

Pervez Elahi gets relief

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court has ordered the removal of the names of Pervez Elahi, Zara Elahi and Rasakh Elahi from the passport control list. Justice Shams Mahmood Mirza delivered the verdict. The federal govt has illegally included names of Elahi and Zahra Elahi in the ECL, the prayer reads. Earlier, PTI President Pervez Elahi was released from the Kot Lakhpath jail after he was granted bail in the illegal recruitments case.

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

Vol. XXXIXI No. 165 Regd. No. 241 MUHARRAM 02 1446 -- TUESDAY, JULY 09 2024 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

PPP does not believe in politics of foul language: Bilawal

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a press conference in Peshawar on Monday said that he was briefed on the issues of the people. Bilawal said that the PPP has always engaged in positive, issue-based politics and intends to continue do so in the future as well. The PPP does not believe in the politics of foul language and desires to represent the people to resolve the plethora of problems they face.

There is a deficit of positive politics in the country, and the politics of hatred and division has reached its peak. We have to combat such anti-political and anti-democratic tendencies in a democratic manner, as is the wish of the people. Bilawal said that as the chairperson of his party, he would like to reorganise the party nationwide, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PPP will combat all antagonistic forces with positive politics and it will be victorious. He further said that the increasing inflation, poverty and unemployment are of utmost concern and the situation is deteriorating by the day. If politicians are not seen combatting these issues sincerely, they would then have to face the people of the country. The security situation Pakistan is faced with is critical. The policemen, Army and martyrs of the country made the terrorists face a historic defeat, with the world as a witness. Unfortunately, despite these great sacrifices to achieve peace, decisions were taken as a state and as a government that led to a resurgence of terrorism, from KP to Balochistan.

Chairman PPP said that the government has decided to call an APC regarding the counteroffensive, which will be attended by a delegation of the PPP. The party will then share its input on the appropriate forums. The PPP's aim will be to allow for the formation of consensus, as it had also hoped for the budget and the economic policy. The PPP is standing with its people, police and Army, and the law enforcement agencies are rendering sacrifices in all four provinces. We have to put our House in order when it comes to the economic and security situation, and the PPP will play a positive role in this process, he said.

Responding to a question, Bilawal said that the decisions taken with consensus will be better apt for the

current economic quagmire. It is correct that the current government is standing with the votes of the PPP and that is how the budget too was passed. This is why we had stressed on consultation with us prior to the budget. The PM and his team paid heed to the issues we raised, and assured us that our input would be taken into consideration prior to certain policies being devised.

Responding to another question regarding Afghanistan, Chairman Bilawal said that many were not able to achieve their targets in the country. Furthermore, a visit to Afghanistan will not resolve our problems. Referring to his own tenure as the Foreign Minister, Chairman Bilawal said that not only did Pakistan host Afghanistan's FM but also the Chinese FM. It marked the first tripartite interaction between Pakistan, China and Afghanistan. This is the diplomatic, engaging manner with which our issues should be tackled. It is in the interest of the people of both the countries that we address our mutual concerns. Afghanistan does not have a standing army or counter-terrorism experience, there are capacity issues. However, our issues too carry weight and we should see to it that they are paid heed. If the two countries are to successfully resolve their issues, it will mark an era of economic prosperity for both the nations.

Answering a question, Chairman PPP said that no party other than the PPP has consistently demanded accountability for terrorism. When General Faiz and General Bajwa were incumbent, it was the PPP's demand that brought them to the National Assembly. PPP was the party that raised questions in that meeting. The PPP is awaiting the APC, where factual information will be presented, and that will be the appropriate forum to raise concerns. There have been mistakes in the past that cannot be denied. Our security situation is directly linked to the economic plight. We cannot criticise every decision of the government just for the sake of it.

As far as the law and order situation is concerned, the KP government has a primary role to play. If the KP government and its ministers, for the past 15 years, have admitted to being financed by terror outlets, continue to voice support for them, and directly fund these organisations, then how can we expect to combat such ele-

ments? Hence, the APC is a welcome initiative so that all political parties can present their stance.

Responding to a question regarding the budget, Chairman PPP said that CM Sindh had resolved all of Sindh's issues prior to the budget. The remaining issues concerned the rest of the three provinces. This was because it was included in the agreement that the PPP and PML-N would collectively collaborate on the PSDP prior to the budget. Our objection was on the post-facto agreement. It is hoped that in the future, there would be pre-facto cooperation instead.

Chairman PPP said that the PPP had planned on creating fiscal space to fund the projects it had proposed in its manifesto as well as the 10-point agenda. Till now, the ministries operating in the federation have not been devolved. When this takes place, it will aid the federal and provincial governments.

Moreover, Chairman PPP said that Sindh's budget is pro-poor and includes public-private partnership based initiatives centring around solar energy to address the energy crisis and rising costs. Chairman PPP said that the Pakistani government is no longer in denial of the plethora of issues we face as a country. We were told by governments in the past that all is well. There were instances in the past, such as the one taken by the President of Pakistan and the government of the time, to provide relief to and invite the hardened criminals including those responsible for the APS attack, which led to a mindset of denial.

Chairman PPP said that there has been a shift since but there needs to be further change as far as the economic policy is concerned, which centres around regressive taxation and indirect taxes, burdening the impoverished. The Karachi Chamber of Commerce has presented an analysis on the budget, according to which, for every 1000 rupees earned, there is a 100 percent increase in the taxes. In contrast, for every 20 million rupees earned, there is only a 4 percent increase. As long as we burden the poor, instead of the elite, we will not be able to form a welfare state. Bilawal said that the PPP does not desire ministries in the government, but wants for the problems of the people to be addressed. The only condition is to be given the respect, space and opportunity for its input to be included.

KP CM cases: ATC adjourns hearing

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Monday adjourned the hearing till July 29 for indictment of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur in connection with terrorism cases registered in police stations Sangjhani and I-9.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard the case. During the hearing, CM KP Ali Amin Gandapur and PML-N MNA Khurram Shahzad appeared before the court. The judge summoned Gandapur to the rostrum, and remarked that copies of the charge sheet would be provided at the next hearing.

Court adjourns hearing of marriage case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court on Monday could not proceed with arguments in the appeals against the suspension of sentences of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and Bushra Bibi in illegal marriage case. The District and Session Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka heard the case.

The hearing of this case could not proceed due to the absence of Khawar Manika's lawyer and the court sought instructions from the Islamabad High Court on the adjournment of the case. During the hearing, PTI lawyer Murtaza Turi appeared before the court and requested for a short break, citing the need for senior lawyers to join.



PESHAWAR: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with Governor KP, Faisal Karim Kundi talking to media persons at Governor's House.

President okays Election (Amend) Bill, 2024

Zardari signs into law bill on appointment of retired judges to election tribunals

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday approved the Election (Amendment) Bill 2024. Through the Election Amendment Bill, the amendments were made in the section 140 of the Election Act 2017.

After the amendment, the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court will be consulted in case of appointment of a serving judge in the Election Tribunal, a press release issued by the President House said. The president extended the approval of the bill under Article 75 of the Constitution. After the president's approval, the Election Bill has become an Act. The Election Amendment Bill was passed by the National Assembly on June 28 and by the Senate on July 8.

Kachhi Canal project must be completed within 1.5 years: President: President Asif Ali Zardari has directed the authorities concerned to complete the Kachhi Canal project within

one and half years to irrigate around 713,000 acres land of Balochistan province.

Chairing a meeting on the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday, he said that the federal government would provide funding for the project to ensure its timely completion on a priority basis, said a press release issued by President House.

On the occasion, the president was briefed about the construction of six strategic canals for the Green Pakistan Initiative. The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and senior military officials. He was informed that the construction of six strategic canals, viz. Chashma Right Bank Canal, Kachhi Canal, Raineen Canal, Greater Thal Canal, Cholistan Canal, and Thar Canal, would help enhance the agricultural potential of Pakistan by increasing the cultivable area as well as the livestock and fisheries potential of the country.

President Asif Zardari directed to kickstart work on strategic canals for GPI and ensure their early completion, besides lining them with concrete to prevent seepage and wastage of water. He urged the need to develop Pakistan's irrigation sector along modern lines to conserve water, reduce water losses, and enhance water availability. He also underlined the need to promote drip irrigation in the barren areas surrounding the canals.

The president underscored the need to revamp and improve the Indus River System Authority. He also proposed establishing a state land bank to productively utilize state-owned lands surrounding strategic canals by securing funding and investment from international financial institutions and the Pakistan Stock Exchange. The meeting was also briefed that 27 telemetry points would be established to ensure accurate data sharing regarding the availability and flow of water.



QUETTA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif talking to media persons after signing of agreements to solarize agricultural tube wells of Balochistan.

Arshad's killing wasn't a case of mistaken identity: Kenyan court

NAIROBI: The Kenyan high court on Monday ruled that the killing of Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif was not a result of mistaken identity and ordered legal action against the involved police officers.

The Kenyan court ruled that Arshad Sharif's killing was unconstitutional and illegal. The court has ordered a compensation of Rs21.7 million to be paid to Arshad Sharif's family. The Kenyan court also directed criminal proceedings against the police officers and personnel involved in the shooting.

Investigations have begun concerning two brothers connected to the Arshad Sharif case, with travel records obtained. The court's decision highlighted that the government entities named in the petition cannot shirk their responsibilities. In response to the Kenyan court's ruling, Arshad Sharif's widow remarked that while justice has been served in Kenya, it is still awaited in Pakistan. It is noteworthy that on October 23, 2022, Arshad Sharif was shot in the head by police on the Magadi Highway in Nairobi, Kenya. — Agencies

Pak Army deployed during Muharram

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Interior Ministry has approved the deployment of the Pakistan Army across the country during Muharram to ensure peace and security. The deployment, sanctioned under Article 245 of the Constitution, comes in response to requests from various provincial governments and administrative regions.

The governments of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, along with the administrations of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad, had all requested the deployment of army troops to maintain law and order during the significant religious period. A notification issued by the Interior Ministry confirmed the army's deployment across the country. The decision underscores the government's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of citizens during Muharram, a time marked by processions and religious gatherings.

Earlier, the Sindh government had contacted the military authorities for the army's deployment in the province for the holy month. According to an Interior Ministry notification, army, Rangers, and FC troops will be deployed keeping in view the ground conditions. The Sindh Home Department has prepared a road map for army deployment in Muharram. Under the Anti-Terrorism Act, the army will be deployed in Sindh like the rest of the country. The army is being deployed to help the civil administration, the order of the Interior Ministry says, the army will be deployed as per requirement in mutual consultation of the parties concerned and the home departments.

Focus on to develop Balochistan: Shehbaz

— announces solarization of tubewells

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that under an agreement reached between the Federal and Balochistan provincial governments, a total of 28,000 agricultural tube wells in the province would be shifted to solar system within three months.

Talking to media after the agreement signing ceremony, the prime minister said the federal government would provide 70 percent funds while 30 percent would be contributed by the provincial government for Rs 55 billion solarization project. The prime minister met the provincial cabinet in which the federal ministers and Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhel and Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti were present, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Earlier, the prime minister witnessed an agreement signing ceremony between the federal and the provincial governments for shifting of electricity run tube wells to solar powered mechanism. The prime minister tasked the chief minister to complete the solarization project within three months.

He opined that the completion of project would ensure prosperity of the farmers and bring a large area of cultivable land under farming, adding that with functioning of the solar powered tube wells, the farmers would get uninterrupted power supply throughout the day. During his address to the provincial cabinet, he termed the agreement as 'a deep structured change' firmly rooted in the government's conceived reforms agenda, he said that a huge sum of Rs500 billion would be saved from going down the drain.

The prime minister said that the federal government would be absolve of paying Rs80-90 billion burden which was provided as subsidy to the province due to non-payment of bills and still the farmers community was getting 2 to 6 hours power supply. With the solarization process, the issue would be resolved forever, he expressed the hope.

The prime minister said that throughout the world, the utilization of solar capacity was tapped for generation of environment friendly power which was considered as the inexpensive source of power. He said that

the government was taking steps on priority basis for the provision of solar power and assured that the federal government would work closely with the provincial government for the uplift of the province.

The prime minister said that they had reserved 10 percent of additional quota for the students of province in a batch of 1,000 graduate students being sent to China on government scholarships to seek the latest training in the agriculture sector. While 10 percent additional quota for the students of Balochistan was also allocated in the training programme to be imparted by Huawei to 300,000 students in IT sector, he added.

He further informed that the federal government had already set aside funds in the fiscal budget for Danish schools in the province, adding that they were keen to broaden Danish schools to the divisional level so that students in the entire province could be benefitted from the education facility. The prime minister said that when the young people of Balochistan were equipped with the latest education, the country and province would move on path of progress.

The prime minister also appreciated ideas and efforts of the chief minister and said the today's signing of agreement was part of the reforms agenda and collective efforts made by the federal and provincial governments for the progress and prosperity of the country. The prime minister also apprised that a total of 1 million agricultural tube wells throughout the country would also be converted on solar power and would save a sum of \$3.5 billion on import bills of fuel, thus saving precious and limited resources of the country.

The model for the upcoming project would be introduced soon which would be 'a quantum jump', he added. He regretted that the injustices were done with the debt ridden country in the last many decades and if they had not taken drastic steps for the economic turnaround, the coming generations would not forgive them. The prime minister said that it was his first visit to the province after the formation of new government. He said Balochistan was a very important province of the country and if it was lagging behind in terms of development, there were various reasons, adding Pakistan's progress was linked with the development of province.

Polio eradication priority of KP government: Gandapur

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur was called on by Prime Minister's Focal Person on polio eradication, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq on Monday. Matters related to strengthening anti-polio campaigns to eradicate polio virus from the province came under discussion during the call on meeting.

Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed, Secretary Health Adeel Shah and other relevant officials were also present in the meeting. Speaking on this occasion, the Chief Minister said that eradication of polio virus from the province was on top of the priority list of the provincial government adding that he was personally looking into polio eradication campaigns, and the incumbent provincial government was taking steps with a renewed determination to make the province free of polio virus.

He remarked that eradication of polio virus was a national cause, and was above politics and all other

commitments, and added that this is a matter of a secure future of our young generations and there will be no compromise on it. The Chief Minister termed it encouraging that no case of polio was reported in the province so far this year, and stated that despite difficult situation of law and order, practical measures are being taken to continue the anti-polio campaigns in an effective manner to achieve its set targets, and special attention is focused on anti-polio campaigns in hard target areas.

He underscored the need of out of the box solutions in hard target areas, and said that the provincial government has given some suggestions in the National Polio Task Force meeting, which, if implemented, will yield better results. Ali Amin Gandapur also stressed the need of engaging the local communities to make anti polio campaigns more effective in problematic areas, and to strengthen routine immunization for better results of anti-polio campaigns. He further suggested that anti polio campaigns be launched in staggered manner at divisional level in areas with law and order

issues. Lauding the role of frontline polio workers, the Chief Minister said that frontline polio workers and security personnel deputed on the security of polio teams are our heroes adding that the provincial government highly values the sacrifices of polio workers and security personnel who lost their lives in the line of duties.

Ali Amin Gandapur stated that the provincial government is giving free plots to the heirs of workers martyred during polio duty in recognition of their sacrifices. He reiterated his government's commitment and resolve to fight the menace of polio until it is completely eradicated from the province.

Talking on this occasion, Ayesha Raza Farooq appreciated the leadership role of the Chief Minister in anti-polio campaigns, and expressed the hope that under the dynamic leadership of the chief minister, anti-polio campaigns will yield their desired results in the province. Both the dignitaries expressed the resolve to work together as a team to eradicate polio virus from the province as well as from the country.

