern border, while alienating regional and international allies, and deepening the divisions within Israeli society. Netanyahu is ready to allow this litany of threats to the country's national interest simply so that he can stay in power and delay indefinitely the conclusion of his corruption trial.

The Biden proposal is not perfect, but it contains the seeds of ending the hostilities, of stopping the loss of life of many more Palestinians and the devastation inflicted on the Strip,

allowing for desperately needed humanitarian aid to be delivered on a larger scale, and bringing to an end the suffering inflicted on the hostages and their families who have been living in an awful limbo regarding their loved ones' fate.

Instead, we are witnessing Prime Minister Netanyahu and Mr. Bibi's horror show. The former understands that talk about completely eliminating Hamas is unrealistic. **The three-phase plan as proposed by Israel and introduced by Biden could create the conditions for ending this war, one that has already entered its never-ending stage at the expense of the people of Gaza, the hostages, and in the larger scheme of things, both the Israelis and all Palestinians. When a ceasefire is agreed, then and only then will the door be open for the reconstruction of Gaza, which might also create a political horizon beyond a truce. Admittedly, Hamas' leadership in Gaza is playing hardball with the ceasefire negotiations, as its main interest is its own survival and that of the movement. It knows that the end of the war will be a moment of accountability for its triggering of the events that led to the calamity that has befallen Gaza, as will be the case for the Israeli government regarding its colossal failure to foresee the events of Oct. 7. In the meantime, Hamas is holding on to the hostages as its only card that might guarantee an end to the hostilities and by that save its skin. But Netanyahu's admission that a ceasefire deal will not bring an end to the war is as good as abandoning the hostages, for whom every day that passes is a matter of life and death.**

colossal failure to foresee the events of Oct. 7. In the meantime, Hamas is holding on to the hostages as its only card that might guarantee an end to the hostilities and by that save its skin. But Netanyahu's admission that a ceasefire deal will not bring an end to the war is as good as abandoning the hostages, for whom every day that passes is a matter of life and death.

By all accounts the Israeli Defense Forces are winding down the assaults on the Gaza Strip, reducing the number of forces there, and transitioning to a stage that for all intents and purposes will be an occupa-

tion, with no "day after" or exit plan. Instead Israel is establishing what seems to be a semi-permanent plan to take a hold on what is known as Route 749, or the Netzarim Corridor, and on the Philadelphi Corridor. The first is a new road that runs across northern Gaza from east to west, dividing the north and south of the enclave, while the second runs along the border with Egypt and also controls the Rafah crossing on the Gaza side. The circle to square for Netanyahu is how to maintain a low-intensity conflict with Hamas that could last for years, while at the same time convincing the Israeli public that the damage inflicted on the militant group is irreversible and, therefore, at least this objective of the war has been accomplished.

As long as the hostages remain in captivity, Israeli soldiers are still being killed in Gaza, the security situation in the West Bank deteriorates, and the situation in the north of the country escalates toward full-scale war with Hezbollah, the Israeli public will not believe Netanyahu's endless mantra that "we are a step away from victory." Instead, they see how he is cynically using the war to tell the court, through his lawyers, that he will be unable to give evidence in his corruption trial until March next year, while he continues to cave in to every whim of his far-right and ultra-orthodox coalition partners.

When I was among those who argued that as a defendant in a corruption trial, Netanyahu should have suspended himself from office — as one cannot run a country, especially one as complex as Israel, and at the same time manage one's legal affairs that might lead to a criminal conviction and a jail sentence — I could not have foreseen in my worst nightmare the scenario that would unfold on and after Oct. 7.

To suspend himself would have been the right thing to do in a more routine state of affairs, let alone in a major conflict situation. Netanyahu was not fit to govern before the war, as he was already attacking his country's liberal-democratic institutions for the sake of a get-out-of-jail-free card. Now he is cynically toying with the lives and security of the entire nation and well beyond. Playing with the idea of a partial ceasefire is just another ploy to help him cling to power.

From Raisi to Pezeshkian — what next for Iran?

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

In a significant turn of events, reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian has emerged victorious in Iran's presidential election, defeating his hard-line rival, Saeed Jalili. The results were announced after Pezeshkian secured 53.3 percent of the more than 30 million votes counted, compared with Jalili's 44.3 percent. This pivotal vote comes at a critical juncture marked by heightened tensions both domestically and internationally. Does the election outcome have far-reaching implications for Iran's internal political landscape, as well as its foreign policy and relations with the global community?

First, it is essential to highlight that the voter turnout was 49.8 percent, which is historically low. The low turnout reflects several underlying issues, such as widespread public dissatisfaction with the economic situation and political process, potential disenchantment with the candidates, and perhaps a broader sense of apathy or disillusionment.

Pezeshkian has navigated two distinct career paths in medicine and politics. As an Iranian heart surgeon of Azerbaijani and Kurdish heritage, he was actively involved in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, not only sending medical teams to the front lines, but also serving as a combatant and physician. After the conflict, he furthered his medical studies, focusing on general surgery at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, and obtaining a subspecialty in cardiac surgery from Iran University of Medical Sciences in 1993. His surgical expertise led to his appointment as president of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences in 1994, a role he held for five years.

In 1994, a car accident resulted in the tragic loss of his wife, Fatemeh Majidi, and one of his daughters. In 1997, Pezeshkian transitioned into politics by joining Mohammed Khatami's administration as deputy health minister. He was promoted to health minister in 2001, a position he held until 2005. Since then, he has been a significant figure in the Iranian parliament, representing Tabriz for five terms, and serving as the first deputy speaker from 2016 to 2020.

Pezeshkian is often categorized as a reformist or moderate within Iran's political landscape for several compelling reasons. Similar to former presidents Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani, he stands for fostering improved relations with Western nations, notably the US. His advocacy for stronger diplomatic ties is rooted in the belief that such relations could lead to the lifting of sanctions, bolstered trade opportunities, economic enhancement and, ultimately, a stronger Islamic Republic.

Moreover, Pezeshkian has not shied away from criticizing the Iranian government, particularly regarding its handling of protests. He has voiced concern over the authorities' stringent measures against demonstrators, particularly highlighting issues surrounding women's rights and the enforcement of the hijab rule. He said: "We will respect the hijab law, but there should never be any intrusive or inhumane behavior toward women."

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that Pezeshkian has consistently shown strong support for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, criticizing the US for designating it as a terrorist organization. His past public display of wear-

ing the IRGC uniform in parliament further underscores his alignment with this stance.

In addition, his approval by the Guardian Council to run for the presidency and his sustained career in Iranian politics indicate his loyalty to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the foundational revolutionary principles of the Islamic Republic. Pezeshkian appears to be advocating for policies such as improving Western relations not as a challenge to the system, but as a means of enhancing its resilience and effectiveness. Like other figures considered moderates or reformists, he seeks to strengthen the Islamic Republic through different strategies, while maintaining its core principles.

The international community should temper its expectations regarding Pezeshkian's potential to bring about fundamental changes in Iran. The reality is that the country's domestic and foreign policies are primarily controlled by the supreme leader and the senior leadership of the IRGC. These entities wield significant authority, often overshadowing efforts by reform-minded figures, such as Khatami, in the past. History has demonstrated that even those labeled as reformists have been constrained by the overarching influence of the supreme leader and the IRGC, whose decisions hold sway in Iranian governance and strategic direction. Thus, while individuals such as Pezeshkian may advocate for certain reforms or policies, their ability to enact substantial change remains limited.

In other words, Iran's stance on regional policies, support for proxies, and approach to nuclear and ballistic missile programs are unlikely to change. Historically, when a so-called reformist assumes office, it often triggers a reactionary response from hard-liners who intensify crackdowns domestically. This serves as a clear signal to Iranian society that despite any electoral changes, the hard-liners maintain authority and control. Thus, while there may be shifts in rhetoric or emphasis, particularly on issues such as domestic reform or international relations, the core strategies and policies of Iran are typically upheld by the entrenched hard-line power structures within the country.

In conclusion, while Pezeshkian's victory as a reformist or moderate may signal potential for nuanced policy approaches, particularly in diplomacy with the West and criticisms of domestic governance, it remains clear that fundamental shifts in Iran's core policies — such as regional strategies, support for proxies, and nuclear ambitions — are unlikely under the prevailing influence of the supreme leader and the IRGC.

This continuity suggests that while Pezeshkian and others may advocate for change, the entrenched power structures within Iran will continue to shape the country's direction, maintaining stability according to their established principles. In addition, the low voter turnout underscores broader public disillusionment and raises questions about the election's legitimacy. Thus, while the election outcome may appear to introduce new dynamics, it underscores the enduring dominance of Iran's conservative elements in determining its trajectory, both domestically and on the global stage.

Iran: 5 things to know about Masoud Pezeshkian

Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian has been elected as Iran's new president, defeating hardline conservative Saeed Jalili, as per Iranian state media.

Iran's interior ministry confirmed Pezeshkian's victory on Saturday, announcing that he secured 16.3 million votes compared to Jalili's 13.5 million.

Here are 5 things to know about the incoming Iranian president:

A reformist politician
Masoud Pezeshkian is

not new to the political scene in Iran. A former health minister under President Mohammad Khatami, he has served in the Iranian parliament for 16 years, including a notable stint as deputy speaker.

His deep involvement in politics, combined with his reformist stance, makes him a seasoned player who understands the intricacies of Iran's political landscape.

A voice of reform

Pezeshkian gained significant attention for his outspoken criticism of

Iran's morality police and the crackdown on pro-democracy protests in 2009 and 2022.

His condemnation of the violence following Mahsa Amini's death in custody resonated with many Iranians who seek greater social justice. He has consistently advocated for addressing the country's issues through dialogue and reform.

A champion of dialogue with the West

Pezeshkian is a proponent of constructive negotiations with Western pow-

ers, especially concerning Iran's nuclear programme.

He sees dialogue as essential to alleviating Iran's international isolation and addressing domestic economic woes. His election signals a potential shift towards more engagement and less confrontation with the West.

A personal story of resilience

Tragedy struck Pezeshkian's life in 1994 when he lost his wife and one of his children in a car accident. This personal loss has

deeply shaped his political career, leading him to devote much of his time to public service and politics.

His ability to persevere through personal hardship and his dedication to his remaining family members, particularly his daughter who often accompanies him at public events, has endeared him to many voters.

A relatable figure

Pezeshkian's background as a member of an ethnically mixed family and his fluency in several language, positions him as

a relatable figure for Iran's ethnic minorities.

This unique heritage has bolstered his image as a leader who understands and represents the diverse cross-section of Iranian society, even as it exposes him to xenophobic attacks from some opponents.

As Pezeshkian steps into the presidency, the world watches to see how his reformist ideals will navigate the complex and often turbulent political environment of Iran.

— Gulf News

French poll points to an increasingly isolationist Europe

In France, it came as little surprise last month when the right-wing National Rally won 30 percent of the vote in the European parliamentary elections, securing 30 of the country's allocated 81 seats, and sidelining French President Emmanuel Macron's liberal Renaissance party.

The real shock came just hours later, when Macron dissolved the National Assembly, the lower house of the French parliament, and called a snap election.

On Sunday, as French voters got to the polls in the second and final round of voting, there is the very real possibility that, thanks to mounting national hysteria about a largely illusory migrant "problem," France is about to fall under the spell of the most right-wing government the country has seen since the Second World War.

In the first round of voting, on June 30, National Rally stormed to victory, winning 33.1 percent of the vote. Its closest rival was an alliance of left-wing groups, on 28 percent, with Macron's centrist alliance on 20.76 percent. A grouping of traditional conservative parties managed just 10.7 percent.

Since then, in an increasingly febrile campaign marred by violent incidents across the country, political differences on the left and center have been set aside in a desperate scramble to form tactical alliances designed to keep Marine Le Pen's National Rally out of office.

In the hope of not dividing the opposition vote, the left-wing New Popular Front alliance and Macron's centrist Ensemble have withdrawn candidates in 212 of France's 577 National Assembly constituencies where one or the otherUnder Jordan Bardella and National Rally — with the very real additional possibility of Marine Le Pen succeeding Macron as French president in 2027r of its parties is likely to

have come third.

Whether the tactic will succeed remains to be seen. Polls suggest it might prevent National Rally securing the 289 seats it needs for a majority, leading to a hung parliament — a recipe for inaction that will only stoke further frustration among French voters.

Either way, though, it is clear that France, like much of the rest of Europe, is sliding inexorably toward the right. National Front's success in the European elections was echoed by other right-wing parties in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Spain.

Students of the Second World War — which ultimately saw the EU founded

Jonathan Gornall

migrants across Europe, the figure was only 6.3 per 1,000.

But facts are not a prerequisite for politicians seeking to gain power by exploiting prejudice and racism. Neither, it seems, were they enough to prevent Macron taking a decision that could prove to be a disaster for France and for the very future of the great European project.

The French leader's wild gamble is reminiscent of British Prime Minister David Cameron's impetuous decision in 2016 to put the UK's membership of the EU to a referendum — a decision prompted by a

appear at first glance that Britain is resisting Europe's slide to the right. In fact, all the signs are that the right-wing tide that is sweeping across Europe has merely ebbed away only temporarily, and will soon flood back in to inundate the UK's political hinterland.

It is true that Labour enjoyed a landslide, securing 412 seats in parliament for a majority of 170, but it would be wrong to say that the party won the election. Rather, the Conservatives lost it — and it is where its disillusioned voters went that is the real headline story.

The Conservatives saw their share of the vote fall by 20 percent, to 24 per-

ders of the disillusioned voters of the deprived seaside constituency of Clacton — and not unconvincingly predicting that he will be Britain's prime minister by 2029.

Europe's right-wing nationalists have grown up, and grown smarter. In France, Le Pen has repackaged the overtly racist National Front party founded in 1972 by her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. In her boyish 28-year-old protege Jordan Bardella, its prime minister-in-waiting, National Rally now has a good-looking, acceptable face.

But behind the window dressing the party is still peddling the same dangerously divisive wares.

Bardella, who has repeatedly framed immigration as an existential crisis for France, despite being himself the child of parents of Italian and Algerian origin, has risen far and fast by helping to persuade many French voters that all their problems, social and economic, can be blamed on unwelcome foreigners. Under Bardella and National Rally — with the very real additional possibility of Le Pen succeeding Macron as French president in 2027 — France would become a very different country, turning its back on the principles of "liberte, egalite et fraternite" upon which the republic was founded, and turning its back on Europe and its history.

In France, as across the entire continent, it is one of the grim ironies of the right-wing's rush to scapegoat foreigners for all its ills that Europe's malcontents have forgotten that its migrant "problem" is a direct consequence of Europe's 20th-century colonial adventures in the Middle East and North Africa.

But history, and the invaluable lessons it has to offer, is not on the political curriculum in an increasingly isolationist and intolerant Europe.

Did the UK vote for Starmer — or against the Conservatives?

Peter Harrison

When Sir Keir Starmer told an elated group of Labour Party faithful in the early hours of Friday, "We did it. Change begins now," he did so in the knowledge that despite a landslide victory in the UK general election, he remains anything but safe.

Starmer's win makes him only the fourth Labour leader to take the party into government since the Second World War, and only the second in the past 50 years. There were of course James Callaghan and Gordon Brown — but they became PM by default following leadership elections within the party.

Britain is traditionally a conservative country and it is rare that Labour has held power for successive terms — Tony Blair achieved it, but Brown was out after barely three years.

"Ah, yes," I hear you respond, "but Brown was appointed PM after he won an uncontested leadership competition in the Labour Party following Blair's resignation; he wasn't elected PM."

But both John Major and Boris Johnson did just that as Conservative Party leaders. They were both challenged and won the leadership battle before going on to win majorities at the following general elections.

Starmer's honeymoon period is likely to be short, assuming there is one at all.

His approach now will no doubt see him pursue domestic policy, but there are many — both at home and abroad — who will want to know about his foreign policy.

If you are reading this from the Middle East, or in any way support the Palestinian cause, prepare to be underwhelmed — from the outset of the war in Gaza, Starmer has either adopted a clear stance of support for Israel, or taken the "scale back" approach, while steering clear of actual calls for action against Tel Aviv.

In May, Starmer did say he wanted to recognize a Palestinian state if he won power — but with the proviso that such a move would need to come at the right time in a peace process.

It is worth mentioning that at the same time Ireland, Spain, and Norway all said they would recognize a Palestinian state.

If Starmer is to hold power for longer than one term, he will likely prioritize domestic policies over foreign affairs issues, except those that directly affect the British economy.

There is a lot to focus on: Britain still faces a cost-of-living crisis, unemployment remains high, fuel bills are crippling household budgets, and families unable to afford supermarket bills are queuing at food banks.

And, of course, there is the increasingly popular, but frankly ill-founded, claim that Britain is overrun with migrants. It is not, but this remains a hot ticket issue with all political movements.

In truth, there have been momentary increases in immigration in the UK in recent years, but as the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford highlighted, both history and future predictions show that emigration will result in a consistent number of foreign nationals living in the country.

Most people who travel to live in the UK either do so to study or for existing

work reasons, and are in the country temporarily. Those who moved there after Russia invaded Ukraine did so with the intention of one day returning to their homeland, and indeed many already have.

Starmer, while claiming to be a man of the people, will have to also please those traditionally right-wing voters who moved over to support change after 14 years of Conservative rule, but not necessarily switch their long-term allegiance away from the Tories.

And there are large numbers of people who did not vote Labour — somehow, he needs to win them over.

In the Bassetlaw constituency, where this writer votes using his mother as a

inclined to vote for the smaller parties. If that happens then the push for electoral reform will likely be unavoidable.

Starmer might have won with a historic majority. But as Boris Johnson's majority inherited by Rishi Sunak shows, there is no guarantee that a disgruntled electorate will not change their minds again.

And while he tries to please all the people all the time, this might prove increasingly tricky for Starmer.

There is a saying in Britain, albeit a rather defeatist one, that tries to somehow support the rather apathetic view that there is no point in voting. It goes like this: "No matter who you vote for, the government always wins."

The 2024 election saw

The French leader's wild gamble is reminiscent of British Prime Minister David Cameron's impetuous decision in 2016 to put the UK's membership of the EU to a referendum — a decision prompted by a fear among many of his MPs that they might lose their seats to the rising right-wing populist UK Independence Party. As with National Rally in France now, UKIP had dominated the 2014 European elections, pushing the Conservative Party into third place. In the event, the party won only one seat in the UK's subsequent 2015 general election. But, as Thursday's general election in Britain showed, in its new guise as Reform UK, the party that delivered Britain's Brexit disaster is stronger than ever.

in a bid to prevent such a tragedy occurring again — will note with unease that those five countries, along with Marshal Petain's collaborationist Vichy France, were key members of the Axis fascist coalition that aided and abetted Adolf Hitler.

Students of statistics will know also that France's migrant "problem" has been cynically overstated. Across Europe in 2022 there were just 11.4 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants — a total of 5.1 million people from non-EU states, the vast majority of whom came to fill labor shortages.

In France, a country with one of the lowest intakes of

fear among many of his MPs that they might lose their seats to the rising right-wing populist UK Independence Party.

As with National Rally in France now, UKIP had dominated the 2014 European elections, pushing the Conservative Party into third place.

In the event, the party won only one seat in the UK's subsequent 2015 general election. But, as Thursday's general election in Britain showed, in its new guise as Reform UK, the party that delivered Britain's Brexit disaster is stronger than ever.

Following the Labour Party's victory, it would

cent. But the bulk of its deserters did not flock to Labour, which increased its share of the vote by a mere 2 percent, to 34 percent.

Instead, provoked by months of Conservative rhetoric about the supposed dangers of immigration, matched by a failure to do anything about it, they turned sharply right.

Contesting its first general election, Reform UK, the latest vehicle for the right-wing, anti-immigrant populist Nigel Farage, sucked up 14 percent of the vote, winning five seats.

And, at the eighth time of trying, Farage is finally an MP, carried to Westminster on the shoul-

Diagnosing the strengths and ills of AI in healthcare

One of the main advantages of artificial intelligence-supported diagnostics is the exceptional speed and accuracy it offers. AI systems can analyze vast amounts of medical data, including patient records, images and lab results, at a pace far exceeding human capabilities.

Speed can be crucial in emergencies, enabling faster decision-making and potentially life-saving interventions. Additionally, AI has proven its accuracy in diagnosing diseases, from common conditions to rare disorders, detecting anomalies that humans might miss.

Diagnostic errors are a persistent concern in healthcare. AI systems, when properly trained and validated, can significantly reduce these errors, as the elements of fatigue or cognitive bias do not exist in this equation, enhancing the overall quality of medical decisions.

By integrating patient information with extensive medical databases and clinical guidelines, AI can help identify potential issues and ensure no aspect is overlooked. This leads to more reliable diagnostics and treatment plans.

AI-supported diagnos-

tics also facilitate the transition to personalized medicine. They can analyze a patient's genetic makeup, lifestyle, and medical history to create personalized treatment plans.

This personalization ensures patients receive the most effective treatments with fewer side effects. It also improves medication management and dosage.

AI has been applied in the fields of radiology and medical imaging, including X-rays, MRIs, and CT scans. Radiologists can benefit from AI assistance in detecting abnormalities, even in complex cases.

It is important to emphasize that AI is not intended to replace healthcare professionals. Instead, it should be viewed as a supportive tool. AI assists doctors and radiologists by providing data-driven insights, enabling them to make more informed decisions.

Saudi Arabia is investing heavily in AI-assisted diagnostics technology. Its "Eyenai" project is a collaborative effort involving the Saudi Data and AI Authority, King Khaled Eye Specialist Hospital, Lean Business Services, and the Saudi Company for Artificial Intelligence.

Abeer Alamrani

Developed by Saudi engineers and AI specialists, the project represents a pioneering solution in the field of ocular healthcare, using AI to accurately identify diabetic retinopathy. It relies on advanced analytics and smart algorithms to streamline and accelerate screening processes, overcoming challenges such as limited resources, examination time, and high costs.

Dr. Adi Al-Owaifeer, an ophthalmology consultant and head of the administrative committee for the Eyenai project, said that the initiative embodies the spirit of innovation and collaboration in Saudi Arabia's healthcare system.

He also highlighted the importance of developing this solution to facilitate screening processes, increase accuracy, and treat as many individuals as possible.

Microsoft recently introduced a suite of AI tools designed to help healthcare organizations access and enhance learning from data. In addition, Google has announced the development of an AI-powered tool to make it easier for professionals to search for health information.

Although AI can improve patient outcomes,

increase efficiency, and reduce costs, integrating it into healthcare is not without its challenges.

First, AI systems require access to a vast number of patient records, raising concerns about privacy and security. Healthcare institutions must therefore implement robust measures to protect patient information from data breaches and cyberattacks.

Second, AI relies on high-quality, organized data for training and decision-making purposes. However, healthcare data can be unstructured, fragmented, or inconsistent, making it difficult for AI algorithms to derive meaningful insights.

Third, AI algorithms can inherit biases present in training data, which may lead to inaccurate decisions. Developing methods to identify and mitigate bias remains an ongoing challenge in AI ethics.

Fourth, obtaining regulatory approvals for AI-based medical devices and solutions can be a lengthy and complex process.

Balancing innovation with regulatory compliance is a major challenge that healthcare companies must address.

Fifth, AI applications raise ethical questions, particularly regarding patient privacy, consent and transparency. Patients must be informed about how their data will be used and should have the right to opt out, and ethical guidelines should be developed.

Sixth, gaining the trust of healthcare professionals and patients is a significant challenge. AI systems must undergo strict clinical validation to prove their safety and efficacy, which can be a long and resource-intensive process.

Seventh, AI in healthcare requires substantial investments in technology, training and staffing. Healthcare providers must allocate resources for AI adoption and ongoing maintenance.

In conclusion, AI has the potential to bring about transformative changes to healthcare. However, addressing these challenges is essential to fully harness its benefits while ensuring patient safety, data security and ethical use.

The healthcare industry must work collaboratively with AI developers, regulators and policymakers to overcome these hurdles and pave the way for a more efficient, patient-centric system.

proxy, a vast 56.5 percent of the registered electorate voted for the other candidates. A mere 41.2 percent voted for the incoming Labour candidate, with 2.3 percent returning blank or spoilt ballot papers.

In England, the lack of representation is highlighted even more when you consider that independent politicians claimed a combined 6,418,370 votes, while Labour claimed just 9,686,329.

The main parties need to address the electoral system if they are to put an end to the continued spiral of British politics — it is clear to anyone watching that a vast number of UK nationals remain unimpressed and yet, under the current system, are not being recognized or represented.

Why should the main parties care? They have a guaranteed future — well, they used to, but with the Reform Party and the Greens, as well as other independents, including former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, winning seats, there is every chance that more people might be inspired to vote next time.

And they might be more

the lowest turnout in 20 years, with less than 60 percent of people bothering to vote.

In 2022, the Electoral Commission surveyed people about their voting habits and found that contrary to popular belief, those aged 24 or below were less likely to register to vote than those aged 55 and older.

There was a 77 percent approval to the statement "It's not really worth voting," despite there being a 91 percent agreement with "It's everyone's duty to vote."

Starmer needs to convince the apathetic to agree that voting matters if he intends to maintain the support gained in the election, or even win a second term.

The incoming prime minister is not popular — for many it was the case that he just wasn't the Conservative Party, and after 14 years in power enough voters in the right places wanted a change.

Whether Starmer can prevent that desire for change from happening again, this time in five years against him, remains to be seen.

Why Saudi Arabia is boosting defense ties with Turkiye, China

Saudi Arabia's burgeoning defense cooperation with Turkiye and China over the past few years has been garnering significant attention, especially following the recent visits to both countries by Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman.