Rail service suspended

CHAGHI (INP): The Pakistan-Iran rail service has been suspended after a train derailed near Dalbandin Balochistan. As per details, the railway officials confirmed that three bogies of the freight train went off the track. The train was traveling from Taftan to Quetta when the incident occurred however, rescue operations are currently underway to put the derailed bogies back on track.



KARACHI: Firefighters used a snorkel to extinguish a fire that erupted on the fourth floor of the Pakistan Stock Exchange building. —APP Photo

CM Murad directs health dept to eradicate polio

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed his displeasure over the detection of two polio cases in the province and directed the health department to intensify efforts to eradicate the disease and fulfil his government's commitment to polio eradication.

He expressed his concerns during a meeting at the CM House to evaluate the progress of polio eradication initiatives. The meeting was attended by various officials including Dr Azra Fazal, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Local Government Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, CEO PPHI Javed Jagirani, Coordinator EOC Irshad Sodhar, DG Health Dr Waqar, and others.

The Chief Minister was briefed about two polio cases detected in May and June 2024. The first case involved a 30-month-old malnourished boy from the Jatoi tribe in Lakhi area of Shikarpur, who was tested positive for polio on May 11, 2024. The Health Minister, Dr. Azra Fazal, informed the CM that the child's condition was improving, and the paralysis had subsided.

In response to a question, Coordinator EOC Irshad Sodhar mentioned that the child had received three doses of RI OPV and two doses

of IPV. Minister Health Dr. Azra highlighted that 73 per cent of children within six union councils of Shikarpur had been administered IPV.

The second case involved a three-year-old girl from the Malkani tribe in UC Keamari-3 of Karachi, who was diagnosed with polio on June 3, 2024. The affected child had received three doses of RI OPV, two doses of IPV, and over 7 doses of SIAs.

The Health Minister mentioned that in response to this case, 18,000 children were vaccinated with OPV and over 4,000 children received the IPV booster dose. Positive messages from local influencers and doctors were shared on social and mass media, and awareness campaigns were conducted in affected areas.

The Chief Minister emphasized the need to sustain high-quality immunization campaigns with little margin of error in Karachi due to the significant risk posed by the amplification and spread of the polio virus. He also stressed the assessment of under-reported missed children and other risk factors, especially in migrant settlements.

Coordinator EOC Irshad Sodhar reported that a special targeted activity was initiated to cover high-risk and under-immunized children as directed by the Chief Secretary. Over 600 outreach sites were set up in 183 UCs to target children who were still missed, persistently

missed (PMCs), and zero-dose, along with administering the booster IPV dose. So far, 38920 children have been vaccinated with OPV and 18710 children have received IPV.

To a question the CM was told that in Karachi Sohrab Goth, Machhar Colony, Chakora Nalla, Rashid Minhas polio virus was detected from the sewage in September 2023. In June the environmental surveillance result of Machhar Colony and Chakora Nala came negative. Khamiso Goth, Mohammad Khan Colony, Orangi Nalla, Bakhtawar Goth, Korangi Nalla, Haji Mureed Goth, Hijrat Colony and Manzoor Colony have environmental Surveillance results positive.

The environmental surveillance results for various divisions in Sindh are as follows: Sukkur Saddar Police Station Positive, Hyderabad: Tulsidas police station, Qadir Nagar Police area, and Latifabad Police: Positive. Badin Mahammad Wali Dargah police: Positive, Mirpurkhas Ring Road and Puraan area: Positive.

The Chief Minister has instructed the health department to ramp up efforts for polio eradication. This includes engaging key influencers and conducting awareness sessions in Madares. Refusal of vaccination is not tolerated, and the health department has been tasked with fulfilling the government's commitment to eradicate polio from Sindh.

Minister orders foolproof security for Muharram

KARACHI (PPI) Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar presiding over a high-level meeting at CPO on Monday directed top police officials to ensure foolproof security for Muharram-ul-Haram's congregations, mourning procession, and places of those events.

The meeting/video link conference was attended by all the senior officers of Sindh police, including IGP Ghulam Nabi Memon. The home minister said in the meeting that all officers should perform their duties as per the contingency plan devised for Muharram-ul-Haram. He said that foolproof security should be ensured at all congregations, mourning processions, and gatherings according to the lists. Rooftop police deployment, placement of snipers, and sweeping & clearance of main mourning procession routes by bomb disposal squad should be ensured, he said.

Mr Lanjar said that steps should be taken to promote harmony between the Shia school of thought and other sects besides taking all stakeholders on board to ensure stability and peace during Muharram. He said that actions should be taken according to the law regarding the persons included in the Fourth Schedule List. IGP Sindh said that regarding Muharram security, Sindh police were active and alert as additional manpower had been provided since the 1st Muharram on the disposal of districts.

The IGP Sindh said that all units of Sindh Police were active and engaged in Muharram security matters as a team. Earlier, the Sindh home minister offered prayers and Fateha for the departed soul of martyred DSP Ali Raza.

Meetings/interviews with drugs prisoners banned

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal on Monday clamped complete ban on conducting meetings/interviews with prisoners facing drugs and narcotics cases within jail corridors, specifically in the Administrative Block, across the entire province.

In a circular issued here, Inspector General of Prisons Punjab Mian Farooq Nazeer said this directive aims to curb the influence and communication channels of individuals linked to drug-related crimes within the prisons. By restricting their interac-

tions in these designated areas, it will prevent the spread of illicit activities and maintain better control in jails, he added.

It was clearly mentioned that the decision reflects the government's commitment to tackling the pervasive issue of drug abuse and trafficking that underscores a broader strategy to dismantle networks that facilitate the drug trade both inside and outside the prison. This move is part of a series of measures intended to reinforce security protocols and enhance the overall management of corrections in these designated areas.

He said such restrictions would contribute significantly to their ongoing efforts to rehabilitate inmates and reduce the incidence of drug-related offenses. By isolating those accused of narcotics crimes from potential avenues of influence, the prisons department aims to foster a more secure and orderly prison environment conducive to effective rehabilitation and law enforcement.

He warned that Superintendent Jail will be proceeded under amended PED Act if found guilty in strict compliance of ban.

TikTok releases its community guidelines

KARACHI (PPI): In its continuous effort to foster a secure and positive online environment, TikTok has unveiled its latest Community Guidelines Enforcement Report for the first quarter of 2024.

According to the company statement on Monday, this release highlights TikTok's unwavering commitment to transparency, safety, and inclusivity, reflecting its dedication to building trust and ensuring a safe platform for its global community.

During the January-March period of 2024, TikTok's proactive measures led to the removal of 166,997,307 videos worldwide, representing about 0.9% of all videos uploaded on the platform. A substantial portion of these, 129,335,793 videos, were identified and removed through automated detection technologies, while 6,042,287 videos were reinstated upon further review.

In a bid to enhance transparency, TikTok has now disclosed the number of comments removed and filtered by our comment safety tools

for the first time. TikTok has removed and filtered 976,479,946 comments using comment safety tools during this three-month period.

In Pakistan alone, the platform took action against 20,207,878 videos for breaching its Community Guidelines in the first quarter, underscoring its resolve to combat violations effectively. Moreover, TikTok aggressively pursued spam accounts and related content, implementing robust measures to prevent the proliferation of automated spam accounts.

Notably, approximately 93.9% of videos that violated the guidelines were removed within 24 hours of posting, and the proactive removal rate for the quarter stood impressively at 99.8% globally. In a global effort to safeguard younger users, TikTok also deleted 21,639,414 accounts suspected of belonging to individuals under the age of 13.

TikTok's Community Guidelines are meticulously crafted to cultivate an environment that is safe, inclusive, and authentic for

Govt to introduce fortified flour bags

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has decided to introduce unique fortified flour bags across the province which will help overcome medical issues of children and women.

According to official sources here on Monday, Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yaseen met representatives of the Flour Mills Association. Problems facing the industry and steps to provide relief to people were discussed in the meeting.

Bilal Yaseen said that fortified flour bags would be full of vitamins. "Punjab Food Authority labs will have authority to check fortified flour," he added.

He said that a case would be registered by the Anti-Corruption Establishment if an officer was found involved in issuing a flour permit. He further said there was no room for corruption in the Punjab Food Department.

Punjab Food Secretary Moazzam Iqbal Sipra and Food Director Shoaib Jadoon accompanied the minister. Representatives of the Flour Mills Association included Asim Raza, Majid Abdullah, Iftikhar Mehtu, Khaleeq Arshad, Muhammad Shahid and Ahmad.

PU issues LLB online admission schedule

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University Department of Examinations has issued the schedule for online submission of admission forms & fee for LLB (3-years) Part-II & III annual examination 2024 and LLB (5-years) Part-I, II, III, IV & V annual examination 2024.

According to details, the last date for receipt of online admission forms with single fee of said exams for regular / late college candidates is July 19, 2024.

This schedule is also for those candidates who appeared in LLB (3 years) Part-II, III supplementary examination 2023 and LLB (5-years) Part-I, II, III, IV and V supplementary examination 2023.

All admission forms will only be received through online and no admission form will be received by hand or by post. Details are available at www.pu.edu.pk.

LDA, TEPA seal three dozens properties

LAHORE (APP): On the direction of Lahore Development Authority Director General Tahir Farooq, the LDA and Traffic Engineering & Transport Planning Agency (TEPA) teams have launched crackdown on illegal constructions, commercial buildings, and parking violations in the city.

TEPA Enforcement Wing took action on Monday in Johar Town, sealed over two dozen properties for violating parking regulations. These properties include well-known salons, private offices, cash & carry shops, food points, private banks, restaurants, dental clinics, bakeries, coffee shops, and other establishments. The operation was conducted under the supervision of Chief Engineer TEPA, Iqar Hussain, and Operation Director Enforcement TEPA-II, Jawad Kamran.

Ulema call for peace in Muharram

LAHORE (APP): Religious leaders from various school of thoughts have called for strict adherence to the Paigham-e-Pakistan Code of Conduct to promote peace and religious harmony during Muharram-ul-Haram, aiming to combat extremism, terrorism, and intolerance in the country.

In a joint press conference held in Gujranwala on Monday, prominent figures such as Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and President of the International Interfaith Council, Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala Tariq Mehmood Qureshi, SSP Rizwan Tariq, ADCG Shabbir Hussein Butt, along with various leading

Ulema, emphasized their commitment to this cause.

According to a press release issued here, key resolutions of code of conduct are: Eradicate sectarian violence; Sectarian antagonism, violence, and forced imposition of ideologies are against Islamic Shariah and national law.

Religious scholars refute extremist mindsets and emphasize peaceful coexistence. Upholding the sanctity of prophets, companions, caliphs, and wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is mandatory. Only the state has the authority to declare someone an infidel (Takfir). Non-Muslims have the right to worship and practice their rituals freely. It is impermissible to harm peaceful non-Muslims; violators will be

punished by the state.

Women's rights, including inheritance and education, must be respected. Citizens are allowed to hold religious gatherings during Muharram and Safar, vigilance against enemies' conspiracies during religious observances, religious leaders should promote unity and identify miscreants, leaders should educate their followers and avoid targeting other sects, media should highlight the Paigham-e-Pakistan Code and report any sectarian content, the Ulema-Mashaikh pledged full cooperation with law enforcement and government agencies to uphold these principles, aiming for national stability and prosperity through a unified policy against extremism and terrorism.

CM Maryam approves Roshan Gharana Program

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, during a meeting of the Energy Department, approved in-principle 'Roshan Gharana Program' under which solar panels would be provided to the consumers consuming up to 500 units of electricity.

The chief minister said that Punjab government will provide solar system to million of consumers consuming electricity from 50 to 500 units, adding that 90 percent of the cost of solar panel will be paid by the Punjab government, while the remaining 10 percent will be paid by the consumer.

The CM said in view of the rising cost of electricity and the energy crisis, it was decided to start 'Roshan Gharana' programme, under which solar panels will be provided to the customers in easy installments of five years.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "We will not leave people alone in difficult situations." She added, "We are trying to save people from the effects of past disasters." She high-

lighted that after five years people will not have to face the current issues.

The CM also called a cabinet meeting tomorrow to formally approve 'Roshan Gharana' program of providing solar panels to the people. She said using a transparent procedure, solar systems will be given to the poorest families in Phase-I. She added in winter the installment of solar panel will be relatively less, the panel will only be supplied by the government. She said that as per user's needs, ratio between government electricity and the electricity obtained from solar system would be determined.

CM Maryam chairs apex committee meeting: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a meeting of the provincial Apex Committee here on Monday.

The meeting was also attended by Commander Lahore Corps, Chief Secretary Punjab, IG Police Punjab and other senior government, intelligence and military officers.

The forum took a holistic view of the prevailing

security situation in the province and measures being taken to ensure public safety and national security in line with the revised National Action Plan. Forum also reviewed comprehensive arrangements for the security of foreign nationals, including the Chinese employed on CPEC and non-CPEC projects in the province.

The participants were also briefed on an elaborate security plan aimed at ensuring peace and harmony during the month of Muharram.

Effective monitoring of the processions using high-tech gadgetry and tiered employment of various security forces will be done for effective security.

The forum also held extensive discussion on monitoring mechanisms of floods during monsoon and short-term and long-term measures for the protection of people and livestock from anticipated floods including rescue and relief plans in various contingencies. The forum resolved to continue unified efforts for ensuring public safety and well-being in the province.

Pakistani nation stands united with Kashmiris: Murtaza

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the Pakistani nation stands united with their Kashmiri brothers and fully support their demand for the right to self-determination.

He expressed these views while meeting with a delegation of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, led by Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi and included APHC General Secretary Pervez Ahmed Shah, Kashmiri leader Sardar Nazakat, senior Hurriyat leader Syed Ejaz Rahmani, Raja Khadim Hussain, Imtiaz Iqbal Wani, and others. Also present were Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad and Mayor Karachi Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi.

The Mayor said that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always advocated for the rights of oppressed nations,

including the freedom movement in Kashmir, on various international platforms. Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan, and sacrifices like those of Burhan Wani and other martyrs will never be forgotten, he said.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab emphasized that we all pay tribute to Shaheed Burhan Wani, whose martyrdom occurred on this day, and urged for the documentation and publication of all documents and movements related to Kashmir in written form so that future generations can be informed about this great movement.

He stated that all movements for freedom and self-determination in the world owe their existence to those who prioritized the nation's survival and future over their own lives and became immortal in human history.

He called upon the inter-

national community to play its role at all levels for a just solution to this critical issue and to pressure India to adhere to United Nations resolutions. Pakistan has consistently raised the Kashmir issue on all international forums, and the Pakistani nation will continue its efforts in support of Kashmiris, he added.

On this occasion, prayers for forgiveness were also offered for all Kashmiri martyrs, including Burhan Wani. Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, All Parties Hurriyat Conference remarked that today is observed as a day of resistance, recalling that the massive participation in Burhan Wani's funeral proved that the death of a martyr is the life of a nation.

He affirmed that the Kashmiri people will never accept India's slavery and their struggle for freedom will continue unabated.



KARACHI: Activates of Jamaat e Islami hold protest against K electric at Orangi Town Islam Chowk. —INP Photo

FC seizes Rs340 million smuggled items in a month



F.P. Report



PESHAWAR: Frontier Corps (FC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North achieved significant success in its anti-smuggling efforts over the past month.

A series of operations in Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Swat, Dir and Chitral has led to the seizure of illegal goods worth Rs 340 million. These goods include food

items, clothing, cigarettes, tyres, auto parts and foreign advanced weapons.

Additionally, Frontier Corps recovered illegally smuggled gold and foreign currency from Afghanistan valued at Rs 15 million. Anti-narcotics operations resulted in the recovery of 482 kg of various drugs worth Rs 45 million.

In total, 18 criminals have been arrested in connection with these operations, and legal action has

been initiated against them. Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North remains vigilant and committed to preventing smuggling activities.

Health Dept issues guidelines for medical facilities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Department of Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released comprehensive guidelines to ensure the availability of health facilities during the month of Muharram. The guidelines are aimed at addressing any health emergencies that may arise during this period.

According to the guidelines, all hospitals and primary health centers across the province have been instructed to remain open 24 hours a day.

This measure is to ensure that essential medical services are available at all times.

Health centers located near Imambargahs have been directed to expand their emergency services to effectively manage any emergencies resulting from large gatherings and processions.

Additionally, the guidelines call for the establishment of emergency control rooms at both the directorate and district levels throughout Muharram. Hospitals and health centers must have their full staff, including

doctors, nurses, and support personnel, on duty to handle any situation.

In the event of any untoward incident, the emergency departments have been instructed to be fully equipped with necessary medical equipment and medicines.

There is also an emphasis on maintaining complete cooperation with local administration. Furthermore, health centers are required to submit reports on the implementation of these guidelines to ensure compliance and readiness.

Chanzeb grieves over tourists' car accident in Chitral

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzeb, Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture, has expressed his deep sense of grief and sorrow over the accident of a tourist vehicle in Chitral's Ashrit area.

In his condolence message, he prayed for the eternal peace of the departed tourists' souls in this tragedy and the early recovery of the injured. He also expressed his heartfelt sympathies with all members of the affected families.

Meanwhile the Advisor Tourism KP directed the concerned local administration to extend all possible help to the affected families in transferring the dead bodies to their homes and the treatment of the injured tourists.

KP CM did not support any operation, says Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Adviser to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, has stated that the Chief Minister has neither supported nor signed off on any operation.

He emphasized that taking all stakeholders, including Parliament, into confidence before any operation is their consistent demand.

He accused a thrice-defeated individual of seeking media attention through baseless statements.

In a statement issued here, Dr. Saif remarked that Faisal Karim Kundi has completed a hat-trick of severe election defeats to Ali Amin and his brothers.

He advised the Governor to recall the deteriorated law and order situation during the PPP's tenure before making unfounded statements about the province's security.

Dr. Saif further criticized the PPP era for pushing the country and province decades back due to its poor management of law and order.

Meanwhile, Secretary Energy and Power Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nisar Ahmad Khan has said that development work on 300mega watt Balakot Hydropower Project (HPP) in cooperation with Chinese engineers is in full swing. Speaking during his emergency visit to the Balakot HPP site on Monday, he said that the project will be completed with the financial support of Asian Development Bank (ADB), that will earn a receipt of Rs 15 billion per annum for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and generate employment opportunity for around 1400 people.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi talking to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during later's visit to city.

KP women talent hunt in Sept this year

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women's Talent Hunt under the banners of Women Empowerment Program of Human Right Council of Pakistan will start in the first week of September wherein players from across the province would participate in softball, baseball, cricket and football competitions.

The decision in this connection was taken in a meeting of the Women Working Group (WWG) chaired by Shahid Khan Shinwari, Senior Vice Chairman Human Rights Council of Pakistan with Miss Najma Qazi, Assistant Operations Manager Pakistan Cricket Board Haseena Khushboo, Director Sports Sadia Khan, former national athlete Shazia Ayub, Aziza Ehsan and Miss Sumayah Ahmed (Swat) participated.

The Women Working Group (WWG) to be working under the umbrella of Women Empowerment is aimed at bringing the neglected female athletes to the fore in various sports activities.

It was said in the meeting that in various games teams are formed only from Peshawar who participate in the games at different levels while players from other districts of the province are completely ignored. Shahid Khan Shinwari, who is also the President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Softball Association and former President of FATA Olympic Association, said that one

of the reasons for the decline of sports in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is that the selection of teams has been limited to Peshawar district only.

No attention is being paid to the players of other districts or regions including Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Swat, Mardan, Hazara and merged tribal areas.

He said that U23 Games have been organized recently, which is a welcome initiative, but it will not be possible to promote sports in the future, as the age of the player has passed by U23 and work should be made at the grassroots level in the age of U14, U16 and U19.

Shahid Khan said that the women's talent hunt program, which will be started in the first week of September this year, will be started with softball, in which one team will participate from all seven regions and a team from merged tribal areas.

He said out of that Talent Hunt through competitions, one team would be short-listed to represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in various level competitions at National Junior and National Senior levels. He said that six teams will participate in cricket while eight teams each will participate in football and baseball. Players will be selected for these games by holding open trials in each region and the deprivation of talented players will be removed.

Najma Qazi said that the softball

event will be played at Board Ground or Hayatabad Sports Complex. All the players will be provided daily allowance and traveling allowance as well as kits, Najma Qazi said. Each team will consist of 12 players and one official, Director WWG Najma Qazi said.

Director players Sadia Khan will look after all the players during the talent hunt while, former national athlete and baseball gold medalist Shazia Ayub and Hasina Khushboo will perform duties of player data record and ensuring facilities including kits and camp training. Najma Qazi said that a total of 72 players will participate in the softball games and the competition will continue for five days.

Shahid Khan said a coaching and refresher course with the support of Pakistan Softball Federation will be organized to update all KP officials with much needed rules and regulations. He said that he would also meet Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Education Minister Meena Khan Afridi, Sports Adviser Syed Fakhar Jahan, Secretary Sports and Director General Sports so that this talent hunt can be expanded to other games and the players can be trained for different games under women coaches. He said women athletes of KP could be ensured their rightful place under the banner of Women Empowerment Pakistan.

Country's upper and central parts to receive rain from tomorrow: PMD

PESHAWAR (APP): The country's upper and central parts are likely to receive rain wind/thundershower from July 10-15, as per weather experts, due to the penetration of monsoon currents from Arabian Sea.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rain wind/thundershower with isolated heavy falls are expected in Dir, Chitral, Kohistan, Bajaur, Malakand, Shangla, Battagram, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Hangu, Kurram, Waziristan, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan from July 11-15 with occasional gaps.

In Balochistan, mainly hot and humid weather is expected in most districts of the province. However, rain wind/thundershower is expected in eastern parts of Balochistan including Khuzdar, Kalat, Ziarat, Zhob, Barkhan, Musa Khel and Shirani on July 08 and July 09th and from July 10 (evening/night) to July 15 with occasional gaps.

Rain/thundershower is also expected in

Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Rahimyar Khan and Layyah from July 12-14.

In Punjab, rain wind/thundershower is expected in Dir, Chitral, Kohistan, Bajaur, Malakand, Shangla, Battagram, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Hangu, Kurram, Waziristan, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan from July 11-15 with occasional gaps.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, mainly partly cloudy to cloudy weather conditions at times are expected however, rainfall activity is also expected in Diamir, Astore, Skardu, Gilgit, Ghanche and Shigar from July 11-15 with occasional gaps.

About the possible impacts, the PMD said that heavyfall may

increase inflows in local nullahs/streams of Murree, Galliyat, Mansehra, Kohistan and Kashmir from July 12-14.

Heavyfall may cause urban flooding in low lying areas in northeastern parts of Punjab.

Landslides may disrupt roads at the vulnerable points of hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the spell.

Heavy downpour/windstorm and lightning may affect daily routines, weak structures like roof/wall collapse of Kacha houses, electric poles, billboards, vehicles and solar panels etc during the period.

The farmers are advised to manage their activities keeping in view the weather forecast.

Travelers and tourists are advised to remain extra cautious and manage their traveling according to weather conditions and avoid any untoward situation during the wet spell. All concerned authorities are advised to remain alert and take necessary measures to avoid any untoward situation.



PESHAWAR: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program Rubina Khalid discussing the problems faced by the women during her visit to City.

BISP is most transparent welfare initiative: Chairperson

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), has stated that the BISP is considered Pakistan's most transparent welfare program by international organizations, directly benefiting the public. She made these remarks during an open court session at Circular Road, Babar House, during her visit to Peshawar city.

The event was attended by Nilofar Babar, Advocate Meher Sultana, Qazi Masarat, and other party officials. The session included detailed discussions on the funds provided under the BISP and the issues faced by women. During the session,

Chairperson Rubina Khalid met with deserving women, listened to their problems, and reaffirmed BISP's commitment to resolving their issues.

Chairperson Khalid informed the participants about the registration process, noting that BISP has started disbursing installments.

The government has issued a code for Benazir 8171, allowing individuals to check their installments from home. Recognizing that many poor families lack internet access, a mobile code (8171) has been issued. By sending their ID card number to 8171, individuals can check their eligibility.

She emphasized that the Government of Pakistan ini-

tiated BISP to provide monthly financial assistance to the poor suffering from poverty and inflation, allocating significant funds for this purpose.

Rubina Khalid further mentioned that complaints about deductions from the funds of deserving women have been taken into account, and financial institutions are being engaged to ensure transparency in the disbursement of aid.

She highlighted that BISP is empowering women economically, in line with the vision of the late Benazir Bhutto.

The program has gained international recognition and embodies the mission of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, implemented by President Asif Ali Zardari.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali inspecting Kohati Gate area during a surprise visit. Director East Rehmat Khattak is also seen in the picture.



In brief

Man axes niece to death

ARIFWALA (INP): A man axed his divorced niece to death for honour here on Monday. Police arrested the accused with murder weapon. According to details, the incident took place in Bhatta No 2 area of Arifwala where a man axed to death his sleeping niece who was on visit to his home. The police arrested the accused with murder weapon. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem. Police after registering a case into the incident started investigations.

Robbers deprive citizens of cash

FAISALABAD (INP): Robbers deprived citizens of cash, jewelry and motorcycle in separate incidents in different localities of Faisalabad, police said on Monday. According to details, armed robbers climbed into house of Mian Imran Aziz located in Mohallah Ismailabad of Jaranwala and took the residents hostage gunpoint. The robbers took away thousands of rupees cash, gold jewelry and other valuables from the house. Unidentified bike lifters stole motorcycle of Shehryar Khan parked outside a pan shop in Cinema Chowk of Jaranwala. The police registered separate cases in both incidents at respective police stations and started the investigations.

392 POs arrested in June

SARGODHA (INP): Sargodha police held 392 proclaimed offenders and 288 criminals during the last June across the District. According to the press release issued here on Monday, the teams conducted above 200 raids and recovered valuables worth in 185.7 millions of rupees from their possessions. Police also registered 174 cases against illegal weapon holders, besides recovering of four kalashnikovs, 18 rifles, 22 guns, 134 pistols and 571 bullets from them. Police busted 18 dacoity gangs as well as 138 drug pushers were also arrested, besides recovering 41,231 kg charas, 220 liters wine, 3300 liters of liquor and two working distilleries. Police said that crackdown against law violators would continue on daily basis.

Youth killed in mishap

F.P. Report

MALAKAND: A youth was killed after an over truck hit a motorcycle here on Monday, police said. According to details, a reckless driven truck knocked down a bike in Bazai area of Malakand district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As a result of collision, motorcyclist youth was killed on the spot. Truck driver escaped the scene of accident and body was shifted to hospital for postmortem. The police impounded the truck and after registering a case into the incident started raids to arrest truck driver at large.

Owner murdered by her co-wife

GUJRANWALA (INP): Police in Gujranwala have solved the mystery surrounding the murder of the owner of a beauty parlour as it was the co-wife of the deceased who had masterminded the murder, reported on Monday. People's Colony Police have arrested Farzana, the suspect, along with her brother and another accomplice. Police have said that Farzana had given Rs24,000 to her brother to purchase a pistol for the purpose. Elaborating further, the Force said that Farzana's husband had contracted a third marriage with the deceased which did not go down well with her.

Khurshid orders planting upto 1m trees on Indus River

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: Senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party and Member of the National Assembly, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, has ordered the plantation of 5 to 10 lakh trees along both banks of the Indus River. He directed the Sukkur Commissioner to coordi-



nate with the Irrigation Department to execute the tree plantation project on both sides of the river.

These instructions were given by Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah while presiding over a meeting held at the Commissioner's office regarding tree plantation and developing green belts in Sukkur. In this regard, he suggested that third-party experts and non-governmental organizations should also be invited for support. Mr. Shah instructed the Deputy

Commissioner to compile a list of all landowners and farmers, encourage them to plant trees, and provide compensation to those who do so." "MNA Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah said that a comprehensive plan be developed to waive water fees for those farmers/landowners who plant trees. He added that cutting

trees is punishable by law worldwide."

However, in our country, people are cutting trees indiscriminately, as they please. The cutting of trees in Sukkur is causing the groundwater to become increasingly saline and also causing intensive heat wave. "If cutting a tree is absolutely necessary, it should be conditional on obtaining permission from the Deputy Commissioner.", Shah added. "MNA Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah

emphasized that planting trees and creating green belts is now crucial to mitigate the effects of climate change, and all concerned officials must take immediate and serious action to achieve this goal.

He also directed the Commissioner Sukkur to hold a meeting with community representatives to discuss tree plantation and green belt projects in the city. Meanwhile, Commissioner Sukkur, Fayaz Hussain Abbasi, has formed a task force under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Sukkur to oversee tree plantation and environmental conservation efforts.

The task force includes representatives from various departments. He directed the task force to start work within 15 days and to prepare a comprehensive plan for tree plantation and environmental conservation.

The Deputy Commissioner Sukkur Dr. MB Raja Dharejo, and representatives of various departments, including Revenue, Forest, Agriculture, and Irrigation, local government and other line department attended the meeting.

Construction work on Balakot HPP in full swing

F.P. Report

BALAKOT: Construction work with the cooperation of Chinese engineers is in full swing on 300mwatt Balakot Hydropower Project.

The project will be completed with the financial support of Asian Development Bank (ADB), that will earn a receipt of Rs.15 billion per annum for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and generate employment opportunity for around 1400 people.

These views were expressed by the Secretary Energy and Power, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nisar Ahmad Khan during an emergency

visit to the Balakot HPP site on Monday. During the visit, he met with the team members of Chinese construction company Gazoba China and the Turkish consultant company Dolsar working on the project in order to review the progress of the work.

Meanwhile, the Project Director Aziz Raza, Deputy Director Engineer Mohammad Zubair Khan and other concerned officials were also present in the meeting. The Secretary Energy and Power was given a detailed briefing about the ongoing work on a colony, including the design of the project, civil works, construction of the

tunnel.

Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary urged the contractors, consultants and project director to speed up the work on the site of the dam and to restart the construction at some places wherein worked stopped.

Moreover, Nisar Ahmad Khan also inspected the additional tunnel of the project, which was completed by Chinese engineers team in a short time. He expressed the hope that the Balakot hydropower project will prove a milestone in the economic stability and prosperity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



HYBDERABAD: LPG dealers holding a sit-in for acceptance of their demands.

Villagers construct linking bridge over a stream on their own

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The villagers of Amluk Dara Talash in Lower Dir set a unique example by constructing a bridge over a stream leading to their village on their own with a total cost of Rs 10.05 millions. Hundreds of the villagers took part in the filling work here done here the other day. The project was completed in a record duration of two months.