After his visit to China last week, the Saudi defense minister met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara on Tuesday. His visit included discussions with his Turkish counterparts and meetings with officials from leading Turkish defense companies to discuss opportunities for defense cooperation in line with Saudi Vision 2030.

In China, Prince Khalid was received by Zhang Youxia, China's second-ranked military official after President Xi Jinping. This meeting was Zhang's

first with a foreign defense minister this year.

Saudi Arabia is increasingly being seen as a significant defense partner in the region by both Turkiye and China, as these two non-Western states have already signed deals on defense and military cooperation with Riyadh. Saudi Arabia is aiming to direct half of its defense spending to domestic facilities by 2030 and, in pursuit of this goal, the Chinese and Turkish defense industries appear to be strong partners for cooperation.

To start with Turkiye, bilateral relations between the two countries have been progressing in several areas. However, it seems that Saudi-Turkish defense cooperation is outweighing their political and economic cooperation. Last year, during Erdogan's landmark visit to the Kingdom, Saudi

Arabia agreed to buy Turkish drones from Baykar in the biggest defense contract in Turkiye's history.

Considering the crises these countries are facing in their immediate neighborhood, the constructive nature of their relations is crucial and the defense sector appears to be a significant area of cooperation. During Prince Khalid's visit, Saudi Arabian Military Industries, known as SAMI, signed three memorandums of understanding with Turkish companies — namely Baykar, Aselsan and Fergani. These deals aim to support the Kingdom in its localization of the defense industry.

SAMI will participate in the production of Baykar drones, with Riyadh aiming for more than 70 percent of the production to be carried out in the Kingdom. The

first unmanned aerial vehicle is expected to be delivered to the Royal Saudi Air Force by 2026.

One of the key components of Saudi Vision 2030 is to develop an autonomous defense industry, aiming to reduce the Kingdom's dependence on arms imports by at least 50 percent. Saudi Arabia is one of the world's largest military spenders. Established in 2017 to lessen the country's reliance on foreign defense products, SAMI has quickly become a major player in the Kingdom's defense sector.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan, a former SAMI board member, is now the foreign minister and his tenure has fostered a strong interplay between foreign policy and defense industry development. On the other hand, Erdogan has significant

Sinem Cengiz

influence in Turkiye's defense sector through family ties, with his son-in-law being the mastermind behind the production of Baykar drones.

Given its successful experience in building its indigenous defense sector, Turkiye aims to serve as a potential model for Saudi Arabia. Two decades ago, few believed Turkiye would achieve such success. However, the arms embargoes Turkiye faced from its Western allies catalyzed the rapid drive for an autonomous defense industry. This rapid localization has helped Turkiye reach the level of being able to manufacture its own drones, helicopters and submarines without relying on imported products. Today, Turkish defense companies play a significant role in the glob-

al market.

Saudi Arabia has also faced similar challenges. The US previously restricted arms exports to Saudi Arabia and Germany has blocked sales of tanks. These incidents prompted Riyadh to establish SAMI and cooperate with major external entities in building its indigenous defense sector. The Kingdom, as well as other Gulf states, wants to diversify its security and defense ties following an era of heavy dependence on the West. According to official data, the level of so-called Saudization in the defense sector has already reached 15 percent.

From the Chinese side, Beijing considers Saudi Arabia to be a key partner for cooperation in the region. China earned Riyadh's trust by successfully mediating a reconciliation agreement between

the Kingdom and Iran in March last year.

In the defense context, the strategic value of China for Saudi Arabia is related to the changes in US-Saudi relations.

Yet, the Kingdom's defense relations with China are multilayered, encompassing direct military cooperation, technology transfer and industrial partnerships. The Chinese and Saudi navies conducted a joint counterrandom exercise last October. Additionally, in February, China's state-owned defense industry had a significant presence at the World Defense Show in Riyadh.

Boosting localization rates for defense equipment to such a high level by 2030 is a challenging task for Saudi Arabia and cooperation with China is crucial. Also, Chinese, as well as Turkish, defense products

are not only highly efficient in terms of quality, but they are also affordable, making them an attractive option for Riyadh as it aims to optimize its defense spending. Furthermore, unlike Western states, both Ankara and Beijing do not tie their defense cooperation deals with Riyadh to political issues.

Lastly, Saudi Arabia's defense cooperation with Turkiye, a regional actor, and China, a global actor, is vital in strengthening regional security.

The nature of defense cooperation is such that countries orient their defense relations on the basis of their respective national interests and regional strategies. Saudi Arabia looking to Turkiye and China as potential partners to boost its defense industry is based on this understanding.



Banking industry:

SBP, PBA takes steps to grow agri, SME, digital & technology sectors

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Governor, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), chaired the second Steering Committee meeting on initiatives aimed at boosting the agriculture, small and medium enterprises (SME), and digital & technology sectors within the banking industry. These steps are part of SBP's and Pakistan Banks Association (PBA) ongoing efforts to promote financial inclusion and support economic growth in the country.

SBP has issued letters to all banks to develop and submit their five years Agriculture and SME finance expansion plans and strategies to significantly grow these portfolios over the next five years. As part of

its Vision 2028, SBP aims to increase outstanding Agri-finance portfolio to Rs 1,000 billion with total disbursements exceeding Rs. 3,000 billion by the end of June 2025. It further envisions to double the SME financing to Rs. 1,100 billion over the next five years with Rs. 100 billion to be added by June end 2025.

The SBP is working closely with PBA to support commercial banks to enhance their lending in both sectors to stimulate entrepreneurship, create jobs, help farmers improve productivity, invest in modern equipment, expand their operations and drive economic development at the grassroots level. Furthermore, the Central Bank has taken measures to pro-

mote digital and technology-driven solutions in the banking sector by encouraging banks to adopt innovative technologies to grow digital payments, and develop digital lending platforms to improve access to financial services for underserved populations and drive efficiency especially in Agri and SME industry, and above all reduce cash in circulation to achieve much needed reduction in inflation, thus, interest rates.

PBA highlighted its key initiatives for deepening and broadening of financial services for priority sectors including i) development of SME and Agri Environment and Performance Index (SEPI/AEPI) for assessing, improving, and sustaining the performance

of both sectors, ii) promotion of Electronic Warehouse Receipt Financing including warehouse accreditation, iii) revitalization of Agricultural Cooperatives, iv) set up of escrow services to boost e-commerce, v) installation of Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs) in commercial bank branches to reduce currency in circulation, vi) development of virtual prepaid card solution at merchant outlets to encourage digital payments, and vii) set up of a Private Equity fund to support fintechs to develop solutions and use cases to help reduce currency-in-circulation and help farmers and SMEs' access to financial services.

Governor appreciated the initiatives and empha-

sized that active collaboration between SBP and PBA to promote financing to priority sectors is critical for ensuring sustained access of these sectors to financial services as well as fostering inclusive growth.

Zafar Masud, Chairman PBA stated that "these measures underscore PBA's commitment to supporting key sectors of the economy and driving sustainable growth in Pakistan. By focusing on agriculture, SMEs, and digital & technology, we aim to create a more inclusive, resilient, and competitive banking industry that serves the needs of all stakeholders."

Finance Minister is overseeing these efforts himself as the initiatives have been identified on his advice.



ISLAMABAD: People purchasing seasonal fruit displayed by vendor at fruit market.

FTO Advisor cautions taxpayers of scammers

LAHORE (APP): Taxpayers should not fall prey to scammers, fake websites, non-existent charities, fictitious emails and dummy tax notices and never respond to such fraudulent tactics.

Advisor to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Waqar Chaudhry cautioned this while addressing an awareness session organized on the direction of FTO Dr Asif Mahmood Jah here Sunday.

The FTO Advisor said that it is his duty to bring into their knowledge pressing matter that requires immediate attention- the escalating prevalence of scams and fraudulent activities targeting taxpayers across Pakistan.

He said FTO has noticed a disturbing surge in deceptive practices including fraudulent emails, fabricated notices, sham websites, and the creation of non-existent charities, all designed to exploit unsuspecting taxpayers. These

malicious modus operandi are adept at mimicking official communication channels, posing a significant threat.

He said tax payers receive calls or messages promising hefty tax refunds in exchange for a fee by impersonating tax authorities. He said in 2023 Pakistan's computer emergency response team reported a 300 percent increase in tax related phishing incidents and scammers pose as charity which is non-existent.

He said fraudsters steal taxpayer's personal information to file fake tax returns, claiming refunds and leaving the victim with a tax liability.FBR has reported over 1500 cases of identity theft last year.

Dr Waqar said these tactics are to create panic and pressuring victims for making hasty payments.

He said that crux of the matter is that tax scams pose a considerable challenge in Pakistan but

through the partnership of vigilant taxpayers and the FTO, a significant progress can be made in protecting taxpayers from falling prey to fraudulent tactics.

He said by staying informed, vigilant and proactive taxpayers can ensure their financial security and maintain the integrity of the tax system.

He stressed the need for implementation of a comprehensive public advisory campaign by chambers. This campaign should underscore the imperative for taxpayers to exercise heightened caution and diligence when encountering any communication purportedly from tax authorities.

Underlining importance of independently verifying the legitimacy of such communications, cross-referencing official contact details, and refraining from divulging sensitive personal or financial information without robust verification measures is crucial, he concluded.

PIAF: Massive base tariff hike puts burden of Rs580b on consumers

F.P. Report

LAHORE: While criticizing the government's decision to make another raise in electricity tariff, the PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol has urged the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority to reverse the proposed jump in power charges, as it has notified an additional fuel cost adjustment of Rs3.33 per unit for May after a massive base tariff hike a day earlier, putting an additional burden of least Rs580 billion annually.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the PIAF chairman said the government's decision to increase the electricity tariff is anti-industry, and the PIAF strongly condemns the government's move and calls on it to rescind it. He urged the power ministry to identify system constraints and communicate targets to all concerned departments in order to launch a wartime effort to upgrade the transmission system.

Faheem Saigol said that move would further burden the financially strained

trade and industry, as this adjustment of Rs3.3287/kWh shall be applicable to all the consumer categories except Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and lifeline consumers. The electric shock comes a day after the government approved up to 51% or Rs7.12 increase in the per-unit price of electricity from July. After adding the cost of losses and distribution margins, the average tariff rises to Rs35.50 per unit.

He said the real, applicable average national tariff would now be between Rs65 and Rs72 per unit after including surcharges, taxes, duties, and levies, as well as monthly and quarterly adjustments.

As many as 32.5 million consumers would pay an additional amount of at least Rs580 billion in this fiscal year which is over and above the existing cost of electricity. He believed such an increase in tariff was due to the mismanagement and wrong energy policies of past three decades.

On June 14, Nepra

already announced almost a 20pc (Rs5.72 per unit) increase in the uniform national tariff to ensure about Rs3.8 trillion in funds to the 10 Discos during the fiscal year 2024-25.

All other consumer categories — commercial, general services, industrial and bulk — would be subjected to Rs1,250 per kilowatt fixed capacity charge compared to the existing rate of Rs400-500 per kilowatt.

On top of this capacity charge increase, commercial and general services tariff would increase by 17pc (Rs5.89 per unit) to about Rs44.

On the other hand, the industrial tariff for the B1 category would be reduced by 6-8pc (Rs2-2.65pc) to Rs31.65 per unit, but the off-peak rate for all other industries exceeding 25-kilowatt capacity would increase by 8-11pc (Rs2.64 to Rs3.56 per unit), and the peak rates would remain unchanged.

The power division said the proposed tariff would generate Rs3.5tr to 10 Discos during the current fiscal year, about Rs580bn

higher than last year.

After the impact of 18pc GST, the total revenue would reach around Rs4.2tr in addition to any further adjustments in the shape of monthly fuel charges and quarterly tariff adjustments for exchange rate, inflation and other factors.

The average national base tariff, including for K-Electric, has now been worked out at Rs35.50 per unit for the next fiscal year, against Rs29.78 per unit for the current year. This would yield about Rs3.763tr in revenue to 10 Discos this fiscal year, compared to Rs3.28tr last year.

He said that Pakistan's industry had been harmed by the high cost of doing business, which discouraged investment in capacity and capability and called for easing the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector. He said that the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for Pakistan's industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector.

SNGPL: 38 connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, KP and Islamabad, disconnecting another 38 connections and imposed Rs0.95 million fine.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 06 connections on illegal use of gas.

14 connections on illegal use of gas disconnected in Multan while another 4 on use of compressor.

The regional team of Faisalabad disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.02 million against gas theft cases.

In Sahiwal, the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas.

The regional team of Gujranwala disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.45 million against gas theft cases.

In Mardan, the team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed fine of Rs 0.48 million against gas theft cases.

The regional team of Bahawalpur disconnected 4 connections on illegal use of gas.

Huawei leads next-level human facilitation towards intelligent future

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the coming decade, the transformative potential of 5G and AI technologies promises to revolutionize every facet of human existence. From smart kitchens that anticipate our culinary needs to autonomous vehicles that redefine travel safety and efficiency, the integration of advanced AI into daily life will streamline processes, enhance productivity, and elevate experiences.