Disappointed by the government and local lawmakers, the residents of Amluk Dara village in Talash launched construction work on the bridge over a stream in May after flash floods washed away the link road, and announced to build it on their own. The area elder Malik Taj Muhammad Khan, DSP Bakht Jamal, Mufti Khalid Mehmood, engineer Murad Khan and village council chairman Rehman Zada formally had launched the project during a function in the presence of hundreds of local residents on the site.

The area said that they

had been requesting the lawmakers and government departments for the last 50 years for construction of the bridge over the stream on a link road to Amluk Dara village but to no avail. They said that local residents especially students, patients and women suffered hard during rains due to lack of the bridge. They lauded the efforts of overseas Pakistanis for motivating them to start work on the project without any government's support.

Local residents and the overseas Pakistanis helped the residents of Amluk Dara Talash to complete the construction work. The area elders tasked a local engineer Murad Khan to oversee the project and supervised the construction work. Talking to this scribe, Mr Murad said that local residents, wealthy individuals and overseas Pakistanis generously donated for the project. "The construction of the link bridge has entered the final stage as filling completed and only protection walls are yet to be built", he said, adding

they had enough funds to complete the project.

The residents celebrated the project and they thanked the donors. Another elder Bakht Jamal said the link bridge would be opened for traffic after a month. He said the overseas Pakistanis and local philanthropists actively participated in the completion of the construction work costing more than Rs. 10 millions. The area elder said that students, traders and patients, especially women, were facing severe difficulties due to the suspension of traffic on the link road leading to the village with a population of over 6000.

He said the residents of the area were also facing difficulties in obtaining food items. He said that for the past two decades, members of Parliament had been continuously contacted to build the bridge but to no avail. "Despite the continuous protests brought to the notice, the promises of construction of the link bridge could not be fulfilled", he said.



QUETTA: Activists of Balochistna Sunni Ulema Council holding a rally in connection with Shahadat of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA).

Mushaira in memory of slain journalist arranged

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: To remember his services and to pay homage to the deceased journalist, Khalil Khan Afridi, a peace Mushaira (poetry reciting session) was organized at Takya ground of Sultan Khel village tehsil Landi Kotal.

Large number of local poets, writers' tribal elders, literary figures and people from walks of life participated in it. Scores of poets including Qandahar Afridi, Abdul Ghafoor Ghafoor, Bawar Shinwari, Namadar Afridi, Raziq Afridi, Adil Khan Humard and others paid homage to the deceased journalist through their poetry and underlined services rendered him for the poor segment of the society.

Earlier, addressing on occasion speakers like head of FATA Qaumi Jirga(FQJ) Bismillah Khan Afridi, district chief of Awami National Party (ANP) Shah Hussain, tehsil ameer Jamate-Islami (JI) Murad Hussain, President Khyber Transport Association Shakir Afridi and others highlighted different aspects of life of the late journalist, Khalil Khan Afridi and said that the slain media persons always emphasized solution of miseries of laymen through his reporting and therefore he faced the fatal consequence. They called upon the warring groups to halt their fight and resolve the issue through table talks to restore stable peace in the area. They threatened that till the arrest of the killers of the journalist, Khalil Khan Afridi they would not give up their agitation.

Improvement in cleanliness directed

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Madam Sundas Irshad inspected ongoing development schemes, hospitals and schools to review pace of work on ongoing development projects, provision of medicines and treatment facilities to patients in the hospital and availability of academic and co-curriculum facilities in the schools.

Chief Executive Officer Education Muhammad Anwar Javed, Deputy Director Development Tassawar Abbas, AC Pindi Bhattian Ishfaq Ahmad and other officers were also accompanied by the DC. While visiting Rural Health Centres Rasulpur Tarar and Jalalpur Bhattian, DC checked attendance of staff, cleanliness, X-Ray Room, medicine store, laboratory and different wards. She also took feedback from patients and their attendance about availability of free of cost medicines and other treatment facilities in the RHCs.

HEC new graduate policy to be implemented: UoM

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The University of Malakand (UoM) on Monday decided to implement the higher education commission's decision regarding the new graduate policy within the varsity rules and regulations.

The decision was taken during the 21st meeting of the UoM Academic Council held with the Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmed in the chair. According to the varsity's public relations officer, Miraj ul Hameed Nasari, various educational problems and policies of the university were considered and after detailed discussion and useful suggestions of the participants, new

rules and regulations would be formulated to solve these problems. The new graduate policy issued by the Higher Education Commission was also discussed and was decided to be implemented according to the rules of the university.

Addressing the meeting, the VC said that the University was providing the best environment and facilities to its students while maintaining its glorious traditions. He said that solving the problems of male and female students had always been his first priority and he would try to provide the best educational environment for them. In the meeting, a lot of discussions were held on the problems faced by the affil-

iated colleges and it was decided to pay full attention to their unresolved issues.

The meeting was attended by elected members of the Council, all Deans, Professors, Heads of Departments, Director Admissions, Controller of Examinations and Registrar. The PRO said the UoM would rearrange the BS final term research paper which was wrongly distributed among students by the supervisory staff at the affiliated colleges. He said the students were provided with a different paper in the colleges. He said the varsity would soon announce its schedule to conduct the paper at the main campus for students who were earlier provided with another paper.

Tribesman killed, JUI-F leader survives bomb blast

F.P. Report

WANA: In the Karikot Bazaar area of South Waziristan Lower, unknown armed individuals opened fire on Yasir and Mujib ur Rahman Toji Khel from a non-custom-paid vehicle with tinted windows.

As a result, Yasir died on the spot, while Mujib ur Rahman was critically injured and transferred to the Headquarters Hospital in Wana, where he succumbed to his injuries. Additionally, two passers-by, including Imran Khan, a youth councillor of the Awami National Party, were also injured in the firing.

The armed individuals managed to escape from the

scene after the incident. Locals transferred the injured to the Headquarters Hospital in Wana, where their condition is reported to be out of danger. No organization or individuals have claimed responsibility for the incident so far. There is considerable concern among people due to the continuous increase in targeted killings.

Meanwhile, a devastating bomb blast targeted Maulana Abdullah Nadeem, the vice Emir Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, at the Kaloocha location in Lower Waziristan. Although his vehicle was completely destroyed, he miraculously survived the attack.

This incident follows a similar targeted attack on Maulana Mirza Jan, the

Emir Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam in Lower South Waziristan, who was martyred before Eid ul Azha. The deliberate targeting of religious leaders suggests a sinister plot to destabilize the region, spread fear, and undermine the peace.

South Waziristan, once a calm and peaceful area, has witnessed a surge in terrorist activities, leaving the entire populace terrified. The authorities must take immediate and decisive action to ensure the safety and security of the people, bring the perpetrators to justice, and restore peace to the region. The government must also address the root causes of terrorism and work towards a comprehensive solution to end this senseless violence.

Holding of peaceful Muharram finalized

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The eternal sacrifices of the security forces and common people for maintaining lasting peace in the entire country including Kurram district are crystal clear and the whole nation recognizes their sacrifices.

All our institutions are constantly fighting for the establishment of durable peace, During Muharram the unity of the tribe for peace is commendable. These views were expressed by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 9 Division Kohat Major General Zulfikar Ali Bhatti while addressing the Tribal Jirga held in connection with Muharam ul Haram at Sadda Jirga Hall in Kurram District. On this occasion, Commander 73 Brigade Brigadier Shahzad Azim, Deputy Commissioner Karam Javedullah Mehsud, DPO Kurram Nisar Ahmed



Khan, Wing Commander 113 Wing Colonel Sohail and concerned Assistant Commissioners were also present.

Deputy Commissioner Kurram said that arrangements have been finalized for peaceful holding of Muharram and all the stakeholders have been taken into confidence in this regard.

GOC in his address said that all the institutions including the security forces are actively working against the miscreants and are trying to establish peace in the area. He specially mentioned the exemplary cooperation of the tribal of Kurram district for the establishment of peace. He

while describing the eternal sacrifices of the martyrs of Karbala as an excellent example for the Islamic Ummah said that we should also have to fight evil together in the same spirit and avoid any action that harms peace.

GOC categorically said that the miscreants wherever they are, will sternly be dealt indiscriminately with iron hands. On this occasion, the tribal elders also expressed their views in detail and assured their full cooperation for the peaceful conduct of Muharram. Meanwhile, a special session was also held with the local youth and students where they openly expressed their view point.

RDO & PCE holds consultation

F.P. Report

BUNER: To tackle the education crisis and the upcoming budget, the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and Rural Development Organization (RDO) was organized a consultation with key stakeholders regarding transformation in education through collective action and effective financing in Buner district.

Umar Farooq Deputy DEO disclosed that the government withdraws amount from the education budget for other schemes which should not be taken rather the budget should be spent

on education. He further said that education department had been released funds to all of schools through PTC.

Mian Moinuden district leader of PTI claimed he would raise all of issues with the assembly members and minister education the problems related to education. He assured joint efforts to solve the problems to the extent possible. Haji Rozi Khan Tehsil Chairman Daggar said that the government should keep a separate budget for the children who are out of school and at the same time provide more opportunities for girls' education. PTC member Shaukat Khan said that more funds should be

given to schools and PTC should be activated and schools should be made tax-free so that we can invest funds within schools.

Principal Sartaj said that the government should run various campaigns to bring out of school children to school so that more children can be brought inside the school. He suggested in this regard the government should also take help from the civil society. And at the same time, children of minorities and disadvantaged groups should be provided equal opportunities so that these children can also be given equal education.



Biden campaigns as Democrats discuss his candidacy

WASHINGTON: United States President Joe Biden is on a campaign trail in the critical swing state of Pennsylvania as he fights to save his endangered re-election effort following a June 27 disastrous debate performance against his rival Donald Trump. Biden, 81, has vowed to stay in the race and win the November 5 presidential election, despite growing calls from fellow Democrats to end his campaign.

Biden attended a predominantly Black Mount Airy Church of God in Christ in northwest Philadelphia, where he entered the gold-chandeliered sanctuary to applause and a cry of "Let him know we are with him!" Later in the day, he will travel to the nearby state capital, Harrisburg, for an ice cream social event with union members and local Democrats, his campaign said.

This is Biden's 10th visit to Pennsylvania during the 2024 election cycle. He spoke with the national co-chairs of his campaign, the White House said, without providing any details. In a taped interview with news anchor George Stephanopoulos, which aired, Biden said only the "Lord Almighty" could persuade him to drop out,

dismissing the prospect that Democratic leaders could join forces to try to talk him into standing down. Despite his performance, Biden's family has encouraged him to remain in the race. The president is struggling to put down a slow-boil uprising among some congressional Democrats and some influential donors who fear he lacks the capacity to defeat Trump in light of the debate. Pressure from the US Congress seems likely to ramp up in the coming days as lawmakers return to Washington from a holiday recess, and donors mull their willingness to keep funding his campaign.

Five US lawmakers have called for Biden to end his re-election bid, including Representative Angie Craig of Minnesota, the first Democratic member of the House of Representatives from a battleground district, with others reportedly poised to join in. "Given what I saw and heard from the President during last week's debate in Atlanta, coupled with the lack of a forceful response from the President himself following that debate, I do not believe that the President can effectively campaign and win against Donald Trump," Craig, a top 2024

target of House Republican efforts, posted on X. Two letters are circulating among House Democrats calling for Biden to step aside, House Democratic sources have said. US Senator Mark Warner of Virginia was contacting some fellow Democratic senators to invite them to a possible meeting on Monday to discuss Biden's campaign. Biden told reporters he had spoken with 20 congressional Democrats, who urged him to stay on, and said he knew of no senators ready to join Warner. The political crisis is also unfolding as Biden prepares to host dozens of world leaders at a high-stakes NATO summit in Washington on Tuesday and hold a rare solo news conference.

The trip to Pennsylvania is part of a July voter outreach blitz by the Democratic Party that includes a \$50m paid media campaign aimed at events such as the Olympic Games and travel by Biden, his wife, Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband to every battleground state. The campaign said it aims to have volunteers and staff knock on more than three million voters' doors in July and August. — Aljazeera

Iran detains an outspoken lawyer

DUBAI (AP): An outspoken Iranian lawyer who has publicly criticized how the government handled the 2022 protests over the death of Mahsa Amini has been arrested, state media reported. The unrest followed the death of the 22-year-old detained by the police for allegedly not properly wearing her mandatory hijab. The massive protests quickly escalated into calls to overthrow Iran's four-decade Islamic theocracy.

The judiciary's Mizan news agency said that Mohsen Borhani had been previously sentenced but did not give further details on his case or jail time. Borhani, also a university professor, became popular on social media for his critical views of the Iranian government during the 2022 demonstrations that shook the Islamic Republic and sparked a security crackdown that killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained. UN investigators said Iran was responsible for the physical violence that led to Amini's death. The lawyer's arrest came a day after reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian was elected to lead the country.

Pezeshkian promised to ease enforcement of the country's mandatory headscarf law and reach out to the West after years of sanctions and protests squeezing the Islamic Republic.

Texas braces for Hurricane Beryl

TEXAS (BBC): The US state of Texas is bracing for the arrival of storm Beryl, which has strengthened into a hurricane again, according to the National Hurricane Center. Forecasters say the storm could bring destructive winds, storm surges and up to 25cm (10 inches) of rain when it makes landfall early on Monday local time.

Some of the state's largest ports have closed in preparation, while residents have been warned of widespread power outages. Beryl caused at least 10 deaths in the Caribbean before being downgraded to a tropical storm as it hit Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. More than a million Texans were placed under a hurricane warning ahead of the storm's arrival. It is expected to make landfall between the cities of Galveston and Corpus Christi and could reach Category 2 level, meaning that it could sustain winds of up to 177km/h (110mph). The authorities say that even though it may not be as strong as it was in the Caribbean, it could still cause widespread power outages and disruption in Texas, as far inland as the city of Houston. The director of the US National Hurricane Center, Michael Brennan, has warned those living in Beryl's path to find a safe place to be through Monday "as hazardous conditions will persist even after the centre of Beryl moves through".

"There's a very considerable risk of flash flooding across the Texas Gulf Coast, eastern Texas, ArkTex [Arkansas-Texas] region. [Do not ignore this very serious storm," urged Acting Governor Dan Patrick. The ports of Corpus Christi, Houston, Galveston, Freeport and Texas City have all closed, meaning there could be a temporary halt to exports. All vessel movement and cargo operations have been restricted. Refugio County, north of Galveston, issued a mandatory evacuation - stating the limited capacity of emergency services staff, 4 July holiday traffic and the area's weakened infrastructure from Hurricane Harvey in 2017 as reasons. Nueces County, meanwhile, ordered the mandatory evacuation of visitors and strongly encouraged locals to leave as well. More than 2,000 emergency responders have been made ready to deal with Beryl's aftermath, Mr Patrick announced, including members of the Texas National Guard.

According to US forecaster AccuWeather, land-falling hurricanes of this kind are somewhat rare for Texas in July. Beryl is expected to move across America's central states, including Mississippi, later in the week. Hurricane Beryl has been an unprecedented storm.

Massive floods affect millions across South Asia

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): Massive floods have swept through swathes of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh in recent days, affecting millions while killing scores of people and animals. Large-scale rescue operations are underway, with authorities directing thousands to shelters while sending food and supplies to stranded families.

Major rivers including the Brahmaputra and the Koshi, which flow through several countries, have overflowed their banks due to heavy rain. Floods and landslides are not uncommon during South Asia's monsoon season, when it receives up to 90% of its annual rainfall. But experts say the issue has worsened in recent years due to climate change.

Over the weekend in Nepal, authorities said 14 people have died since Thursday, with key highways blocked and some bridges swept away by swollen rivers. Authorities estimate that this year's monsoon has killed more than 40 so far. They have urged residents in the south-east of the country to be on alert as the Koshi river, which flows through Nepal and India, is flowing above the danger level. "This is not new for us, but the timing is wrong," Kathmandu resident Rajkumar Bk told the Reuters news agency.

"The flooding triggered by heavy rains started early this year, in July. The water level has reached up to our knees. If the rainfall continues the same way then we will have to run for our lives." In the Indian state



of Assam, about 2.4 million have been affected by floods while 66 people have died since mid-May. Officials have warned of even more rain with water levels in the Brahmaputra expected to increase in the coming days. Roads and vast areas of farmland have been submerged along the banks of the Brahmaputra, which flows through parts of India and Bangladesh, and other rivers. Television pictures in recent days showed villagers salvaging their belongings and leaving their inundated homes by boat. Several bridges and roads have been washed away, disconnecting remote villages. Assam's Kaziranga nature reserve, home to nearly 2,200 one-horned rhinos, was also under water. Four rhinos and scores of deer and other animals have died so far. Experts have said it is one of the worst incidents of flooding in recent

years in terms of the number of animals killed. On Monday, officials closed some schools in the financial capital Mumbai as heavy rains overwhelmed some highways. In Bangladesh, authorities said two million people have been affected by floods with at least eight people dead. The overflowing Brahmaputra has inundated a quarter of the districts in the country. "We live with floods here. But this year the water was very high. In three days, the Brahmaputra rose by 6ft to 8ft (2m-2.5m)," Abdul Gafur, a local councillor in the district, told the AFP news agency. "We are trying to deliver food, especially rice and edible oil. But there is a drinking water crisis." The UN's World Meteorological Organization is predicting "above normal" rainfall for the South Asia monsoon season that is expected to last till September.

Factbox-Key figures to know in France's left-wing New Front bloc

PARIS (Reuters): France's left-wing New Popular Front (NFP), an alliance of parties hastily assembled after President Emmanuel Macron called a surprise snap parliamentary election, looked set to score a shock win in vote over the far right and the ruling centrists. If initial projections are confirmed, Macron will be required to name a prime minister from the bloc. The initial estimates are typically accurate.

The NFP - made up of the Communist Party, the hard left France Unbowled, the Green party and the Socialist Party - has not said who would be its pick for prime minister. The following are some of its best-known figures: Jean-Luc Melenchon, 72, has been a fixture in French left-wing politics for decades and

held ministerial posts in past governments, when he was a member of the Socialist Party. He ran for president in 2012, 2017 and 2022, improving his score each time. He came third in 2022, just behind far-right leader Marine Le Pen. Macron won that election.

A fiery orator, Melenchon is one of the most divisive figures in French politics, enthusing some voters while horrifying others with his unbrellaed tax-and-spend proposals, class war rhetoric and controversial foreign policy positions, especially on Gaza. Critics accuse him of antisemitism, which he denies. Tondelier, 37, grew up in Henin-Beaumont, a town in northern France that is well-known as a bastion of the far-right National Rally (RN) and its leader Le

Pen. Tondelier has a long record of opposing the RN. She was elected as an opposition member of the town's municipal council in 2014. She documented her experiences working under an RN mayor and what she described as the oppressive atmosphere generated by the far-right administration in a 2017 book entitled "News from the Front". Tondelier was also elected to a northern regional council in 2021, and she became leader of France's best-known ecologist party, the Greens, the following year.

Raphael Glucksmann, 44, headed the Socialist list of candidates in the European elections in early June. It obtained nearly 14% of the vote, just behind Macron's Together group. This was considered a sign of revival for a party that

governed France in past decades but had recently fallen into electoral oblivion. Glucksmann attended prestigious schools and had a career in journalism and broadcasting before branching out in a variety of directions, including being an adviser to then Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. He advocates strong European support for Ukraine in its resistance against Russia's invasion. Laurent Berger, 55, is a former head of one of France's main trade unions, the moderate CFDT. He has a track record of strong opposition to the RN. Berger has said he does not want to be prime minister, but others on the left have put his name forward, saying he could be a unifying figure and a popular alternative to Melenchon.

Barcelona residents protest against mass tourism

BARCELONA (AFP): Thousands of protesters marched in Barcelona to denounce mass tourism and its effect on Spain's most visited city, the latest in a series of similar marches in the country.

Under the slogan "Enough! Let's put limits on tourism", some 2,800 people -- according to police -- marched along a waterfront district of Barcelona to demand a new economic model that would reduce the millions of tourists that visit every year. "I have nothing against tourism, but here in Barcelona we are suffering from an excess of tourism that has made our city unliveable," said Jordi

Guiu, a 70-year-old sociologist.

With banners saying "Reduce tourism now!", the protesters chanted slogans such as "Tourists out of our neighbourhood", stopping in front of hotels to the surprise of visitors. Barcelona's rising cost of housing, up 68 percent in the past decade according to local authorities, is one of the main issues for the movement, along with the effects of tourism on local commerce and working conditions in the city of 1.6 million inhabitants. "Local shops are closing to make way for stores that do not serve the needs of neighbourhoods. People cannot afford their rents,"

said Isa Miralles, a 35-year-old musician who lives in the Barceloneta district. The northeastern coastal city, with internationally famous sites such as La Sagrada Família, received more than 12 million tourists last year, according to local authorities. To combat the "negative effects of mass tourism", the city council run by the Socialist Jaume Collboni announced 10 days ago that it was banning tourist apartment rentals -- there are now more than 10,000 -- by 2028 so that they can be put back on the local housing market. The announcement could lead to a legal battle and is opposed by an

association of tourist apartments who say it will just feed the black market. The Barcelona protests come after similar demonstrations in tourist hotspots such as Malaga, Palma de Mallorca and the Canary Islands. The second most visited country after France, Spain received 85 million foreign visitors in 2023, an increase of 18.7 percent from the previous year, according to the National Statistics Institute. The most visited region was Catalonia, whose capital is Barcelona, with 18 million, followed by the Balearic Islands (14.4 million) and the Canary Islands (13.9 million).

Koike wins a third four-year term as head of Tokyo

TOKYO (AP): Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike easily won a third four-year term as head of Japan's influential capital in a closely watched vote, the city's residents apparently happy with her governance that included providing childcare subsidies and holding the Olympics during the coronavirus pandemic.

The vote was also seen as a test for Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's governing party, which supports Koike, the first woman to lead the Tokyo city government. Tokyo, a city of 13.5 million people with outsized political and cultural power and a budget equaling some nations, is one of Japan's most influential political posts. A record 55 candidates challenged Koike, and one of the top contenders was also a woman - a liberal-leaning former lawmaker who uses only her first name, Renho, and was backed by opposition parties.

Minutes after exit polls projecting her victory, Koike showed up at her campaign headquarters in Tokyo and celebrated by thanking the voters who chose her. "I believe the voters gave me a mandate for my accomplishment in the past eight years," Koike said. She pledged to push for more reforms and support for Tokyo residents.

"I'm fully aware of my heavy responsibility," she said. "I will tackle my third term with all my body and soul."

A win by Koike is a relief for Kishida's conservative governing party, which she has long been affiliated with. Kishida's Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner, Komeito, unofficially backed her campaign. But in separate supplementary elections for Tokyo's metropolitan assembly that were eclipsed by the governor's vote, LDP lost in six of the eight districts where it fielded its own candidates, underscoring still harsh public response to the party's corruption scandal. Renho, running as an independent but supported by the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and the Japanese Communist Party, criticized Koike's ties with Kishida's party, which has been hit by a widespread slush fund scandal. A victory for Renho would have been a major setback for Kishida's chances in the party's leadership vote in September. LDP acting secretary general Tomomi Inada, in an interview with NHK television, welcomed Koike's victory as a "positive development" for the governing party, but stressed the need for the LDP to firmly push

its own reforms. While the two high-profile women gathered national attention, Shinji Ishimaru, a former mayor of Akitakata town in Hiroshima prefecture, was seen to have gained popularity among young voters. The main issues in the campaign included measures to improve the economy, disaster resilience for Tokyo and low birth numbers. When Japan's national fertility rate fell to a record low 1.2 babies per woman last year, Tokyo's 0.99 rate was the lowest for the country. Koike's policies focused on providing subsidies for married parents expecting babies and those raising children. Renho called for increased support for young people to address their concerns about jobs and financial stability, arguing that would help improve prospects for marrying and having families. Another focus of attention was a controversial redevelopment of Tokyo's beloved park area, Jingu Gaien, which Koike approved but later faced criticism over its lack of transparency and suspected environmental impact. The final vote count by the election administration commission showed Koike got more than 2.9 million votes, way ahead of Ishimaru in second with 1.66 million and Renho in third with 1.28 million.

The Frontier Post

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After victory, Labour faces bigger challenge

THEY call it the irony, and some others folly, of Britain's old-style first-past-the-post electoral post. The Labour Party had won a landslide majority of 412 seats out of 650 with a voting support of 34 per cent, while the Conservative Party suffered the most shameful defeat in decades with voter support base of 24 per cent.

The more ironical part is the fact that the smaller parties, with Liberal Democrats, the Greens and the far-right Reform, won 43 per cent of the votes for the least number of seats, with Liberal Democrats winning 77. There is also the fact that the poll verdict showed how diverse Britain is electorally, with South Asians and others, and women, winning more seats than ever before.

Despite the anomalies of number of seats won and lost in contrast to the voter base support, there is no question that the people of Britain wanted a change and they voted for it. Britain's new prime minister Keir Starmer does not have the luxury of relishing the sweet victory after Labour's stay in political wilderness for 14 years.

Starmer has led a different kind of Labour to power, not the Labour which unimaginatively stuck to its old beliefs in a welfare state. The key theme of Starmer and Labour is they would govern responsibly. There would be no financial recklessness. It can be said that Starmer is closer to the New Labour forged by Tony Blair in 1997. Starmer has steered Labour away from the party's traditional belligerence displayed by the earlier party leader, Jeremy Corbyn.

But it remains an uphill task for the Starmer government to pull Britain out of the economic woods.

Political observers feel that Liz Truss' short stint as prime minister and her disastrous budget proposals contributed to the economic woes of Britain and the Conservatives. Britain is still reeling under the cost of living crisis, and illegal immigrants do pose a challenge. The Conservative solution of shipping them to Rwanda might not be the solution, but it needs a proper response.

The newly-named Chancellor of Exchequer Rachel Reeves has her plate full as it were. She has to come up with a plan that helps the frayed sensibilities of ordinary Britons while at the same time putting the country on the path of economic recovery and growth. The extreme position of the Conservatives over Brexit might have to be reviewed, or a fresh round of negotiations begun with the European Union which will ease the strains of United Kingdom (UK)-European Union (EU) trade ties.

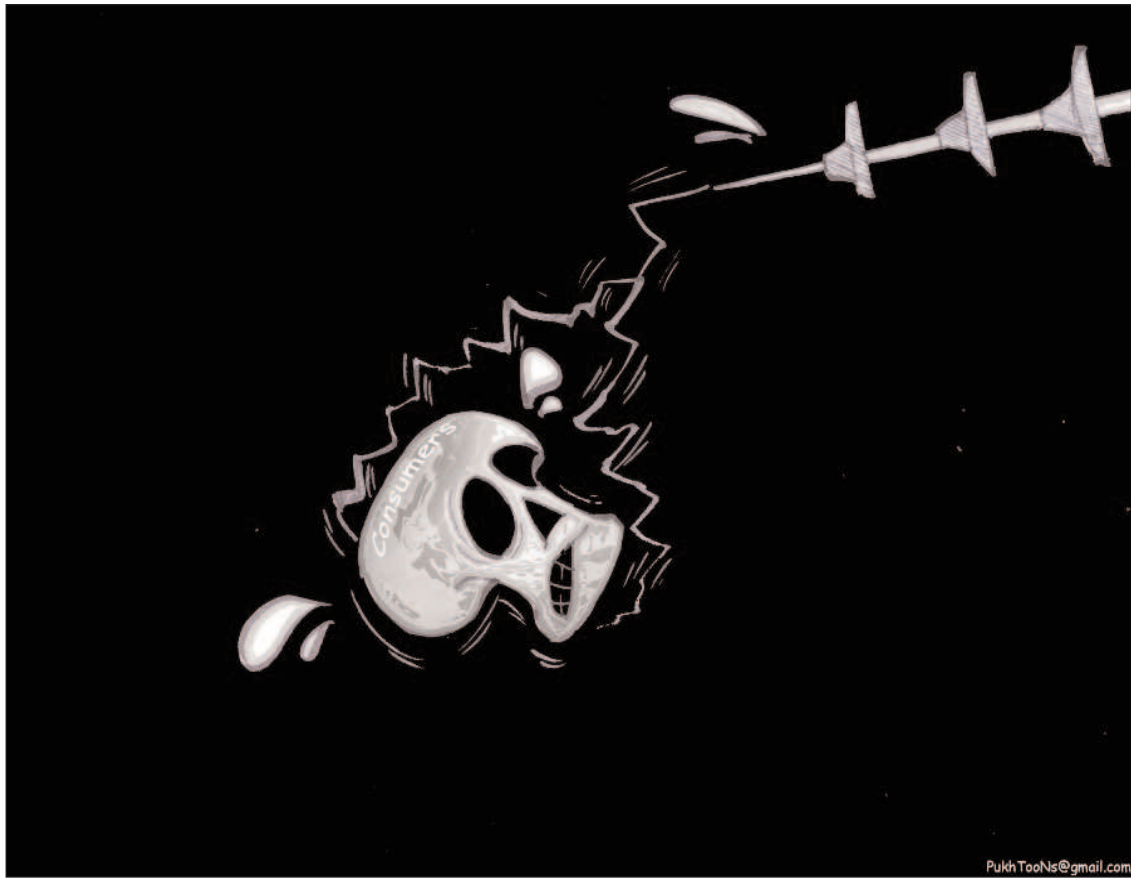
The next few months will be crucial for Starmer. He has to send out a positive message through his actions to the country as well as to Europe and others, that Britain intends to play a careful role. The Conservatives have been quite militant in their stance over Ukraine, and the Conservative prime ministers, Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak, were wearing the sentiment prominently on their sleeve. There is need for a nuanced stance on the issue as displayed by French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

While winning the election was an important task, and Starmer has accomplished it with enough push from the voter anger, the more important challenge is that of sorting out the economic mess that Britain is in.

Starmer presents the image of a sensible and pragmatic political leader, and people would expect him to take decisions which are measured. He seems to have a talented team to be able to handle the situation well. All that can be said is that he should make the best of what fortune has handed him on a plate.

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Arab Americans short of options in presidential election

Ray Hanania

ARAB Americans do not often have the opportunity to flex their voting muscle and influence elections on a national level, but they will in the presidential election this November.

The difference in the number of votes for former President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden in 2020 was extremely small in several swing states that just happen to have large Arab American populations. Biden defeated Trump in those states four years ago and now the incumbent needs to win them again. That gives Arab Americans clout, but this has been offset by rising antagonism against them over America's prejudicial support of Israel over all of the Arab world's interests.

Israel is an American political priority, mainly because its supporters have carefully cultivated sympathy in the mainstream news media, Hollywood movies, books and in politics.

Arabs have never come close to either competing with or challenging the pro-Israel dominance in the US. The country is even willing to compromise on its principles, laws and critical aspects of its constitution to silence and oppress Israel's critics.

But this year, the Arab American vote has become vital to the result of the election. It could determine which candidate, Biden or Trump, wins the key states that will determine the outcome of the election.

Let us understand the political candidates they will be voting for, as well as the forces Arab Americans face.