In the recently concluded Mobile World Congress in Shanghai, where the transformative potential of artificial intelligence took center stage, Huawei emerged as the vanguard of the 5G AI revolution, pioneering next-level human facilitation and ushering in an intelligent future.

The event, a convergence of global leaders and tech giants, highlighted groundbreaking advancements poised to redefine connectivity and human interaction in the era of 5G and AI. Among the prominent unveilings was Honor's breakthrough tech-

nology designed to combat deepfake scam calls—an increasingly prevalent threat in the age of generative AI. These fraudulent calls, which manipulate audio and video to deceive victims, underscore the critical need for AI-driven solutions to safeguard authenticity. Honor's real-time detection system, set to debut this year, employs AI to scrutinize minute details such as eye contact and lighting, swiftly alerting users to potential scams.

George Zhao, CEO of Honor, emphasized the empowering potential of on-device AI, addressing concerns over AI's impact on authenticity and security. His remarks echoed sentiments shared by industry leaders who see AI as pivotal in shaping the future landscape. At the forefront of these discussions was Huawei, whose executives outlined a vision where AI's omnipresence is supported by robust telecom networks, particularly the forthcoming 5.5G. David Wang, Huawei's Executive

Director, stressed the integral role of advanced network infrastructure in realizing AI's full potential across industries. He highlighted the evolution towards 5.5G, citing its enhanced capabilities in bandwidth and latency, which promise tailored experiences and heightened connectivity reliability.

The summit also tackled challenges posed by AI's growing demands on processing power and heat dissipation. Sue Ryan of Forre Systems underscored the industry's push for innovative cooling solutions like AirJet, vital for maintaining AI-driven devices' performance in increasingly compact form factors.

Lara Dewar of GSMA noted a significant shift where AI, once a supporting technology, now steers the wheel of innovation across sectors like automotive IoT. The exhibition showcased AI-integrated vehicles and IoT advancements poised to revolutionize daily life and industry practices alike.

Huawei's Li Peng delved deeper into the transformative impact of 5.5G, emphasizing its role in unlocking new potentials through enhanced uplink speeds and low-latency networking. He envisioned 5.5G as a catalyst for industrial applications, enabling precise AI-driven functionalities crucial for sectors like transportation and logistics.

Huawei's strategic focus on the mobile AI era was clear. Wang highlighted upcoming milestones such as the commercial deployment of 5.5G and the integration of AI into diverse devices by 2024. This convergence, Wang asserted, would usher in a new era of intelligent services, where AI assistants seamlessly integrate into daily life, from personalized content generation to enhanced user interactions.

The exhibition floor buzzed with demonstrations of Huawei's latest innovations, showcasing their commitment to advancing 5G-A networks and AI-powered devices. Strategic partnerships with glo-

bal operators underscored Huawei's dedication to driving industry-wide collaboration and shaping the future of mobile technology.

As the summit concluded, the consensus was clear: AI's pervasive influence will reshape industries and societal norms, ushering in an era where connectivity is not just ubiquitous but intelligent. Huawei's leadership in advancing 5.5G and AI integration underscores its pivotal role in steering this transformative journey towards an interconnected, intelligent world.

In conclusion, the Mobile World Congress Shanghai 2024 not only highlighted technological marvels but also set the stage for collaborative efforts aimed at harnessing AI's potential for societal benefit. As Huawei and other tech giants forge ahead, the promise of an AI-driven future beckons—a future where innovation knows no bounds, and connectivity transcends mere communication to become truly transformative.

MULTAN (APP): Exporting cosmetics, utilities and agro based industry products can bring foreign exchange worth billions of dollars to Pakistan to strengthen the economy which is undergoing troubled times the government should introduce business friendly policies to attract maximum investment to increase exports.

Cosmetics and utilities are a huge sector for export. It has potential of 10 to 12 billion dollars. If we shift its certification from Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), we can inject these dollars to our economy overnight, Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President, Mian Iqbal suggested during an exclusive interview with APP here on Sunday.

Moisturizing lotions, whitening creams, beauty soaps, facials and scrubs are basic utilities which are in daily usage for everyone, he said and added that if rules are relaxed for its exports in the market, these can add billions of dollars to Pakistani exports.

He informed that fruits and vegetables are perishable and these can be transported to foreign countries with different means. Some countries who import fruits and veggies have set their standards and criteria for it.

"First, we should identify our markets before exporting and secondly we should meet the criteria of the countries. For example,

we cannot export mangoes to the USA and Europe without hot water treatment. Our farmers and exporters should be educated about these terms and conditions. Fruits and vegetables are a big market but unfortunately over 50 percent of them are wasted after harvesting because neither we have good quality and large cold storage and also have not foreign markets to export. Farmers and growers have to bear the brunt, if sector is dealt properly, it can be a huge avenue for exports," Main Rashid Iqbal explained.

Likewise, Pakistan is exporting 11 billion dollars Information Technology at the moment where only upto 3 billion dollar is reaching the country as foreign exchange because people have parked their money in their Dubai and England based companies and they only invest the money which is permissible in Pakistan, the seasoned businessman informed.

The MCCI president regretted that when a businessman earned dollars from foreign counties and got its transaction in Pakistan, FIA reaches his home to ask from where he had earned this money while he had not exported anything. This is because of laws made under FATF in haste. He demanded the government to rectify this type of legislation at the earliest so that IT exporters could carry Rs8 to Rs10 billion dollars to the country without any fear and fright to add more to our

economy.

Replying on a question, he underlined the need of improving trade ties with Central Asian countries saying that we are only focusing on the USA and West even though they are thousands miles away from us where freight issues are too much besides time span.

"Afghanistan is a good source of trans border trade. Central Asia is a big market.

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Armenia are a landlocked area. They could not see industrialization owing to being under control of the Soviet Union which had kept them as raw material producers. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan produce cotton on a very large scale, but there are only spinning factories. They do not have textile mills. There is an acute shortage of industry in these countries. These can be very potential markets for export. The only problem is that the road to these countries leads from Afghanistan and we do not enjoy good relations with it", Mian Rashid Iqbal maintained.

To another question, he stated the Charter of Economy (CoE) was a demand of the business community and as MCCI president, he would request government and all political parties to join hands for the welfare of the masses and join the same page as soon as possible as it will pave the way to cement the economy of the country.

BMP for focusing on economic recovery as just 1.9% growth expected

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has asked the government to give priority to the economic recovery, emphasizing the necessity of joint efforts to tackle Pakistan's economic difficulties, as economy is expected to grow by 1.9% in the current fiscal year.

Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar warned that inflation would remain elevated at about 25 percent during the same period before easing a bit in the next financial year.

He said that the country has been facing significant economic challenges in

recent years, grappling with high inflation, fiscal deficits and external debt pressures.

He expressed confidence in the country's ability to overcome these challenges and highlighted the government should fulfill the commitment to eradicating poverty and unemployment.

The government should remain steadfast in its commitment to guide Pakistan through its current economic and political challenges, with a focus on unity, effective governance, and public welfare.

The country has had trouble raising enough money to cover its expenses. Due to the low tax-to-GDP ratio, borrowing and outside help are heavily relied upon to close the fis-

cal imbalance. In Pakistan, there is a recurring budget deficit because the government spends more than it takes in. The national debt burden has risen, as a result, needing substantial financial resources for debt repayment. Both internal and external debt in Pakistan has been constantly rising.

The budget is largely consumed by debt servicing; leaving little money for social welfare and development initiatives. Circular debt, which is the accumulation of unpaid invoices and pending payments among power generation firms, distribution companies, and the government, is a problem in Pakistan's energy sector.

This problem has a significant negative impact on

the power sector's finances and hinders its ability to meet the rising energy demand.

Other troubling issues also exist, posing obstacles to our economy's expansion. Pakistan is ranked 173rd internationally for tax payments. According to a World Bank analysis, Pakistani businesspeople pay 47 taxes yearly, compared to those of Hong Kong, the UAE, Ireland, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and India, which are the countries with whom Pakistan must compete.

A single business that conducts business in four different Pakistani provinces annually disburses five corporate income taxes, twelve employer-paid pension contributions,

twelve Social Security payments, one property tax, one professional tax, one vehicle tax, one stamp duty payment, one fuel tax payment, and twelve payments of goods and sales tax. An exporter needs 75 hours to complete border compliance and document compliance. Additionally, Pakistan dropped 23 spots on the indicator for corporate loan availability.

The nation was ranked 105th this year as opposed to 82nd last year. There wasn't much money left to fund the company's expansion because of the government's expanding budget financing requirements. Pakistan's Human Development Index is 0.544, placing it 161st out of 192 nations.

The HDI of Pakistan is

among the lowest in Asia, right below Yemen and Afghanistan. The country dropped one spot, moving to positions 142 and 170 on the indices for registering businesses and properties, respectively.

There are 12 different treatments, and it takes roughly 18 days to finish them all. Similarly to that, it took many days to register a property. The nation climbed nine spots in the rating for handling building permits, landing at position 141. It takes an investor 252 days to complete 15 different types of procedures to obtain a building permit.

The BMP chairman said that the government will have its work sharply cut out as far as the economic challenges are concerned.

Coming at the back of fast-unfolding climate change crisis and recent COVID pandemic that pushed millions into poverty with little fiscal capacity of government to provide anywhere near close to what was needed in stimulus spending.

Then there is acute debt distress, and seriously high inflation at the back of global aggregate supply shock, and accentuated by a world of rising conflicts, mainly in Ukraine, and the Middle East.

Last year, the country secured a \$3 billion short-term loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a bid to stabilize its economy, with the final tranche anticipated for release in the coming days. Amid the ongoing economic

difficulties, the Pakistani government is seeking a more extended bailout program from the IMF, though the specifics of the arrangement are still being negotiated.

The ADB report suggested Pakistan could find itself on a better footing to deal with the financial challenges if it continued to implement structural economic reforms diligently.

Growth is projected to remain subdued in FY2024, and pick up in FY2025, provided economic reforms take effect, it said. Real GDP is projected to grow by 1.9 percent in FY2024, driven by a rebound in private sector investment linked to progress on reform measures and transition to a new and more stable government.



In brief

Broad hails Anderson

LONDON (AFP): Stuart Broad has praised James Anderson as "an addict of the art of bowling" as the veteran fast bowler prepares for his final Test. Anderson, 42 later this month, will face the West Indies in a series opener at Lord's starting on Wednesday before ending an England career which has so far yielded 700 wickets in 187 Tests -- both records among quick bowlers. Broad, who played alongside Anderson in 138 of those games before retiring from Test cricket after last year's Ashes, said his long-standing new-ball partner's excellence was down to a sheer love of bowling. "He loves the rhythm of running into bowl, the control of the technique of his action, the tactical side of whether he's bowling away swing, inswing, wobble seam," Broad wrote in the Sunday Times. "When you talk about professionals who have had longevity, you often talk about their dedication to training, their discipline in the gym and their diet." The 38-year-old Broad, who himself took 604 wickets in 167 Tests, added: "And of course you don't play to 42 unless you have that but the thing that makes him different is his genuine love of the art of what he does. "Addict is generally used as a negative word but I'd say he is an addict of the art of bowling." Anderson's reputation was based on his ability as an outstanding conventional swing bowler, particularly in home conditions, but Broad said this ignored his skill in deploying reverse-swing. "He doesn't get enough credit for his reverse-swing, which has been crucial to his great record in the subcontinent," Broad wrote. "Because his line and length are so immaculate it makes it lethal. "(South Africa fast bowler) Dale Steyn was phenomenal and quicker than Jimmy but Jimmy is certainly the best reverse-swing bowler I've played with and probably the best I've witnessed in the flesh outside of Steyn.

John Cena to retire from WWE 2025

TORONTO (Web Desk): After a career spanning over 23 years, John Cena is getting ready to make his final appearance in the wrestling ring. Making a surprise appearance at Saturday's Money in the Bank event in Toronto, Canada, the wrestler who holds the record with 16 world championships announced his retirement from WWE after WrestleMania 2025. While Cena has often shown a towel emblazoned with "never give up" in the past, this occasion saw him carrying one that said, "The last time is now." "Why am I here? Tonight, I officially announce my retirement from the WWE," he stated, eliciting surprised reactions from the audience. Later in his address, Cena disclosed his intention to continue participating in Monday Night Raw as it transitions to Netflix in January 2025, marking an unprecedented move. "This farewell, it does not end tonight," he stated. "It is filled with opportunity. Everybody, Raw makes history next year when it moves to Netflix. I've never been a part of Raw on Netflix, that is history. That is a first, and I will be there." "And along with that history making first, we are going to build so many unforgettable lasts. The 2025 Royal Rumble will be my last. The 2025 Elimination Chamber will be my last. And I'm here tonight to announce that in Las Vegas, WrestleMania 2025 will be the last WrestleMania I compete in," continued Cena.

Alcaraz overcomes slump to reach Wimbledon q-finals



LONDON (AFP): Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz overcame a worrying mid-match slump to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals on Sunday, defeating Ugo Humbert of France in four sets to stay on course for a fourth Grand Slam title. The Spanish world number three came through 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 7-5 against his 16th-ranked opponent to book a spot in the last-eight of a major for the ninth time in just 14 appearances. However, it was another uncomfortable afternoon for Alcaraz, who had needed five sets to see off Frances Tiafoe in the third round. His erratic performance on Sunday saw him drop serve five times and commit an uncharacteristic 33 unforced errors.

The 21-year-old, bidding to become just the sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back, eased through the first set under the Centre Court roof before crucially saving four break points in the fifth

game of the second.

Humbert stormed back, breaking the champion three times in the third set as Alcaraz went spectacularly off the boil.

Alcaraz was twice unable to hold onto breaks in the fourth set and had to fend off three break points in the eighth game to stay level at 4-4. Left-hander Humbert then lost his bearings to hand over a service break in the 11th game and Alcaraz took full advantage to quickly seal the tie. Alcaraz will take on either American 12th seed Tommy Paul or 36-year-old compatriot Roberto Bautista Agut, a semi-finalist in 2019.

Tearful Keys forced to retire from Paolini clash at Wimbledon: Madison Keys broke down in tears at Wimbledon on Sunday as the injured American 12th seed was forced to retire from her fourth round match against Italy's Jasmine Paolini with victory in sight. After dropping the first set to the seventh seeded Paolini on Court One, Keys hit back to level

the match at 3-6, 7-6 (8/6).

The 2017 US Open runner-up was on the verge of reaching a third Wimbledon quarter-final after breaking twice in the final set to build a 5-2 lead. But Keys suffered a left leg injury in the eighth game of the decider, leaving her limping and in need of a 10-minute medical time-out when she was leading 5-4.

The 29-year-old returned with a heavy strapping on her leg and was visibly upset as she struggled to move and was immediately broken by Paolini. Keys gamely tried to continue playing but, after failing to run for a Paolini drop shot, she finally decided to retire with the score level at 5-5 in the deciding set.

Paolini will face reigning US Open champion and second seed Coco Gauff or American 19th seed Emma Navarro for a place in the semi-finals. "I'm very sorry for her. It's sad. Really good match. Really tough, lots of up and downs," said Paolini. "I feel a bit happy but also sad for her because it's not easy to win like that." Paolini, who finished as the French Open runner-up in June, had never been past the first round in her previous three appearances at Wimbledon.

She has reached a Grand Slam quarter-final for the second time, but her progress was overshadowed by the emotional exit of Keys, who was still weeping as she walked off court.



KARACHI: Pakistan Men's red-ball Head Coach Jason Gillespie addressing a press conference at the National Bank Stadium. —APP Photo

Arshad Nadeem finishes fourth in Paris Diamond League



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's premier javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem returned to the field after a year, finishing fourth in the Paris Diamond League.

Although he did not win a medal, he regained his form and rhythm before the Paris Olympics.

In his first attempt, Arshad threw 74.11 meters and gradually improved his throws. On his second attempt, he threw 80.28 meters, and on his third attempt, he achieved a throw of 82.71 meters, placing him in the top three.

In his fourth attempt, he threw 82.17 meters, but Jacob Vadlejch surpassed him with an 85-meter throw in the same round. In the fifth round, Arshad needed a significant throw to make it to the top three, but his throw of 84.21 meters was not enough, leaving him in fourth position.

This was Arshad's first major event since August 2023. Having recently made a comeback after surgery, he is a key hope for Pakistan to win a medal at the Paris Olympics this month.

Remember, after claiming the silver medal in the World Championship in Hungary last year, Arshad had to miss a few events also including the Hangzhou Asian Games due to knee injury. He struggled all the way for achieving fitness and eventually underwent surgery in England which helped him recover.

After featuring in the Diamond League, Arshad will return home on July 8 and will undergo a few days training at Lahore before flying back to Paris on July 24 to take part in the Olympics.

Arshad will get around 12 days to acclimatise before his August 6 meet in Olympics. Arshad's personal best throw is 90.18m which he managed at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. He finished fifth in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Head coach Gillespie vows consistency in Pakistan Test side

KARACHI (AFP): Former Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie Sunday vowed to make Pakistan a consistent side after taking charge as red-ball coach with a hectic six-month schedule in focus.

The 49-year-old will start his two-year tenure with a two-match series against Bangladesh next month followed by three against England in October -- both at home.

Pakistan will also tour South Africa for two Tests in December before hosting the West Indies in as many Tests in January next year.

Gillespie, who arrived early Sunday, said Pakistan are a "talented" side but need consistency.

"How can they be more consistent is one thing that I am hoping I can find some solutions for," Gillespie told a news conference.

He hoped Pakistan can improve on their fifth position in the current World Test Championship cycle, competed by nine teams since 2019. "Ultimately we want to win games of Test

cricket," said Gillespie.

"There are skillful cricketers here, how can we play as a team and perform well against good quality international oppositions and that's going to be the key for us."

Hailing from one of Australia's best Test sides in 1990s and 2000s, Gillespie played 71 Tests, 91 one-day internationals and a solitary T20I in a successful career. He coached Yorkshire to win the English County C'ship in 2014 and 2015.

Gillespie was hired to improve Pakistan's Test side that lost 1-0 to Australia in 2022 before suffering their first-ever 3-0 home white-wash at the hands of England the same year.

Pakistan were routed 3-0 in Australia last year -- their sixth series white-wash in Australia since 1999 -- which Gillespie believed was not one-sided.

"As an observer from outside, I think there were some moments in games where Pakistan were on top but could not finish well," Gillespie reflected. Pakistan squandered

good positions in the second Test in Melbourne and the third in Sydney through crucial dropped catches, leaving them tagged as a poor fielding side.

He said Pakistan needed to be smart to counter what he termed England's "very aggressive" style of playing Tests, dubbed as "Bazball" after their coach Brendon McCullum's nickname.

"England will be a challenge, no doubt about that. But I think we are certainly up to it," said. "We are going to play very smart".

Smarting from a first round exit in both the ODI World Cup last year in India and Twenty20 in USA and the West Indies last month where South African Gary Kirsten was head coach, Pakistan will begin their Test series against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi from August 21-25.

The second Test is in Karachi from August 30 to September 3. They face England in three Tests starting in Multan (October 7-11), Karachi (Oct 15-19) and Rawalpindi (October 24-28).

Abhishek century guides India to T20 victory against Zimbabwe



HARARE (AFP): Abhishek Sharma slammed a 46-ball century as India bounced back with a 100-run win over Zimbabwe in the second Twenty20 international at the Harare Sports Club on Sunday.

Sharma, playing in his second international match, made 100 in an Indian total of 234 for two. Zimbabwe, who won the first match by 13 runs on Saturday, were bowled out for 134. The left-handed Sharma, who was out for a duck on debut on Saturday, thrashed eight sixes and seven fours.

"It was a good performance after the defeat yesterday," said Sharma when he

was named man of the match. "Thanks to the coaches and captain to keep confidence." After opening his score with a six against off-spinner Brian Bennett, who dismissed him on Saturday, Sharma charged to his half-century with a six off medium-pacer Dion Myers.

He then raised his hundred with three successive sixes off left-arm spin bowler Wellington Masakadza before being dismissed next ball, caught at backward point. Sharma was dropped on the long-off boundary off Luke Jongwe when he had 27.

"After the drop I thought it was my day," he said. "I

always believe in my ability. If it's in my arc and even if it's the first ball I will go after it." Ruturaj Gaikwad (77 not out) and Rinku Singh (48 not out) continued to take the attack to the Zimbabwe bowlers, who conceded 160 runs in the last 10 overs.

India made more runs in their innings than the combined total of both teams in a low-scoring encounter on the same pitch on Saturday when Zimbabwe made 115 for nine and India were bowled out for 102.

Despite an aggressive 26 off nine balls by Bennett, Zimbabwe's hopes were virtually extinguished when they crashed to 46 for four after four overs, with seamers Mukesh Kumar and Avesh Khan taking two wickets each. India captain Shubman Gill said his young team had responded well to Saturday's defeat.

"Yesterday it was more about not being able to handle the pressure. It is a young side and many of them are new to international cricket. It was good to have pressure in the first game. We knew what to expect in this game."

Hamilton wins British Grand Prix to end three-year drought

SILVERSTONE (AFP): Lewis Hamilton claimed an emotional and long-awaited record 104th career victory on Sunday when he resisted Max Verstappen to triumph in vintage fashion at the British Grand Prix for a record ninth time.

The seven-time champion, who will turn 40 in January, cracked with emotion and was in tears as he spoke on Mercedes team radio on his victory lap, having finished 1.465 seconds ahead of Red Bull's series leader and three-time champion. In a roller-coaster race of changing weather and

track conditions, Lando Norris came home third ahead of his McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri, Carlos Sainz of Ferrari and Haas' Nico Hulkenberg with Lance Stroll finishing seventh for Aston Martin.

Hamilton, who had not won since the 2021 Saudi Arabia Grand Prix, delivered a masterclass in tyre and race management to secure his 150th podium finish for Mercedes.

"I've been waiting for this," shouted Briton Hamilton after crossing the line in his Mercedes to claim a ninth victory at Silverstone, break-

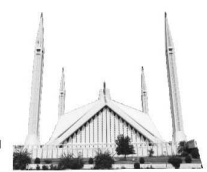
ing a tie with Michael Schumacher for most wins at one track. "I can't stop crying," said Hamilton.

"I think, since 2021, every day getting up, trying to fight, and to train, and to put my mind to the task and work as hard as I can with this amazing team."

Hamilton is leaving Mercedes for Ferrari after this season. "This is my last British GP with this team. I wanted to win so much for them. I love them so much. All the hard work they've been putting in." Verstappen overtook Norris in the closing laps.



Manuel Ugarte beat Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson to seal victory for Uruguay.



In brief

SSC result on July 12

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) will announce the result of Secondary School Certificate (Part I and II) 1st Annual Examinations, 2024 on July 12 (Friday). According to the notification issued by FBISE, the exams of SSC were held in the months of March/April 2024. The result status will be conveyed through SMS to all the candidates, who have provided their cell phone numbers in their admission forms. The said results will be available on FBISE website www.fbise.edu.pk and will also be available through SMS unified code 5050. The candidates will be required to send SMS in the format: FB<space>[roll number].

332,400 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 332,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 522,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1510.20 feet and was 112.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 287,700 cusecs and 133,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1190.80 feet, which was 142.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 49,070 cusecs and 13,700 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 209,200, 168,100, 111,400 and 49,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 91,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 62,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Six gamblers apprehended

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have apprehended six gamblers and recovered bet amount of Rs 10,500 and 05 mobile phones from their possession during crackdown here on Sunday. According to police spokesman, Waris Khan police conducted raid and arrested the gamblers identified as Tauseef, Hameed, Afzal, Nehroz, Irfan, and Faisal. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and started investigation. SP Rawal Faisal. Salim praised the Waris Khan police and said that the arrested accused would be brought to the court with solid evidence and would be punished. Gambling is the root of other social evils and the crackdown against gamblers will be continued without any discrimination, he said.

Two arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two accused involved in fireworks and aerial firing at marriage party here on Sunday, informed police spokesman. Police have also recovered weapons from their possession. Bani police conducted a raid and arrested Hamza and Riaz setting off fireworks during the wedding ceremony. Police have registered separate cases against both of them and further investigation was in progress. The SP Rawal Faisal Saleem appreciated the performance of police team, adding that crackdown would continue against such criminals.

Mohsin Naqvi visits ANF Headquarters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi here on Sunday visited Anti-Narcotics Control (ANF) Headquarters.

The minister was welcomed by Director General (DG) ANF, Major General, Abdul Moeed and senior officers of the Force.

Mohsin Naqvi visited the Martyrs Memorial at ANF Headquarters and laid floral wreath. He offered Fatiha and paid tribute to the great sacrifices of the martyrs. The interior minister chaired an important meeting at the ANF Headquarters where he was briefed on counter narcotics achievements of ANF, current drug situation, ANF performance, functions and operations and major challenges being faced with regard to trafficking of narcotics.

Mohsin Naqvi appreciat-

ed the performance of ANF for effective operations against drug mafia across Pakistan despite the lack of resources and manpower.

It was decided in the meeting that an effective crackdown would be launched against the drug mafia to save the new generation from the scourge of drugs. The authorities were directed to formulate a comprehensive plan in this regard. Strict action will be taken to stop supply of drugs, especially ice, to the students of the universities, colleges and hostels of public and private universities, the meeting decided.

It was also decided that the provinces would be taken into confidence, in this regard. A joint meeting of federal and provincial departments would be held at the end of this month. The provincial ministers of Excise and Inspector

General of Police of the provinces would be invited to attend the meeting.

The minister also sought a plan to stop the online purchase and sale of the drugs. Mohsin Naqvi directed the ANF to develop cyber drug control mechanism. He said that the scourge of drugs, especially ice, had destroyed many families. Multi-pronged measures must be taken urgently to control the growing drug addiction, he added.