First of all, supporters of Israel have far more influence in US politics than Arab Americans. It's not an issue of "control," it is one of engagement. Pro-Israeli groups engage in politics more broadly and actively than Arabs, donating far more money and uniting behind a single cause — Israel.

On the other hand, many Arabs are wealthy but they are stingy with their money, especially when it comes to politics.

Their children pursue careers in medicine, engineering and business, with only a few straying into journalism. This means their voice is weak. Meanwhile, many supporters of Israel have pursued careers in journalism and have been very successful. That is significant because, in

America, the real power is founded in professional communications and the ability to manage perceptions.

The No. 1 priority for politicians is funding. For example, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee donates hundreds of millions of dollars to candidates who support its policies on Israel. Ahead of the November election, all 224 AIPAC-backed candidates — 90 Democrats and 134 Republicans —

While pro-Israeli organizations support both major parties, most Arab activists support the Democrats, naively believing the party is more supportive of their rights. Democrats might generally be more sympathetic to Palestinian rights issues than Republicans, for example, but most are not sympathetic enough to risk losing their reelection bid due to a challenge from AIPAC. Arabs are at a disadvantage in US politics. So, why would candidates not pander to the pro-Israel vote? Let us also look at the candidates. In American politics, when it comes to the Middle East, the issue is who supports Israel the strongest. Biden has always been a Zionist. He has declared it multiple times and that means he will forever side with Israel, even though he, like many Democrats, may have superficial differences with its leaders. Biden needs the Arab vote but he will always take it for granted.

won their primary races, beating "progressives" who spoke out for Palestinian rights. In contrast, there is no real Arab lobby, just small voices of influence.

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The problem for Biden is, of course, that the pro-Israel lobby plays a significant

once. Years ago, Shami told me that Trump understood the challenges facing Palestinians.

Trump's understanding of the Palestinian cause could have made a difference during his first term as president, but the Arab community, which aligned itself with the Democratic Party, opposed everything he did, forcing him deeper into Israel's pocket.

Trump pandered to the pro-Israel lobby to get elected because the Arab vote was so weak, disorganized and ineffective on a national level. And he won. Biden won in 2020 not because the Arabs supported him but because Trump's policies were divisive and petty and often unaccomplished.

Third-party candidates are an option, but not in terms of winning. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has shifted to the right when it comes to the Middle East, recognizing that the issue of Gaza is a political contest that cannot be won. So, he has been outspokenly pro-Israel. The fact that his father, Robert F. Kennedy, was murdered in 1968 by a crazed Palestinian, Sirhan Sirhan, is not a factor. Several years ago, his brother Chris Kennedy told me that the family never stereotyped the Palestinian people.

Dr. Jill Stein, another third-party candidate, is Jewish and is both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian. She is able to do what many Palestinians and Israelis seem incapable of doing: distinguishing between the Israeli government's policies and Israel, and between Hamas violence and Palestinian rights.

The political tables have turned, however, and now Biden is desperate for votes, especially in those swing states where he narrowly defeated Trump in 2020, such as Michigan, Arizona, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Georgia and Minnesota.

Many Arab Americans have rallied behind two movements: "#AbandonBiden" and "Arabs for Trump." They have rejected any outreach from Biden's emissaries to give the president a second chance.

Although this may result in Trump's reelection and some short-term concerns for Arab Americans, they will have a chance to lobby him and not refuse to meet with him, as they have done in the past. But Arabs can be emotional, so one never knows.

— Arab News

Hard work starts here for new UK PM Starmer

Chris Doyle

FOR a British political system that has been characterized for a decade by dysfunction and instability, last week's general election had an almost stupefying degree of predictability.

At no stage was a major Labour Party victory ever in doubt. Keir Starmer could have measured up for new curtains in 10 Downing Street a year ago. As it is, he entered that famous door on Friday with a mammoth majority of about 170.

One indication that he knew this was the absence of any vision for the future of Britain. Even key members of the Labour Party admit in private that they do not have an inkling of what Starmer's Britain will be like, how it will change.

What might be a safe analysis is that Starmer will take a very managerial approach to politics. He was late to politics. He understands the processes of government far better than those of Parliament and elections. He will concentrate on delivery and performance

Israel, although he has made explicit commitments on international law, particularly that Labour will respect the independence of the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court. What happens if the latter does issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Defense Minister Yoav Gallant? Will the government restrict arms sales to Israel? It will have to request the legal advice that the previous government claimed ruled out such a ban. Labour is committed to publishing such advice.

Starmer's position on Gaza alienated huge swathes of the population, not least the British Muslim community. He should attempt to win them back not with vague blandishments but solid ethical positions on Palestine and other issues.

As for the rest of the region, little has been said. Labour will need to boost the flagging British economy, so the party may not raise human rights issues as often as its supporters would

This is perhaps the major element of his appeal. After so much tumult, Starmer offers a reassuring hand. There will be no rash policies. Starmer will take a lawyerly approach to policy formulation, wanting to be convinced in detail of the merits of any case for change. In a world that all too often derides experts, he will depend on them. However, this will not set hearts racing. This is not an inspirational agenda. It is barely leftist either. Starmer has taken the party to the center and, on some issues, to the center-right.

rather than soundbites and slogans. He has made standards in public life a key feature, with an emphasis on country before party.

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However, this will not set hearts racing. This is not an inspirational agenda. It is barely leftist either. Starmer has taken the party to the center and, on some issues, to the center-right. His room for maneuver is tight given that he has refused to significantly raise taxes or borrow further, so his government will look for growth to help fund the UK's degraded public services, which require urgent attention.

Starmer has paid little attention to international affairs, but he has experience of dealing with other governments in his former roles. The core change will be that Labour will try to reembrace European partners, sending a clear message that the era of Europe-bashing, as epitomized by the Conservatives of the last decade, is over. Labour will also look to reassure the Biden administration of the enduring relationship, but will be casting a wary eye over the possibility of a Donald Trump victory in November.

As for the Middle East, many see the differences as marginal. The Conservative Party had an extreme anti-Palestinian approach and policy. The base of the Labour Party is extremely pro-Palestinian, but what about the leadership? Starmer will not be hostile to

like. Do not expect massive change at this juncture.

What is the future for the Conservative Party after not getting close to challenging its opponents? This traditional party of government imploded, winning just 121 seats, fewer than ever before. The heart of the party was ripped out by divisions, failures and recriminations. It could not rally around the uninspiring Rishi Sunak. The leadership war that is to follow may be more akin to a bloodbath.

The party could head to the far right and into the embrace of Nigel Farage, who now heads his Reform UK party in Parliament with five seats. That number is hardly earth-shattering, but the party received an alarming 14 percent of the vote. Some forecast that, within a few years, Farage will launch a takeover of the Conservative Party. Immigration remains a touchstone issue that Reform profits from and on which Labour has few answers. The "deport immigrants to Rwanda" gimmick has been jettisoned, but what will take its place?

The days of Muslim-bashing of the last government should be over. Labour should try to repair the damage. The Conservative Party has to reevaluate how it engages with Muslims, as well as non-white ethnic communities.

Starmer has an opportunity to help the country move on from the last 14 years. Effective government that is reconnected to the electorate and embedded in principled decision-making is vital if his administration is to build belief in Britain that a Labour government is something to be excited about. That did not happen in this election — it was all about the Conservatives facing a near-wipeout.

SCO's growing appeal exemplifies new type of multilateral ties

IN summarizing President Xi Jinping's trip to Central Asia last week, including attendance at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in the Kazakh capital of Astana, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the visit has amplified the Shanghai Spirit, deepened traditional friendships and opened a new vision for building a community with a shared future.

The SCO was not formed to, nor does it now, threaten the "US-led democratic order" as some Western media out-

lets' reports on the Astana gathering suggested.

While the organization's growing size has expanded its geographical scope, and its remit has become more ambitious than countering terrorism, extremism and separatism, it remains a development partnership mechanism.

Although covering international news naturally becomes much easier through seeing the world as black or white, that tends to oversimplify the otherwise complicated and fast-changing situations of global affairs.

That some allies of the United States, including India, Türkiye, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, participated in the SCO summit as an SCO member and dialogue partners respectively, belies the threat-to-the-West rhetoric.

Unlike the NATO summit to be held in Washington, which, as the same group of Western media report, will uphold "Western values", the SCO summit upholds the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for

Li Yang diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development.

It is absurd that these same Western media outlets mocked the UN chief's presence at the SCO summit as a move "to position the UN as an inclusive organization that's talking to all the big clubs" as if he should have naturally boycotted the Astana gathering to give legitimacy to the exclusiveness of the US club.

It is notable that some bilateral and multilateral meetings between leaders were held on the sidelines of the SCO

summit producing many positive results that might advance the solutions to some regional and global hotspot issues.

Those claiming that the SCO summit is merely a "talk shop" rather than "a platform where collective decisions are made, implemented and have an impact" should be reminded that were it not for the SCO's deepening of pragmatic cooperation, Central Asia would not have enjoyed peace and stability over the past 23 years.

They should bear in mind that over the past

23 years, the democracy experiment of the US in Afghanistan has been an abject failure. It is also the practical security cooperation of the SCO members that has prevented Central Asia from becoming another Middle East.

Since it was founded in 2001, the SCO has become a vital demonstration of a new type of international relations. Instead of clinging to a zero-sum mentality of damaging division, the SCO upholds the Shanghai Spirit as the means for common security, stability and development.

The nightmare of Gaza

I had my first nightmare about Gaza six weeks after the end of my first deployment with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in February. I dreamed I was in the OCHA guesthouse: the walls were crumbling before my eyes from constant explosions. The smoke from the blasts was filling my throat as I shouted into my laptop microphone during a coordination meeting. We all went about our business as if nothing was happening.

When I woke up, I felt as if smoke was still suffocating me. I felt powerless, angry and guilty for leaving Gaza. There have been many more nightmares since then, but none has come even close to the harrowing reality that people in Gaza are living in.

Since October 7, more than 38,000 people have been killed in Gaza and more than 87,000 wounded, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health. Many have suffered life-altering injuries. Some 1.9 million people – or 90 percent of the population – have been displaced; many have had to move multiple times, as there is no safe place in Gaza.

Using the term “living conditions” to describe the dreadful circumstances Palestinians in Gaza face seems absurd. People are not “living”, they are barely surviving. Many are forced to reside in crammed shelters in ever-shrinking spaces where they are allowed to seek refuge. I have seen tents where as many as five families are staying together under sheets of plastic or ripped blankets propped up by a rickety frame.

The vast majority of people in Gaza lack the very basics of life, including food, water, medicine and hygiene supplies. Digging latrine pits near one's tent has

become increasingly common to avoid having to search and wait for communal latrines that are now extremely rare.

With the healthcare system decimated, diseases, including Hepatitis A, have reached unprecedented levels. The few remaining hospitals, only partially functional, are receiving trauma patients on a daily basis. Every hospital I visited was overwhelmed with wounded people, many of them children, with horrific injuries, including missing limbs.

When I came back for my second deployment in April, the scale of destruction appeared to have doubled since the last time I was there. I found a virtually levelled Khan Younis and more

Olga Cherevko

During this war, Khaled has been displaced seven times so far. But like most people in Gaza, he refuses to feel sorry for himself. “I want to be the chef of Gaza,” he told me. “To make sure no one goes hungry.”

He was well on his way to achieving this dream, having set up a community kitchen in Khan Younis that fed thousands of people every day when an Israeli bomb wiped it out in April. I had just returned from a mission in north Gaza when Khaled texted me about what happened and sent me a video of the area that had been hit. A little girl, heavily bleeding and covered in debris and dust, was being car-

others injured. Many more will carry the physical and mental scars of conflict with them forever.

In al-Mawasi, where conditions in shelters are deplorable, I met little Sama while she was looking for drinkable water for her family. The search for water – just like the search for food – is a Herculean task. There is simply not enough.

At least half of Gaza's water and sanitation facilities have been damaged or destroyed during the conflict and crippling fuel shortages have put most wells out of operation. People must walk multiple kilometres to reach a distribution point and wait countless hours under the scorching sun to fill a container with

if to shield him from harm. He held their few belongings in the other, with Sama walking a few steps ahead, carrying a jerrycan.

Newly displaced from Rafah, they had been searching for a place to stay in al-Mawasi for hours, under the scorching sun. Turned away from two shelters because there was simply no space left, they continued onward. Where would they sleep tonight? Would they sleep at all? Would there be anything to eat? What would tomorrow bring? Would there be a tomorrow? No one seemed to know.

After the Israeli military issued new evacuation orders in the south in May, the route that runs through the middle of most of the Gaza Strip – Salah al-Din Street – became a sea of people on the move. They travelled in cars, on donkey carts or simply on foot. In just a week, the streets of Rafah emptied, just as quickly as they had filled up during the early weeks of the war, after the first evacuation orders pushed people south.

I left Gaza at the end of May, full of anguish and crippling guilt. Since then, I have been obsessively checking my phone, fearing the worst every time my texts to Gaza do not go through.

Today, Gaza's fate, and that of its people, is more uncertain than ever. Yet aid workers are still working against all odds, day after day, amid impossible conditions. And when the second tick in my WhatsApp message finally appears, my dear friend Khaled reassures me that his work will continue, too. “I will be fine,” he says. “And I will feed people. We will build our country after the war ends.”

His words remind me of the dream I had: All around us, Gaza is burning. But we keep going – because it's the only choice we have.

— Aljazeera

Pezeshkian may not end Iran's Western-driven isolation

Michael Jansen

cials. At the apex of the structure is the supreme leader who is the ultimate decision maker.

Turnout in the second round of the presidential poll was boosted to 49.8 per cent as Pezeshkian's candidacy energised voters in both camps. This was the highest level of participation since the 2021 presidential poll which was won by ultra-conservative Raisi in an election rigged in his favour by the unelected conservative Guardian Council, a body which vets candidates for office.

Pezeshkian, 69, is a heart surgeon and member of parliament for Tabriz since May 2008. He served as First Deputy Speaker from 2016 to

not been charged with corruption which is rampant in Iran.

Since the 1979 revolution against the Shah, Iran's presidency has shifted back and forth between conservatives and moderates/reformists. Following the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Iranian Islamic Republic, conservative President Khamenei (1981-89) became the country's supreme leader. He was followed by moderate Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-97) who sought reconciliation with the vets candidates for office. Khatami (1997-2005) who promoted a “Dialogue of Civilisations.” Both were rebuffed by the US and its Western allies and were

The existing rift between the reactionary clerics and young Iranians who demand freedom from interference on their personal lives and inter-actions widened dramatically in 2022 after Mahsa Amini, 23, was arrested by morality police for “bad hijab” and died in custody. In response, country-wide protests erupted under the slogan, “Woman, Life, Freedom” and were joined by tens of thousands of Iranians demonstrating against inflation, unemployment, and corruption. On the foreign front, Pezeshkian has promised to cultivate better relations with the West and seek relief from sanctions which have crippled Iran's economy. To achieve this objective, he will have to push both clerics in Tehran and politicians in Washington to reopen talks on the 2015 agreement between Iran and the US, UK, France, Germany, China and Russia. The deal limited Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief. Donald Trump's withdrawal from the deal in 2018 led to Tehran breaching its commitments by enriching excessive amounts of uranium to a higher level of purity than permitted. Although US President Joe Biden campaigned on a promise to return to the deal, he failed to honour this commitment and is unlikely to do so before the November presidential election.