For the sake of the children, everyone has to fight this scourge with full force and determination, he said adding, "Today, if we contribute to end of this scourge, it will be a great work." Later, the minister also planted a sapling in the lawn of the Headquarters.

Federal Interior Secretary, Khurram Agha and the ANF officers were also present on the occasion.



RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi laying floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada in ANF Headquarters. —APP Photo

Speaker, Dy Speaker extend warm felicitations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah on Sunday extended their warm felicitations to the Muslim Ummah on the advent of the new Islamic year Hijri 1446.

On this occasion, the Speaker said that this day was a divine blessing, affording an opportunity to rejuvenate faith, resolve and recommit to noble values of peace, justice and compassion. He expressed the hope that this occasion would inspire people to rededicate themselves to the service of humanity and the pursuit of excellence.

The Speaker said that the Muslim

Ummah was facing numerous challenges, including conflicts, terrorism and economic inequality, which required united efforts to address. He emphasized the need for Muslim countries to stand together in solidarity and work towards peace, stability and prosperity.

He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination and urged the international community to play its role in resolving the conflict.

The Speaker prayed that the new Islamic year may bring peace, prosperity and harmony to the country and the world at large, and urged the peo-

ple to work together for the progress and development of the country. Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa said that the new Islamic year heralds new hopes and opportunities.

He urged the people to harness this momentum to propel themselves towards a brighter future, built on hard work, dedication, and service to humanity. He also stressed the need for unity and cooperation among Muslim countries to overcome the challenges faced by the Ummah.

The Deputy Speaker prayed that the new Islamic year may bring happiness and prosperity to the people of Pakistan and the world at large.

'No plan to abolish Ministry of IT'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication here on Sunday clarified that no directions have been issued to abolish the Ministry and its other departments.

The news item in a section of media giving the impression that the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, among others, is being abolished is distorted and fabricated, the Ministry said in a press release. "It is to clarify that the 'Committee on the Right Sizing of the Federal Government' has sought recommendations for right-sizing the attached departments from the respective ministries and there is no directive to abolish the said ministries", it added.

Punjab govt to boosts polio eradication efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Punjab government has decided to establish specialized polio vaccination counters at the entry and exit points of the province to reinforce polio eradication efforts.

According to a private news channel, the directives issued by the Minister and Chief Secretary of Punjab aimed to ensure inclusive vaccination coverage across the province.

Dedicated polio vaccination counters would be strategically positioned at all entry and exit points throughout Punjab, facilitating streamlined vaccination processes. Chief Secretary instructed health authorities and local administrators to identify and resolve any obstacles hindering vaccination goals promptly.

Romina for launching TV channel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has unveiled plans to launch a dedicated TV channel tailored to support farmers in combating the impacts of climate change.

PM's aide in a statement on Sunday said the idea of this innovative channel aims to educate farmers on climate adaptation strategies, disaster management techniques, and sustainable practices to mitigate environmental degradation.

The Coordinator said the channel will leverage the services of Pakistan Television (PTV) to broadcast programs in six regional languages, ensuring that vulnerable communities receive timely information.

The programs will be telecast through local PTV stations at the provincial level, maximizing and localizing the coverage and

reach, she added. Romina Khurshid Alam also engaged with a private channel to amplify the voice of the Climate Ministry, promoting clean and green initiatives.

She emphasized the importance of media support in enhancing climate change coverage and rearranging journalism priorities.

She noted the TV channel will provide farmers with timely information and guidance on adapting to climate-related challenges, including weather alerts to enable preemptive measures. She said adding, the channel will also feature initiatives promoting women's income generation, gender empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

She said the government seeks to empower farmers with knowledge and tools to build resilience against climate change, leveraging

the power of media. She stated media teams from relevant climate change departments and TV initiatives will collaborate to strengthen our efforts protecting the socio-economic impacts of climate change on the farming community.

During different meetings convened in June over global heat waves and floods, the PM's aide directed relevant institutions to strengthen official media teams to keep vulnerable communities informed about climate change timely.

She said the goal is to sensitize the media to report on climate change before potential flash flooding and glacial lake outbursts in vulnerable regions. Romina Khurshid Alam is optimistic that this TV channel initiative will be a groundbreaking step towards a more climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural sector in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters jumping and bathing in nullah korang to get relief from hot weather in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Traffic Wardens directed to ease traffic flow

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Taimoor Khan has directed the Traffic Wardens to make all-out efforts to ease traffic flow on city roads during Muharram.

According to a City Traffic Police (CTP) Spokesman, over 931 Traffic Wardens under the supervision of inspectors and DSPs would perform duties on city roads to control traffic flow during Muharram.

He informed traffic Police Officers and Wardens have also been directed to take action against vehicles having tinted glasses, revolving lights, unregistered vehicles and motorcy-

cles and others moving without, improper and fake number plates. In order to ensure the security of the mourning processions during Muharram-ul-Haram, CTP Rawalpindi has issued a comprehensive traffic plan.

According to the plan, there would be a complete ban on parking any vehicle or pushcart on the route of the procession. Fork lifters would move with Muharram processions, he said. The wardens have been directed to remove all kind of encroachments from the processions routes besides keeping a vigil on suspected persons and things.

Entry of vehicles on the

route of the processions would be blocked by erecting barricades and other hurdles, the spokesman added. He said, Traffic Police officials would be deployed along with district police personnel to ensure the security of the mourners.

Strict disciplinary action would be taken against the delinquent officials, he said. He informed that traffic load would be diverted to alternate routes during mourning processions. A control room would be set up at Traffic Headquarters to monitor the situation while motorists who seek help and assistance can use CTP helpline 051-9272616.

PHA to utilize all resources to upgrade parks of Murree

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi would utilize all available resources to upgrade parks of Murree, said a PHA spokesperson.

She informed that on the directives of Director General (DG), PHA, Ahmad Hasan Ranjha, the authorities concerned had been directed to make all-out efforts to upgrade the parks of Murree.

During a visit to various

parks of Murree, the DG reviewed the facilities being provided to the public in terms of quality recreation, she informed.

She said, the DG had instructed the officers concerned about the improvements of parks and to ensure better recreational facilities for the tourists.

According to the orders of the Punjab government, the tourists and residents were being provided with the best available facilities.

The PHA is also ensuring provision of clean drinking water for the tourists in Murree, benches for sitting and better lighting arrangements.

The DG during the visit inspected all the arrangements regarding lighting and sitting, drinking water and other facilities in the parks and orders were also issued to the officers to take all possible steps for improvement of the facilities, she informed.

Admin sets up Flood Relief Camps

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district administration has set up five 'Flood Relief Camps' in different areas of the city while the officials of the departments concerned would be on duty at these camps during the Monsoon season to cope with any emergency situation during flash flooding particularly in low-lying areas near Nullah Lai.

According to a Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) spokesman, the camps have been set up at Motti Mahal, Liaquat Bagh, Bagh Sardaran, Commercial Market Satellite Town and Khayaban-e-Sir Syed.

He informed that Managing Director (MD) WASA, Saleem Ashraf, had given orders to complete the dredging and de-silting work of Nullah Leh swiftly

before the first pre-monsoon rain.

Over 90 per cent of the dredging and de-silting work had been completed. Similarly, the dredging and de-silting work of 11 other major and minor Nullahs in Rawalpindi had also been completed, he said.

The spokesman said that all necessary arrangements had been made in this regard. The Managing Director had also inspected the operational preparations at Gawalmandi Bridge.

He also mentioned that this year, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) had predicted over 30 per cent more rainfall compared to previous years. Therefore, WASA Rawalpindi had finalised its Monsoon plan for 2024, and all the necessary arrangements were being made to

cope with the upcoming Monsoon season. A rain emergency had been declared until September 15, 2024, he informed.

In addition, the field offices had been established as Flood Response Units at five different places in Rawalpindi, MottiMahal, Liaquat Bagh, Bagh Sardaran, Commercial Market Satellite Town, and Khyaban-e-Sir Syed. WASA's heavy machinery, including eight sucker machines, nine jetting machines, six sewer cleaning machines, 34 de-watering sets, and 29 water bowlers, is in working condition and deployed at these Flood Response Units to give quick response during heavy rains.

The Commissioner of Rawalpindi Division, Aamir Khattak, had also directed the

authorities to complete the dredging and de-silting work promptly, he said adding, section-144 to prevent the dumping of garbage and solid waste in Nullah Leh was imposed.

The spokesman informed that Special Secretary Housing and Urban Development Punjab, Tayyab Fareed visited Gawalmandi area on Saturday 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 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 Nulla 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 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.

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. The Commissioner had instructed the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) to clean the drains and improve the sewerage system in the city to avoid any untoward incident during Monsoon.

Migrant rights discussed

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghan and Iranian diplomats have conferred on the creation of a joint economic committee and protection of migrant rights. MoFA official Rahmatullah Faizan and Iranian CG in Herat Mohammad Sadeghifar met on issues of common interest. At the meeting, Faizan discussed the formation of a joint economic committee between Herat and Mashhad and the issues faced by the Afghans living in Iran with legal documents.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 01 1446 — Monday, July 08, 2024

72 drug factories destroyed

FARAH CITY (Pajhwok): During the course of past three months, 72 drug-processing factories were destroyed in western Farah province, provincial police officials said. Farah Police Spokesman Maulvi Mohammad Nasim Badri made these statements today during a press conference. The security personnel had a tough fight against the narcotics, poppy cultivation and drug-production and smuggling during the course of past three months, Badri said.

IEA changes Minister, Central Bank Chief

KABUL (Ariana News): The supreme leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has removed Shahabuddin Delawar from the post of acting minister of mines and petroleum and replaced him with acting governor of Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) Hedayatullah Badri. The appointment was announced Saturday on X by IEA's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

Delawar has been moved to the post of acting head of Afghan Red Crescent Society, replacing Matiuhaq Khalis who will now act as the head of National

Environmental Protection Agency. DAB's Deputy Governor Noor Ahmad Agha has been promoted to the top post in the bank. The newly announced appointments included also Nooruddin Turabi, former deputy chief of Afghan Red Crescent Society, as the new acting head of National Disaster Management Authority. Former deputy minister of industry and commerce, Qudratullah Jamal, has been appointed as the new deputy minister of information and culture for financial and administrative affairs. Ahmadullah Zahid, former

mer acting director of counter corruption of intelligence agency, has been appointed as the new deputy minister of commerce and industry. Aziz-ur-Rahman, former acting head of National Environmental Protection Agency, has been appointed as deputy head of Afghan Red Crescent Society. Saduddin Saeed, former deputy minister of information and culture for financial and administrative affairs, has been appointed as deputy head of National Environmental Protection Agency for financial and administrative affairs.

No one allowed to rise against Islamic system: Kabir

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Deputy Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Kabir says the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) will not allow anyone's opposition to the regime. In a statement, the Presidential Palace said the deputy premier met a number of tribal elders, religious scholars and officials of various departments at his office on Saturday. Maulvi Kabir said: "The struggle of Afghans was aimed to establish an Islamic system and today, Alhamdulillah, such a system is in place. Afghans will not allow anyone to oppose this government."

He called Afghanistan home to all Afghans and everyone reserved the right to speak their mind and offer their views.

2,000 Afghan refugees deported

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation stated that nearly 2,000 Afghan migrants have been expelled from Iran and Pakistan. According to the ministry's newsletter released today, Sunday, July 7th, 1929 Afghan migrants were expelled by the governments of Pakistan and Iran.

Based on the newsletter, those expelled entered the country through various border points, including Torghundi, Spin Boldak, Islam Qala in Herat province, and Ishkashim in Nimroz province.

Meanwhile, despite international reactions, the trend of deporting Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan continues.

The wave of Afghan migrant deportations, especially from Pakistan, has increased in recent months amidst dire humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan and ongoing security threats.

The forced deportations of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran have sparked significant concern and criticism internationally. The United Nations and humanitarian organizations have condemned these actions, citing the precarious situation in Afghanistan, where conflict, economic instability, and drought have exacerbated humanitarian needs.

The deportations are seen as exacerbating an already dire situation, forcing vulnerable individuals back into a country ill-prepared to support them.

Reports indicate that many of the deported migrants face challenges upon return, including a lack of shelter, livelihood opportunities, and access to basic services such as healthcare and education.

7 check dams costing 22.5m afghanis built in Logar

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): Seven check dams were built in central Logar province during the past one year and work on another seven check dams was ongoing, an official said on Sunday. Speaking on behalf of Logar River Basin Authority, Fazl Rahman Omarzai, told Pajhwok Afghan News the construction of the seven water check dams consumed 22.5 million afghanis and had the capacity to store 60,000 cubic meters water.

He said the dams after their completion were put into service in Pul-i-Alam, Mohammad Agha, Baraki Barak, Charkh, Khoshi, Azra and Kharwar districts last year.

He said the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) will build seven more check dams in Pul-i-Alam city and six districts and a survey in this regard was in progress.

"These check dams will increase the underground water level, prevent floods and also irrigate agricultural lands," Omarzai added.

On the other hand, Rasool Gul, a farmer, said he was happy with the implementation of these projects. He said now the ground water level would surge and water would be available for irrigation.

Fazlullah, a Mohammad Agha resident, told Pajhwok MoEW had started constructing check dams in Sorkhab, Kharwar and Abtak districts.

\$7.5m gas drilling contract awarded to Turkish firm

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has awarded the contract for drilling two gas wells in the Yatim Taq area of Jawzjan province to a Turkish company. Shahabuddin Delawar, the acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, said that this company will drill two wells at a cost of \$7.5 million dollars over the next year. He added, "100,000 cubic meters of gas will be extracted daily from this mine, and each 1,000 cubic meters of gas will be sold for 200 dollars."

Delawar also mentioned the ministry's efforts to contract other gas-rich areas of the country to major companies in the near future, stating that with the exploration and extraction of these gas mines, Afghanistan will be among the important oil countries.

He further said: "We will sign 4,000 kilometers of the area, God willing, with an investment of one billion dollars. We hope that Afghanistan will achieve self-sufficiency with this."



The head of the company said that 20 engineers from Turkey would be brought to Afghanistan for the drilling of the gas well in the Yatim Taq area of Jawzjan, and employment opportunities will be created for dozens of other people in the area. Qadir Karakoc, the head of the company that won the contract, said: "We will bring 20 engineers from

Turkey to Afghanistan to drill these wells, and we will also hire 40 to 50 people from within Afghanistan in the work process."

Homayoun Afghan, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, said: "We have active wells and extraction is ongoing, with approximately 600,000 cubic meters of gas being obtained from various wells

in Sheberghan. With the drilling of two new wells, daily extraction will reach one million cubic meters of gas."

Following the signing of the contract for the two gas wells in Jawzjan, the bidding process for several small projects in the Qashqari block of the Amu Darya oil region was also held among domestic companies.

Reconstruction of 51 school buildings announced in Panjshir

PANJSHIR (TOLOnews): The Governor of Panjshir announced the reconstruction of 51 school buildings by the Ministry of Education in the province last year, stating that 35 more school buildings are to be reconstructed this solar year (1403).

According to Mohammad Agha Hakim, these 51 schools were reconstructed at a cost of 10 million afghani.

Mohammad Agha Hakim, the Governor of Panjshir, told TOLOnews: "They exceptionally provided us with 10 million afghani, of which 8.5 million were used for the deficiencies of the schools, and we repaired 54 schools and

equipped them with the necessary items such as chairs and desks, and we are monitoring the remaining 31 schools this year to meet their needs."

Panjshir province currently has 128 schools where more than 26,000 students are being educated. Some of these schools have been partially damaged due to natural events or recent conflicts in the province.

Meanwhile, officials from some schools in Panjshir are pleased with the reconstruction of the schools but do not find it sufficient.

"It was damaged over the past years, and fortunately, the Islamic Emirate

repaired it, but it is not enough. This school still needs reconstruction; the doors and windows need to be fixed anew," said Mohammad Jamil Nazari, the manager of one of the schools in Panjshir.

"The surroundings of the school, which are about 125 meters long and 95 meters wide, were completely fenced by the Islamic Emirate, preventing idle people and animals from entering," said Del Agha Ahmadi, the head of another school in this province.

Some teachers and students in Panjshir are calling for the resolution of some other challenges in the province's schools.

"We need drinking water, and the doors and windows need repair and reconstruction," said Aziz Rahman, a teacher in Panjshir. "We are facing many problems here. We do not have drinking water, and there is no football field here either," said Ahmad Nawid, a student.

According to the Panjshir Directorate of Education, after the return of the Islamic Emirate, nearly 30 school buildings in this province were used as military bases. However, according to local officials, last year, the military forces of the Islamic Emirate completely moved from the schools to their military locations.

Daikundi's Pato residents lack access to telecom services

NEILI (Pajhwok): Residents of Pato district in central Daikundi province say they have been struggling with serious problems in the absence of telecom services.

Ehsanullah, a resident of the district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that more than 90 percent of the district's population were deprived of telecommunication services. He added that in the past, Pato district had been one

of the most insecure districts and as a result was deprived of public services.

He said some influential people in Biri, Qakhor, Burmani and other areas had previously asked the government to activate telecommunication networks to solve the problem.

"In this age of technology, unfortunately our people live in a primitive way and this has been a big problem for people," Ehsanullah said.

"People in our areas climb mountains with a host of difficulties because the network in our areas is very weak and one cannot speak properly over the phone."

Abdul Hakim Hosseini, another resident of Pato district, said they had to go to the mountains and hills

far from their homes to make telephone and internet calls.

He added: "There is no telecom network in our area and we cannot go to other areas because we are busy. When I'm free I go to the mountain to make a phone call to my children in Iran."

He added that in the era of technology, they could not even make a phone call, which he called a big problem. He urged the government to pay serious attention to the activation of telecommunication networks in Pato district.

However, officials in the telecommunications department of the province say that work is underway to activate telecommunication networks in Pato district and soon the residents of this district will be provided with access to telecommunication services.

Niamatullah Jizdada, head of telecommunication department, told Pajhwok that the majority of residents of Pato district would have access to telecommunication networks in the near future.

He added that three antennas of Salam Telecommunication Network in Barmani, Qakhor and villages between Tamzan and Pato will be activated by Afghan Telecom Company from the budget of the Ministry of Communications and Technology.

He added that 80 percent of the residents of Pato district were deprived of telecommunication services and they would be provided access to telecommunication services.

Nuristan faces educational crisis, lack of school buildings

NURISTAN (TOLOnews): Local officials in Nuristan province said that 80% of schools in this province do not have buildings.

They added that this year, they will undertake the reconstruction of 52 schools that were previously left incomplete.

"In Nuristan province, 80 percent of schools do not have buildings. Nuristan province faces many problems because when it rains, either our students' study in the mosque or they are off," said Sayed Rasul Abed, the deputy director of education in Nuristan.

Students from the Sosum primary school in the Parun center of Nuristan travel difficult routes daily to gain education.

Some of these students urge officials to not only rebuild the school buildings

but also provide educational materials.

Walida, a student, said: "When it rains or snows, we are forced to take off from school. Due to extreme heat, I suffer from headaches. To avoid the sun's rays, I cover my head with a cloth. Because of the lack of a school building, we often study in people's houses or mosques."

Namira, another student, said: "Due to the lack of a school building, we face many challenges. During the lessons, the voices of students from one class disturb another. If this school's building is constructed, we will learn better."

Saleh, another student, said: "Every morning I come from a remote area with my friends. I am very interested in education and want to become a doctor in the future."

Teachers of this school and local residents are requesting the interim government and aid agencies to construct standard buildings for these schools and provide educational materials.

Ismail, a resident, said: "A boundary wall was built for the primary and girls' school, but Sosum remained the same."

Habib Rahman, the school principal, said: "Due to the lack of a building, we face many problems. Sometimes, due to rain and snow, the school is off."

Zainullah, a teacher, said: "People here are poor. If they are helped with clothes and educational materials, it would be good."

According to the statistics of the Nuristan Department of Education, 41,118 students are studying in 214 schools, of which 17,218 are girls.

Uzbekistan to continue assisting Afghanistan

KABUL (Pajhwok): Reaffirming its support for Afghanistan at the Informal Summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) in Shusha, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said Afghanistan had fallen out of the international community's attention due to conflicts in other regions.

Uzbek media reported: "President Shavkat Mirziyoyev called for coordinated action to assist Afghanistan, highlighting the challenges the country faces amid global conflicts".

Mirziyoyev noted the challenges facing Afghanistan due to shifting global focus: "Unfortunately, due to the intensification of wars and conflicts in other regions of the world, the situation in neighboring Afghanistan, where millions of Turkic people live, has fallen out of the international community's attention."

Emphasizing Uzbekistan's dedication to assisting Afghanistan, Mirziyoyev stated, "Uzbekistan

will continue to provide necessary assistance to the Afghan people."

He also addressed the importance of economic measures, specifically the return of Afghanistan's financial assets: "We believe that the return of Afghanistan's frozen financial assets abroad will help alleviate the social situation in the country". Mirziyoyev called for a coordinated effort among OTS member states to address the situation in Afghanistan.

Rise in watermelon yield in Farah expected

FARAH CITY (Pajhwok): The Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Department in western Farah province estimates this year's watermelon yield at 541,500 metric tonnes in the province.

Agriculture and Livestock director Maulvi Abdul Ghani Abid told Pajhwok Afghan News watermelons were planted on 14,250 hectares of land in the province this year, which will produce 541,500

tonnes of the fruit. He recalled last year, watermelons were planted on 15,478 hectares of land and produced 572,686 tonnes.

About 37 tonnes harvest was obtained from a hectare last year, but this year the amount will reach 38 tonnes, he explained.

On the other hand, Farah farmers are not happy with the watermelon harvest.

Abdul Jalil, a farmer from Karezak area of

Farah city, told Pajhwok: "Recent rains caused heavy financial losses to us. All our crops have been damaged."

He said that he bought watermelon seeds and put a lot of effort into it, but he was unsure to meet his expenses.

Mohammad Reza, a farmer in Pashtrod district, also told Pajhwok cold weather had damaged their crops.

People urged to use domestic products



SHIBERGHAN (Pajhwok): Owners of some boot making factories in northern Jawzjan province complain their business has stagnated and people show little interest in domestic products.

These manufacturers urged the countrymen to use domestic products.

In Jawzjan province, domestic production, including boots, has grown significantly, but the producers are complaining about low sales.

Ustad Salam, one of the craftsmen in Jawzjan, who spent more than five years of his life running a boot and sandal making factory, said that their products were not famous and had no buyers.

He urged the people to use domestic products because the quality of foreign products was inferior. "Our products are both cheap and of high quality. We can make any type of shoes and boots."

He has hired eight people and if the sales improve, he will hire more people to work.

"Our income is not good. If people support us and use local products, our business will flourish and more jobs will be created and people will get quality material at low price," he added.

Naqibullah, a resident of Shiberghan, who has also established a boot factory, says that they produce boots and sandals in accordance with the fashion of the day with very good quality.

He said although his business was flourishing, it could further improve if people shunned foreign footwear. He also urged the residents to use domestic products.

"This is my father's business. I want to serve my country and people this way. I have provided work to four people in my small factory. If people use our products and our sales increase and if the government supports us, maybe I will double or even triple my employees."

Some residents of Jawzjan also like domestically produced boots.

Haji Seyed Mohammad, a resident of Shiberghan, says that he is a fan of domestic boots because of their good quality and reasonable price.

He added: "If each of us uses native products, we will contribute to the growth of Afghanistan's economy."

Also, Farooq, another resident, says domestic products are cheap and have high quality compared to foreign boots.

Meanwhile, Maulvi Niaz Mohammad Tawab, director of Commerce and Industry in Jawzjan province, said the boot making business in Jawzjan was improving.

He said they were striving to support all industrialists including boot industry, in the province by creating industrial parks.

ment supports us, maybe I will double or even triple my employees."

Some residents of Jawzjan also like domestically produced boots.

Haji Seyed Mohammad, a resident of Shiberghan, says that he is a fan of domestic boots because of their good quality and reasonable price.

He added: "If each of us uses native products, we will contribute to the growth of Afghanistan's economy."

Also, Farooq, another resident, says domestic products are cheap and have high quality compared to foreign boots.

Meanwhile, Maulvi Niaz Mohammad Tawab, director of Commerce and Industry in Jawzjan province, said the boot making business in Jawzjan was improving.

He said they were striving to support all industrialists including boot industry, in the province by creating industrial parks.

Traders begin first ever onion exports to India

KUNAR (TOLOnews): Some traders from Kunar said that for the first time, the process of exporting onions from this province to India has begun.

They added that the first shipment of onions, costing 91 million afghani, will reach India in less than a month.

Habib Rahman, a trader, said: "Today we are loading

these onions. We have contracted 8,000 tons, and this is the first truck you see."

Habib Jan, another trader, said: "Today we have found a good market which is a foreign market and has a positive impact on the lives of farmers."

Some farmers and residents of this province considered the start of onion exports to foreign countries to be beneficial.

Aziz Rahman, a farmer, said: "Provide us with improved seeds in time and build standard cold storage so that we can keep our vegetables in it, and there is also a road problem that needs attention."

Malik Ajmal, a resident of Kunar, said: "A cold storage should be built in

Asadabad so that our farmers can store their produce there." Local officials in Kunar pledged cooperation with farmers in this regard.

Abdullah Haqqani, the deputy governor of Kunar, said: "We are cooperating with all traders in Kunar and assure all farmers that anyone who invests here, we support them and stand

behind them."

Nazar Mohammad Atiq, the mayor of Asadabad, said: "From the hard work and efforts of our farmers, we gain a benefit so that our country progresses in this field."

Kunar is an agricultural province in the country, which, in addition to onions, also has various types of fresh fruits.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing a meeting regarding health and education sector reforms.