2020 and was Minister of Health and Medical Education between 2001 and 2005 in the government of reformist President Mohammad Khatami. Pezeshkian has openly criticised the government's handling of periodic bouts of mass protest. Khatami, moderate President Hassan Rouhani, and ex-Foreign Minister Javad Zarif backed Pezeshkian's bid for the presidency.

Born to an Iranian Azeri father and Iranian Kurdish mother, Pezeshkian also had the support of those two minority communities. While serving in the military, he decided to study medicine. After becoming a general practitioner, he was appointed to deploy and accompany medical teams to the front lines during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88).

Once the war ended he continued training in general and heart surgery. Following the deaths of his gynaecologist wife and one child in a 1993 car accident, he raised his two sons and daughter. He and his family have

succeeded by populist hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-13). Reformist Rouhani (2013-21) concluded the nuclear deal and was followed by hardliner Raisi (August 2021-May 2024). Iran has longstanding relations with the UAE and reconciled with Saudi Arabia in March 2023, but Pezeshkian is unlikely to end Iran's Western-driven isolation and ostracism. This began with the 1979 ouster of the West's ally, the Shah, and the Iranian students' invasion of the US embassy in Tehran where they held 53 diplomats and staff hostage for 444 days.

Since then, the US and its subservient Western allies have remained hostile and blame Iran rather than Israel for the extreme violence infecting this region. Israel's ongoing nine-month war on Gaza has deepened US and Western animosity towards Iran as it supports Palestine's Hamas and Lebanon's Hizbollah which resist Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory.

Why Netanyahu's US politicking will fail

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

MANY political analysts believe that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is buying time in Gaza and Lebanon in the hope that Donald Trump returns to the White House following November's US presidential election. Whether this is the case or not, a victorious Trump would be unlikely, this time around, to influence the outcomes of the war or to alter Israel's fate.

US foreign policy seems to be ruled by two different outlooks: one dedicated to the whole world and another only to Israel. The first is driven by the famous and oft-repeated quote by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that “America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests.” Israel, however, remains the exception and the ongoing Israeli war on Gaza has again demonstrated the truth of this claim.

Though Washington fully shares Israel's war objectives, it fundamentally disagrees with the concept of the long war and “total victory,” as championed by Netanyahu. The protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq taught the Americans that neither the longevity of wars nor the lofty, unrealistic

expectations alter inevitable outcomes. In fact, many US officials, military generals and mainstream analysts have tried to warn Netanyahu, but to no avail.

Destabilizing the Middle East at this specific historical juncture is simply bad for the US. It comes at a time when Ukraine is suffering a serious weapons shortage, thus territorial losses, and when the US and its European allies are struggling under the weight of economic and political crises.

Since US-Israeli relations are governed according to a unique foreign policy paradigm, the Biden administration continues to support Israel in every possible way so that it may carry on with a losing war. The war is, of course, happening at the expense of the more than 125,000 Palestinians who have thus far been killed or wounded due to Israeli strikes, shelling and mass executions. Those dying from famine or disease are yet to be fully accounted for.

Washington is not perturbed by the Gaza genocide itself, but by the impact of the war on US plans in the Middle East and the

future of its forces in Iraq and Syria. It is also concerned about its geostrategic sway in the region due to the unprecedented instability of the Red Sea.

Yet, President Joe Biden continues to arm Israel and provide a safety net for its dwindling economy. In April, Biden signed off legislation to provide \$26.3 billion in assistance to Israel.

Moreover, massive shipments of weapons continue to flow unhindered. These explosives are not only destroying the whole of Gaza, but also any chance that the US could ever regain any degree of credibility in the Middle East. Worse, the US' blind support for Israel has also shaken Washington's position internationally.

So, what could Trump do that Biden has not?

Trump's politics are unabashedly Machiavellian. During his term in office between 2017 and 2021, he served the role of the American genie, granting Israel's every wish, even though all such demands were flagrant violations of international law. Trump's pro-Israel policies included the recognition of all of Jerusalem as Israel's capital,

the annexation of the Golan Heights and the recognition of all illegal Israeli Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank.

But Netanyahu is also Machiavellian, a fact that irked Trump following his humiliating exit from the White House. “I haven't spoken to him since,” Trump said in an interview in December 2021.

Now, however, both sides are trying to rekindle their love affair. The Republican presidential candidate must be pleased with Netanyahu's public criticism of the Biden administration. In return, Trump is ready to “finish the job,” as he stated in the first presidential debate last month.

However, Trump's return to the White House would do nothing to change Israel's misfortunes since Oct. 7, because Israel's problems do not originate in Washington.

Israel's crisis is multifaceted. It is unable to win the war in Gaza, despite the mass tragedy and destruction it has created there. It is also failing to change the rules of engagement in Lebanon due to the strength of its enemies — and the fact that its military is

AS demonstrated by the late Robert Lucas, founding father of endogenous economic growth theory, modern economies thrive on significant investments in human capital through their education systems. Yet domestically produced talent alone is not enough.

What truly supercharges a country's innovation and sustained economic growth is the influx of international talent. While some speculate that artificial intelligence may eventually automate scientific progress, it's crucial to remember that AI's advancements depend on the amount of data, computational power and, most importantly, computer scientists — that is, human talent.

The United States remains unrivaled in attracting smart and ambitious scientists, entrepreneurs, managers and artists who drive innovation

and cause disruptions. Consider Steve Jobs, the son of a Syrian immigrant, or Elon Musk and Jensen Huang, who too are immigrants to the US, and all the groundbreaking innovations and immense value their entrepreneurship has unleashed. As Japanese-American nuclear physicist Michio Kaku said, the secret weapon of the US is the H1B visa, the vehicle that allows smart talent to stay and flourish in the country.

Unlike those, like for instance Stanford University historian Niall Ferguson, who argue that China and the US are already engaged in a new Cold War and that the US is teetering on the brink of domestic disintegration, a more nuanced evaluation of the current “major country competition” would view China and the US as two superpowers with formidable domestic strengths

engaged in a “long twilight struggle”. The socioeconomic system capable of out-innovating the other will gain a decisive long-term advantage.

Enter China and President Xi Jinping's concept of “new quality productive forces”. This term has become ubiquitous, featuring prominently in a plethora of the Communist Party of China's publications and Xi's recent signed article in the leading Party journal Qiu Shi (Seeking Truth). And the 20th Plenary Session of the Third CPC Central Committee scheduled for mid-July is expected to shed more light on the operationalization of new quality productive forces.

But the concept didn't appear out of thin air. It is rooted in a nationwide dialogue recognizing the current era as the threshold of a technological industrial revolution.

Vasilis Trigkas

In May 2016, the State Council, China's Cabinet, and the CPC Central Committee released the Innovation-Driven Development Strategy. “National prosperity”, the authors said, “springs from strength in innovation, and national misfortune follows from weakness in innovation.” They acknowledged that while China has made significant economic achievements during the four decades of reform and opening-up, “traditional development drivers are growing progressively weaker, and the expansive growth mode is difficult to sustain.”

An innovation-driven approach is now essential to creating new engines of development and fostering new economic growth nodes. The concept of new quality productive forces is

thus directly tied to this process of China cultivating new sources of growth. Indeed, this term may already have entered the lexicon of Chinese officials as a cornerstone of the top leader's strategic vision.

Yet innovation cannot be mandated simply by decree. Calling for the need for innovation and upholding new quality productive forces is one thing, and getting a complex socioeconomic system to deliver and expand the technology frontier is quite another. While general conditions such as property rights, rule of law, political stability and security are necessary, the key factor fueling innovation-driven growth remains human talent. Economists use the more technical term human capital and define this as the accumulated knowledge in peo-

ple's minds. China is poised for a meteoric rise as far as its domestic human capital is concerned, with the number of college-educated members in the workforce continuing to grow even as the overall population declines. However, domestic human talent alone is not enough to make China a more competitive innovator than the US. China has a population of over 1.4 billion people, but the US attracts talent from across the world, tapping into a potential pool of 8.1 billion people. The key idea here is that a person is more productive when surrounded by others with high levels of human talent. In essence, it's the aggregate stock that matters. As such, China needs to double down on openness and attract as much global talent as possible. This will require funding scholarships to lure college graduates, carrying out immigration

reforms to make it easier for graduates of leading global universities to obtain visas and work permits (akin to “high-potential individual programs” in other countries). Essentially, China needs nationwide mass mobilization to become a globally competitive human talent hub by creating conditions that will prompt high-potential individuals to choose to live and work, and flourish in China as global citizens. China needs not fear foreign talent because it can assimilate it effectively.

Xunzi, the Confucian philosopher during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), stated that talent is the source of national power. Echoing this ancient wisdom, Yan Xuetong, the founder of the “Tsinghua School of Thought” in international relations, said that if “in the agricultural era of two thousand years ago, scholars

recognized that the success or failure of the rise of a great state was determined by human talent, then, two thousand years later, the economic development of today's knowledge economy is also determined by human talent”. Xunzi's insight is timeless: the new quality productive forces will demand an abundance of talent. Even a staunch anti-globalizer like former US President Donald Trump recently promoted the idea that foreign graduates of leading U.S. universities should automatically be granted a green card. Trump seems to understand the significance of talent for national power. The country that can create the right domestic conditions to attract global talent will control the strategic commanding heights in building a globally competitive technological innovation ecosystem, and race ahead of its competitors.



PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 353 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 353.41 points, a positive change of 0.44 percent, closing at 80,566.21 points against 80,212.79 points on the last working day.

A total of 261,649,614 shares were traded during the day as compared to 448,981,017 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 13.024 billion against Rs 18.995 billion on the last trading day.

Around 427 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 216 of them recorded gains and 158 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 53 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hum Network with 20,667,563 shares at Rs 11.36 per

share, National BankXD with 19,555,510 shares at Rs 50.92 per share and Bank of Punjab with 17,587,329 shares at Rs5.79 per share.

Sazgar Engineering Works Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 83.98 per share price, closing at Rs 998.89, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Hotels Developers Limited with a Rs 57.66 rise in its per share price to Rs 664.60.

Philips Morris (Pakistan) Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 61.71 per share closing at Rs 617.48, followed by Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with a Rs 27.71 decline to close at Rs 1,300.00.

Rupee sheds 13 paise against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee witnessed a devaluation of 13 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on

Monday and closed at Rs 278.50 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.37.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 279.9 and Rs 280.65 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 32 paise to close at Rs 301.75 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.43, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.73, whereas an increase of Rs 1.15 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 356.87 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 355.72.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased

by 04 paise each to close at Rs 75.82 and Rs 74.24 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs1,300 per tola to Rs245,100

The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,300 and was sold at Rs.245,100 on Monday against its sale at Rs.246,400 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,113 to Rs.210,134 from Rs. 211,247 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.192,622 from Rs. 193,644, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,900 and Rs.2,486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$12 to \$2,376 from \$2,388, the Association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with CEO of K-Electric Syed Moonis Abdullah Alvi and other executives.

OGDCL optimizes production at Kunnar-11 Well

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Monday announced the successful revitalization of the Kunnar-11 well, located in Hyderabad, Sindh. Utilizing advanced production optimization techniques, the well is now producing 960 barrels of oil per day.

The production optimization drive underscores OGDCL's commitment to enhancing oil production through modern recovery methods. The Kunnar-11 well, part of the OGDCL Kunnar Oil Field, is situated within the Kunnar Mining Lease Area, where OGDCL holds 100% working interest. This initiative highlights the company's commitment to optimizing production and demonstrates the effectiveness of modern recovery techniques in rejuvenating mature wells.

Moreover, the production optimization from the Kunnar-11 well is projected to result in annual foreign exchange savings of approximately \$ 30.19 million (PKR 8.45 billion) as import substitution for the country. OGDCL is committed to exploring and implementing advanced technologies to optimize production and ensure a reliable supply of energy resources to meet the growing demands of the nation.

SCL, since 1967 is into the business of manufacturing and distribution of PepsiCo products across Pakistan.

PLGMEA hosts reception

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik attended a ceremony organized by the Pakistan Leather Garments Manufacturing and Export Association (PLGMEA) for the newly elected chairman and vice chairman of Sialkot International Airport Limited.

Addressing the participants, SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik congratulated newly elected SIAL Chairman Hassan Ali Bhatti and Vice Chairman Faraz Akram Awan.

The SIAL chairman and vice chairman expressed their commitment to elevate the standards of Sialkot International Airport. "We are honored to take on these roles and are dedicated to building on the strong foundation laid by our predecessors. Our focus will be on enhancing operational efficiency, expanding our services, and ensuring the highest levels of safety and security for all our stakeholders," they said.

Boeing said Monday it had reached a deal with the US Department of Justice over two fatal 737 MAX crashes, which court papers show would see the aviation giant plead guilty to fraud.

The agreement comes after prosecutors concluded Boeing flouted an earlier settlement addressing the disasters, in which 346 people were killed in Ethiopia and Indonesia more than five years ago.

"We have reached an agreement in principle on terms of a resolution with the Justice Department, subject to the memorialization and approval of specific terms," Boeing told AFP in a statement.

Court papers filed in Texas on Sunday said the company had agreed to plead guilty to "conspiracy to defraud the United States" during the certification of MAX airplanes.

Boeing will be fined under the deal and must invest a minimum of \$455 million in "compliance and safety programs", while compensation for families will be determined by the court.

Boeing's latest legal predicament was triggered by a DoJ determination in mid-May that the company ignored a 2021 deferred prosecution agreement by not meeting requirements to improve its compliance and ethics program after the MAX crashes.

Families of MAX victims were "highly disappointed" by the deal reached between Boeing and the DoJ, an attorney at Clifford Law representing them said.

"Much more evidence has been presented over the last five years that demonstrates that the culture of Boeing putting profits over safety hasn't changed. This plea agreement only furthers that skewed corporate objective," senior partner Robert A. Clifford said in a statement.

The families will ask the court to reject the plea deal at an upcoming hearing, according to an opposition

Minister assures KE of resolving delayed payment issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday assured K-Electric of addressing its matters related to delayed payments.

According to press release issued by the finance ministry, the minister was talking to delegation of K-Electric that called on him here. The delegation members included

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) K-Electric Syed Moonis Abdullah Alvi, CFO KE Muhammad Aamir Ghaziani and Chief Regulatory Affairs Muhammad Imran Qureshi.

The minister asked the KE team to focus on improving service delivery in Karachi and to expedite its plan for adding cheaper generation capacity so that the cost of electricity could be brought down.

Earlier, the KE representatives stated that the agreement signed between the government and KE earlier this year had addressed a number of issues and KE was now vigorously working on implementing the new generation projects to improve its electricity mix.

The delegation raised the issue of delayed payments of KE's consumer bills collected through the post office.

CCP Green-lit Merger of SCL in JKSM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a Scheme of Arrangement for the merger of M/s. Shamim & Company (Pvt.) Ltd with M/s. JK Sugar Mills (Pvt.) Ltd.

JKSM is a private limited company with the business of production and sale of sugar or related products in Pakistan.

JKSM primarily produces refined white sugar, along with three by-products namely, molasses, bagasse, and mud.

SCL, since 1967 is into the business of manufacturing and distribution of PepsiCo products across Pakistan.

The Phase-I competition assessment by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) identified two relevant markets namely, 'Sugar and by-products' and 'Non-alcoholic beverages'. As per the Scheme of Arrangement, the transaction involves merger of SCL with in JKSM.

Moreover post-transaction, SCL would be dissolved and JKSM would be the surviving entity where the Board of Directors of JKSM will continue to serve as directors of the merged entity.

The assessment further confirmed that post-transaction, SCL's market shares in 'Non-alcoholic beverages' will remain unchanged posing no threat for creation of dominance by JKSM.