Leftist alliance leads French election

No absolute majority, initial estimates show

PARIS (Reuters): France was on course for a hung parliament in Sunday's election, with a leftist alliance unexpectedly taking the top spot ahead of the far right, in a major upset that was set to bar Marine Le Pen's National Rally from running the government.

The outcome, if confirmed, will leave parliament divided in three big groups with hugely different platforms and no tradition at all of working together.

That could potentially herald a period of instability, unless the left manages to strike a deal with other parties to work together.

The leftist alliance was

forecast to win between 172 and 215 seats out of 577, pollsters' projections based on early results from a sample of polling stations showed. These projections are usually reliable.

The result would in any case be humiliating for French President Emmanuel Macron, whose centrist alliance, which he founded to underpin his first presidential run in 2017, was projected to be narrowly second and win 150-180 seats.

But it will also be a major disappointment for Marine Le Pen's nationalist, euroskeptical National Rally(RN).

The RN, which had for

weeks been projected to win the election, was seen getting 115 to 155 seats.

The first official results were expected later on Sunday, with the results from most, if not all, constituencies likely to be in by the end of the day or the early hours of Monday.

Voters have punished Macron and his ruling alliance for a cost of living crisis and failing public services, as well as over immigration and security.

Le Pen and her party have successfully tapped into those grievances, spreading their appeal way beyond their traditional strongholds along

the Mediterranean coast and in the country's northern rust belt.

But the leftwing alliance managed to edge them out of the first spot.

That was in part thanks to some limited cooperation by Macron's centrist Together alliance and the left, designed to block the far right's ascendancy to power. Le Pen's rivals pulled more than two hundred candidates out of three-way races in the second round in a bid to create a unified anti-RN vote.

The constitution says there can be no new parliamentary election for another year, so an immediate repeat vote is not an option.

Reforms in KP education, health sectors

Gandapur streses need of management devolution in these sectors

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur regarding reforms in Health and Education sectors in which important policy decisions were taken and directives were issued by the Chief Minister to improve and streamline the existing system of Education and Health aimed at ensuring efficient management and improving service delivery to the desired level.

The Chief Minister stressed the need of devolution of management in these sectors to lower level further directing to post additional director general at the regional level for better and efficient management.

He remarked that such large departments with huge human resources could not efficiently managed from provincial level adding that service delivery can be improved only when managed and looked after at local level; and, therefore, it is necessary to shift the workload to regional level.

The Chief Minister further directed that teachers and paramedical staff recruited on domicile basis should be

reposted in the areas of their respective domicile where they are supposed to serve, and necessary amendments be proposed in the relevant laws for this purpose.

He directed the high ups of health department to collect complete data of the unused or under used medical equipments in all the government hospitals of the province within a week and said that steps should be taken to put the medical equipment into use or otherwise shift them to hospitals where they can be utilized to the optimum.

He underscored the need of digitizing the health and education departments for better utilization of resources and effective monitoring of service delivery, and directed the concerned authorities for steps to this end on priority basis.

During meeting it was informed that the initiatives of the present provincial government have resulted in significant improvement in primary health care system, and added that the time when present provincial the present provincial government took over, only five lac people visited primary healthcare facilities for treatment facilities every month at aver-

age whereas the number has increased to seven lac now which clearly indicates that service delivery in the primary healthcare outlets has improved.

The Chief Minister hailed the improvement in the primary health care system and directed that efforts should be continue to further strengthen and improve the primary health care system to ensure treatment facilities to the people at the local level.

The Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities that there should be no transfer of teachers without vacant posts in the education department.

Apart from this, appointment of teaching cadre employees against administrative positions should be stopped and the teaching cadre and management cadre should be kept separately in the health and education department. Matters related to the launching of Education Card on the analogy of Health card were also discussed in the meeting to facilitate the children to get admissions in private sector schools in areas where public sector schools do not exist or are unaccessible for any reason.

Rains likely in Sindh, Balochistan

KARACHI (PPI): Pakistan Meteorological Department forecast on Sunday that during the next 24 hours, torrential rains may cause flash floods in local nullahs/streams of Kashmir, northeast Balochistan and hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan tonight. However, urban flooding is likely in Pothohar region, Lahore, Sialkot and Gujranwala during this period. Landslides may disrupt roads at the vulnerable points of hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Synoptic Situation: Monsoon currents from Arabian Sea are penetrating upper-central parts of the country. A westerly wave is affecting most upper parts of the country.

Sunday weather: Rain-wind and thundershower is expected in upper-south Punjab, Pothohar region, upper Sindh, northeastern Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Heavy falls are also likely at isolated places in northeast Balochistan, upper Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Pothohar region during evening night.

Monday weather: Mainly hot and humid weather is expected in most parts of the country. However, rain-wind/thundershower is expected in Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, south Punjab, Pothohar region, upper-southern Sindh and eastern Balochistan.

Past 24 Hours Weather: Rain-windstorm and thundershower occurred in Punjab, Islamabad, Kashmir and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and northeast Balochistan. Hot and humid weather prevailed over other parts of the country.

Rainfall(mm): Punjab: Faisalabad (Dogar Basti 98, Madina Town 97, Gulistan Colony 96, Allama Iqbal Colony, G.M.A Waterworks 92, City 30), Jhang 83, Bahawalnagar 67, Bahawalpur (City 61, Airport 30), Multan (Airport 48, City 31), Bhakkar 40, Sargodha 35, Joharabad 20, Sheikhupura 13, D G Khan 12, Layyah, Kasur 08, Lahore (Airport 05, City 04).

Murad to lead promotion of voluntary blood donations

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed his government's commitment to leading the promotion of voluntary blood donations in the province and establishing it as a successful campaign that can be replicated nationally.

He said this while speaking at the launch of "Indus Zindagi," a national movement aimed at promoting voluntary blood donations across Pakistan. The event was hosted by the Indus Hospital & Health Network at a local hotel. The principal donors of the Blood Center Farhan Hanif and Shaista Farhan Hanif of Crown Group graced the event with their support towards the initiative.

Shah revealed that despite the country's vast population of over 240 million, only about 10 per cent of blood donations come from volunteers. He emphasized that this shortage of readily available blood leads to numerous lives lost every year.

Murad Shah stated that Indus Zindagi was not just a campaign but a collective call to action for the people of Pakistan. He stressed the importance of uniting for the shared goal of ensuring that every Pakistani in need has access to life-saving blood through voluntary donations.

The CM praised the National Video Competition as a significant start to this movement, as it encourages creative individuals to showcase the importance of voluntary blood donation.

He commended the participants and winners for their valuable contributions, calling them the change makers. Shah pledged full government support for this national movement and urged every Pakistani to wholeheartedly embrace the cause.

The chief minister urged the transformation of the country's blood donation system from replacement donations to voluntary contributions, emphasizing that each individual has the



power to save lives. By donating blood voluntarily, safe blood can be made available for those in need, anytime and anywhere.

Shah called on everyone to join hands in this noble cause and make Indus Zindagi a resounding success, emphasizing that together, a healthier and stronger Pakistan can be built.

It may be noted that "Indus Zindagi" began with a National Video Competition, urging creative minds to craft videos, photos, or animations highlighting blood scarcity or encouraging voluntary donations. The competition received an overwhelming response, with submissions evaluated by a panel of media experts. Winners were announced during the campaign's inaugural event, held to commemorate the World Blood Donor Day. Winners received exciting prizes, such as the newest iPhone model, cash awards, and other exciting gifts.

Abdul Karim Paracha, Chairman, Board of Directors and Dr. Abdul Bari Khan, President, Indus Hospital & Health Network, warmly welcomed the guests.

Dr. Saba Jamal, Senior Director of Blood Transfusion Services Directorate at IHHN, introduced "Indus Zindagi" stating, "Indus Zindagi is more than just a campaign—it's a national movement that challenges the status quo of replacement donations in the country," she said. "With this initiative, we unite

Pakistanis to donate blood voluntarily, ensuring availability of safe blood every time and everywhere. Throughout the year, activities will be arranged across Pakistan to engage and inspire the nation to donate blood voluntarily and become regular donors.

The goal is to gain momentum till 100% voluntary blood donations across Pakistan has been achieved."

The event featured a panel discussion titled "Change Makers Unite: Leading Pakistan's Voluntary Blood Donation Movement," which brought together leading medical professionals from blood centers & notable healthcare institutions across Sindh and Punjab, focusing on the future strategies to enhance voluntary blood donation in the country. This was followed by the announcement and screening of the National Video Competition winners.

Prof. Syed Zafar Zaidi, Chief Executive Officer, IHHN, concluded the event with a closing speech, appreciating the participants and the guests for their enthusiastic participation. He passionately urged the youth to embrace the urgent call-to-action, emphasizing the importance of immediate and unified effort for the nation's benefit.

Indus Zindagi urges every Pakistani to inspire others by donating blood, fostering a lifesaving culture of voluntary blood donation.

Six Kashmiri youngsters martyred in Kulgam

SRINAGAR (PPI): Indian troops in their fresh acts of state terrorism martyred six Kashmiri youth in Kulgam district of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

According to a Kashmir Media Service report Sunday, the youth

were martyred by Indian troops during cordon and search operations in Mudergham and Frisal Chinnigan areas of the district.

Four youth were killed by Indian troops in Chingam Frisal while two bodies of youth were

found on Sunday morning from the debris of the house destroyed by Indian troops with chemical substances in Mudergham.

Earlier, two Indian troops were killed in attacks in the Mudergham and Frisal Chinnigan areas of Kulgam.

Beryl bears down on Texas, where it's expected to hit

MATAGORDA BAY, Texas (AP): The outer bands of Beryl brought rain and intensifying winds to Texas on Sunday as coastal residents boarded up windows, left beach towns under evacuation orders and braced for the tropical storm that forecasters expected to strengthen back into a hurricane before landfall.

Much of Texas' shoreline was under a hurricane warning and landfall was expected early Monday. Officials in several coastal counties urged tourists along the beach for the Fourth of the July holiday to leave.

The earliest storm to develop into a Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic, Beryl caused at least 11 deaths as it passed through the Caribbean on its way to Texas. The storm ripped off doors, windows and roofs with devastating winds and storm surge fueled by the Atlantic's record warmth.

"We're seeing the outer bands of Beryl approach the Texas coast now and the weather should be going downhill especially this afternoon and evening," Eric Blake, a senior hurricane specialist with the National Hurricane Center, said Sunday morning. "People should definitely be in their safe space by nightfall and we're expecting the hurricane to make landfall somewhere in the middle Texas coast overnight."

Beryl would be the 10th hurricane to hit Texas in July since 1851 and the fourth in the last 25 years, according to Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach. Three times in its one week of life, Beryl has gained 35 mph in wind speed in 24 hours or less, the official weather service definition of rapid intensification.

Beryl's explosive growth

into an unprecedented early whopper of a storm shows the literal hot water of the Atlantic and Caribbean, and what the Atlantic hurricane belt can expect for the rest of the storm season, experts said.

Texas officials warned people along the entire coastline to prepare for possible flooding, heavy rain and wind. The hurricane warning extended from Baffin Bay, south of Corpus Christi, to Sargent, south of Houston.

Beryl lurked as another potential heavy rain event for Houston, where storms in recent months have knocked out power across the nation's fourth-largest city and flooded neighborhoods. A flash flood watch was in effect for a wide swath of the Texas coast, where forecasters expected Beryl to dump as much as 10 inches of rain in some areas.

PM: Country's ports being developed

Continued from Front Page Trust, Port Qasim Authority and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation.

The prime minister directed to take steps to minimize the custom clearance time by installing the modern equipment and machinery at Port Qasim and Karachi Port Trust.

He also instructed to ensure the installation of state of the art scanning machinery at the ports besides taking steps on priority to fully benefit from the ports' potential.

To ensure uninterrupted delivery of goods to and from Karachi Port Trust, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to keep open the Lyari Expressway for cargo traffic for 24 hours a day.

The Malir Expressway should be connected to the port to further improve the

delivery of goods, he added.

He further directed to increase the capacity of supply of goods to and from Karachi Port through railway.

"Fees for LNG ships at Port Qasim should be reduced and fixed according to prevailing rates at the international level," the prime minister said adding that a comprehensive action plan for the regulation of shipping lines should be prepared and presented on priority.

He directed the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation to formulate and present a comprehensive plan to reduce its cost and make its operations effective.

The prime minister said that he held meetings with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the

leaders of the Central Asian countries during his recent visit to Kazakhstan.

Pakistan, he said offered the most suitable sea trade route for the Central Asian states.

Central Asian states have expressed deep interest in using Pakistan's ports for trade, the prime minister said adding that Pakistan could earn foreign exchange reserves worth billions of dollars by introducing modern systems in the ports.

He stressed that the development of the existing ports in Karachi will increase exports from value addition industries.

He highlighted that development of private sector in the country, ease of doing business and facilitation of investors were the top priorities of the government.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb talking to media persons after meeting with Business community at FPCCI.