The proposed transaction would result in benefits in saving costs through streamlining procedures and reduction in overhead and working expenses. There will be an increase in efficiency after the unified control.

Improvement in the operations shall ultimately benefit shareholders, employees, customers and others generally.

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Boeing, DoJ reach deal over MAX crashes case

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The families will ask the court to reject the plea deal at an upcoming hearing, according to an opposition

filed by their legal team.

The original DPA was announced in January 2021, over charges that Boeing knowingly defrauded the Federal Aviation Administration during the certification of the MAX.

The agreement required Boeing to pay \$2.5 billion in fines and restitution in exchange for immunity from criminal prosecution.

A three-year probationary period was set to expire this year. But in January, Boeing was plunged back into crisis mode when a 737 MAX flown by Alaska Airlines was forced to make an emergency landing after a fuselage panel blew out mid-flight.

In a May 14 letter to the US court, DoJ officials said that Boeing breached its obligations under the DPA by "failing to design, implement, and enforce a compliance and ethics program to prevent and detect violations of the United States fraud laws throughout its operations."

Seminar on 'deforestation impact on Pakistan' organized

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq has said that comparing deforestation rate of Pakistan with the world every year, nearly 10 million hectares of forests are deforested worldwide, equal to the area of Portugal.

Addressing a seminar on "Hazardous impact of growing deforestation in Pakistan" here, he said around half of this high deforestation was counter-balanced by re-growing of forests that means half of green gold was lost every year.

Declaring over population, poverty and unnecessary trees logging were one of the major causes of deforestation in developing

countries including Pakistan, he said that Pakistan's population was only 37 million in 1947 which soared to a record 241 million last year, if continued with such pace, will result vanishing of the green gold, wildlife and bees population.

In such a grim scenario, the challenges of food security would be further aggravated for countries like Pakistan and people would be exposed to hunger and starvation.

He said about 60 percent of forests were being used as firewood in the country, 25 percent for furniture and 15 percent of trees are being lost due to urbanization and community-driven demands.

"The deforestation was a

national challenge and there was a need to impose a 'green emergency' to conserve and protect the green gold by looking above party politics." He also suggested an agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan to control the smuggling of timber.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said that wood demand also increases manifolds due to shortage of natural gas, coal and high prices of LPG cylinders especially in KPK and Gilgit regions.

He said deforestation was a major reason for rising of temperature and climate change. According to National Forest Policy 2015, Pakistan's total forest-covered area is five percent and the country was losing about 27,000

hectares of forests per year, mainly occurring in private and community-owned natural forests.

He said as per national policy forest resources in all provinces, especially in KPK and Gilgit Baltistan are under tremendous pressure from timber mafia, particularly in the communal lands, shamalat, guzara, and privately owned forests.

Adversely impacted agriculture yield and quantity of water at outlets due to fast melting of glaciers due to rising temperature, the policy said that deforestation in watershed areas can trigger land degradation, loss of biodiversity and marine life besides making negative effects on wildlife and aquatic resources, he concluded.

Ensuring uninterrupted power supply during Muharram

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A meeting was held between delegations of the central organization Azza Anjuman Haidari Kadamgah Maula Ali, the registered organization Azza, and HESCO Chief Operating Officer Zulfiqar Ali Memon to ensure the uninterrupted supply of electricity during Muharram.

The HESCO administration has made special arrangements during Muharram, including the formation of mobile teams equipped with complete T&P to ensure continuous electricity supply during the days of mourning.

HESCO has arranged for continuous electricity supply from 7 PM to 5 AM across 171 feeders in Hyderabad during Muharram, with 65 of these feeders located in Hyderabad city and Mobile teams have been formed under emergency protocols to ensure immediate response to any technical issues. These teams, led by Chief Operating Officer Riyaz Ahmad Pathan, will be available 24/7, especially around the crossings of Azadari processions.

The meeting included key HESCO officials and representatives from



mourning organizations, including In-charge PDC Ghulam Sarwar Unar, Exen Operation Division Vehicle Accounts Syed Aqib Abbas Shah, Deputy Manager (PR) Muhammad Sadiq Kubar, and officials from Anjuman Haidari and Azza (Registered) District Hyderabad. A control room has been set up at HESCO headquarters to monitor and address any technical issues promptly.

Exen Latifabad, Ghulam Farooq Tunio, Exen Latif II Syed Mukhtiar Shah, Exen Ghazi Syed Aqib Abbas

Shah, and Exen Phuleli Salahuddin have been instructed to visit all Imambarghahs in Hyderabad, check for electricity-related issues, and resolve them immediately while staying in touch with Anjuman officials to support continuous electricity supply, it has been suggested that markets close early during Muharram and that lights on billboards and signboards be switched off.

All line staff holidays have been canceled during the mourning days of Muharram, and emergency

measures have been implemented to ensure full availability.

HESCO is responsible for both electricity transmission and bill collection. Consumers are requested to pay their HESCO dues promptly, use electricity legally, and switch to energy savers instead of ordinary bulbs.

HESCO is committed to ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted electricity supply during the holy month of Muharram, and we appreciate the cooperation of all concerned parties.

European stocks firm, euro down after French election

LONDON (AFP/APP): Europe's main equity markets rebounded from initial losses but the euro fell as investors digested snap French elections in which a hung parliament appeared the likeliest outcome.

In France, the left was set to emerge as the biggest group in a new parliament, beating out a resurgent far-right in a vote called by President Emmanuel Macron three years ahead of schedule.

Macron's centrist alliance will have fewer seats in parliament, but held up better than expected.

The outcome, in which no bloc is expected to have an outright majority, has left the country in a "thick fog" of uncertainty, according to one pollster, with the euro dropping slightly.

European equities swiftly turned positive on investor relief that Marine Le Pen far-right National Rally (RN) had suffered a stinging defeat.

"European stocks have recovered from earlier losses as investors recover from the shock of the French election result," City Index analyst Fiona Cincotta told AFP.

"Of course, there are

concerns over a left-wing alliance, but this is a preferred result to a right-wing win that the market had been dreading."

Ahead of the vote, investors voiced concern about high-spending pledges by the far-right.

The left-wing New Popular Front and its allies won 187 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, Macron's centrist group won 159 seats and the National Rally and its allies won 142 seats, interior ministry figures show.

All three blocs fell far short of the 289 seats required for a clear majority.

Rabobank analyst Jane Foley sounded a note of caution regarding the impact on the French stock market.

"There is also speculation as to whether a politically-fractured France and a weakened Macron means that France's leadership position within the eurozone has been weakened," she said.

"In this environment further pressure on French assets cannot be ruled out."

She added that "France's political and budgetary uncertainties" remain a negative factor for the euro.

In Asia on Monday, stock markets mostly sank with Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index closing down more than 1.5 percent.

Tokyo's Nikkei index seesawed in and out the red throughout the day before finally ending slightly down, while the broader Topix shed more than one percent after hitting a new high last week.

Taipei was a rare bright spot, posting solid gains on the back of a surge in shares of chipmaking giant TSMC, which added nearly three percent over the course of the day.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where two ships, APL Antwerp and Atlantic Spirit carrying Container and Palm Kernel, berthed at Container Terminal and Multi-Purpose Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Achilles-s, IVS Sparrow Hawk and Al-Thakkira scheduled to load/offload Cement, Steel Coal and LNG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last

24 hours.

A total of six ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, APL Antwerp, Wawasan Topaz and Umm Bab left the port on today morning while another containers ship 'Nave Andromeda' is expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 83,332 tonnes, comprising 69,953 tonnes imports cargo and 13,379 tonnes export cargo carried in 1,833 Containers (1,046 TEUs Imports and

787 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 06 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them Liquefied Natural Gas carrier 'Al-Thakkira' & another containers ship 'MSC Mundra VIII' are expected to take berths at respectively EETL and QICT on today 08th July, while another containers ship 'MSC United VIII' is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.



In brief

Jayasuriya to replace Silverwood

COLOMBO (AFP): Former Sri Lanka skipper and one-time chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya said Monday he will be the new head coach, after Chris Silverwood quit following the country's early exit from the T20 World Cup. Jayasuriya, 55, said he had been asked by Sri Lanka Cricket to coach the national squad ahead of a white ball series against India this month, and Sri Lanka's tour of England in August. "I have been asked to take over coaching and I am happy to do it," Jayasuriya told AFP. Jayasuriya, a former Test and ODI captain, had also been a national selector. He is to take over the team after the end of the ongoing T20 Lanka Premier League on July 21. Jayasuriya represented Sri Lanka 586 times across the three formats of the game, hitting 42 centuries and taking 440 wickets. He played his last international in 2011. Former England coach Silverwood, 49, quit for "personal reasons", according to Sri Lanka Cricket, which thanked him for his "valuable contributions" during his tenure. Sri Lanka won only one match at the T20 World Cup tournament, against the Netherlands, and finished third behind South Africa and Bangladesh in their group. Silverwood took over in April 2022 and enjoyed immediate success, as Sri Lanka won the T20 Asia Cup later that year. They reached the final of the 50-over Asia Cup in 2023. But they failed to make it to the knockout stages of the T20 World Cup in 2022 and last year's 50-over World Cup. Former skipper Mahela Jayawardena also stepped down as "consultant coach" last month.

Luke Shaw 'fit and ready'

LONDON (Agencies): England defender Luke Shaw says he is fit and ready to play 90 minutes at Euro 2024. Shaw, the only specialist left-back in Gareth Southgate's squad, did not play in England's first four matches of the Euros because of a hamstring injury. But the Manchester United player came on as a second-half substitute during the quarter-final victory over Switzerland - and says he is now ready to play a bigger part in England's campaign. "Of course, I think I am [fit and ready to play 90 minutes]," Shaw said. "That is down to Gareth's decision. I feel fit and ready to go." Shaw's appearance from the bench after 78 minutes against Switzerland marked his first competitive football since suffering his injury in February. Southgate had hoped to have Shaw back during the group stage in Germany, but his recovery took longer than expected and has meant Kieran Trippier deputising on the left side of defence. "The last four months have been really tough," Shaw said of his injury problems. "At the start I was expected to come back a lot sooner, but I went through a lot of setbacks. "It was really nice to get on the other night and get some minutes - I've been itching. "I think before the squad got announced, we had a plan to come back around the second or third game but, unfortunately, things didn't go as planned and I was pushed back a game or so. "Of course, it's tough. They were really there for me, not just Gareth and Steve [Holland, England assistant manager] but the medical staff as well. I have a lot to thank them for."



LONDON: Taylor Fritz of United States (R) meets Alexander Zverev of Germany at the net following victory in the Gentlemen's Singles fourth round match during day eight of The Championships Wimbledon.

Rohit to lead India in Champions Trophy, World Test C'ship

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) revealed that Rohit Sharma will lead India in the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and World Test Championship after he ended his T20I career with a T20 World Cup triumph.

The top-order batter led India to their second T20 World Cup title last month, ending the cricket-mad nation's global trophy drought since the 2013

Champions Trophy.

Rohit Sharma, along with star batter Virat Kohli, and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja announced their retirement from T20I cricket after the win over South Africa in the final in Barbados. It was also the last match for outgoing coach Rahul Dravid.

"After this victory, the next stage is the 2025 WTC (World Test Championship) final and the Champions Trophy," Jay Shah said in a video

message.

"I am truly confident that we will win both the tournaments under the leadership of Rohit Sharma."

Jay Shah praised the trio of veteran players, as well as Dravid. "This was our third final in the last one year," Shah said, referring to the ODI World Cup and the World Test Championship.

The ODI Champions Trophy is scheduled to be held in February and March 2025 in Pakistan,

while the World Test Championship cycle will end in June 2025 with the final at Lord's in London.

India have twice finished runners-up in the Test championship, losing the final to Australia last year. Moreover, they also lost the ODI World Cup final to Australia at home in 2023.

Rohit Sharma took over the captaincy of the white-ball team in 2021 and became the all-format leader a year later.

England great Anderson 'at peace' with Test retirement

LONDON (AFP): England great James Anderson said Monday he had come to terms with his impending Test retirement even though he feels he is bowling as well as ever as his 42nd birthday approaches.

The first Test against the West Indies at Lord's, starting on Wednesday, will be the paceman's 188th and final appearance after a record-breaking career spanning two decades. No fast bowler has taken more than Anderson's 700 Test wickets and only India batting hero Sachin Tendulkar has played more matches in the five-day game.

Anderson might have carried on for the rest of the season even though he turns 42 at the end of July.

But the decision to retire was effectively made for him when he met with England managing director Rob Key, red-ball coach Brendon McCullum and Test captain Ben Stokes in late April.

The hierarchy told Anderson they wanted to make changes as they looked to build a squad for the 2025/26 Ashes series in Australia.

"I wouldn't say it was a surprise because when the three big dogs invited me to a hotel in Manchester for a chat I didn't think it was just a normal appraisal," Anderson told a

news conference at Lord's.

"I had a suspicion that that was going to be the case. I think they were surprised at how calm I was when I reacted. I think I was probably surprised at my reaction. I wasn't overly emotional about it or angry about it or anything."

"Stop myself crying!" He added: "I saw their point of view and appreciated them taking the time out to lay it out for me, the reasoning and stuff like that. Since then I've come to terms with it and made peace with that decision."

In early May, Anderson released a statement saying he would retire from Test cricket after the first Test against the West Indies. "Now I'm just looking forward to one more game and then see what's ahead," said the bowler, who will serve as a mentor to England's quacks for the rest of the season.

Anderson warmed up for his Test exit with an impressive seven-wicket haul for Lancashire against Nottinghamshire last week in the English County Championship.

"I feel like I'm still bowling as well as I ever have," he said. "But I knew it had to end at some point. Whether it's now or in a year or two... I'd love just to be able to contribute somehow this week. "Whether it's one wicket or

whatever it is, I'd love just to make a small contribution and win the game."

The normally reserved Anderson said he might struggle to keep his emotions in check while bringing down the curtain on a Test career that started 21 years ago against Zimbabwe at Lord's.

"I'm sure the emotions during the week will change, but right now what I'm trying to focus on is to stop myself crying," he said.

Asked what had pleased him most about his lengthy Test career, he replied: "Playing my 188th Test at just short of 42 years old makes me the most proud and I'm still pushing myself to be the best I possibly can."

West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder paid tribute to Anderson by saying: "I'm sure he's got still a lot left in the tank and stuff to prove."

"I always like playing against great players and he's no doubt one of the great players of the game, so I'm looking forward to the contest for one last time." Anderson has yet to decide whether he will keep playing for Lancashire. "The likelihood is this week is my last game of first-class cricket this season, but we'll have to see what happens," he said. "It's a difficult one to weigh up because my emotions are all over the place."

Painful finish as De Minaur reaches first Wimbledon q-final

LONDON (AFP): Australia's Alex de Minaur reached his first Wimbledon quarter-final on Monday with a four-set win over Arthur Fils of France although he ended the match grimacing with pain.

World number nine De Minaur won 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 and will face Novak Djokovic for a place in the semi-finals if the seven-time champion defeats Holger Rune later Monday.

De Minaur appeared to roll his ankle as he played the winning shot on Court One and walked gingerly back to his court-side chair.

As he sat down, he shook his head towards his box, where 2002 Wimbledon champion Lleyton Hewitt, a fellow Australian, and tennis-playing girlfriend Katie Boulter looked on.

"I'll be all right," De Minaur said in his on-court interview. "I'm super-proud to play in front of you guys. I had a few problems getting over the finish line and made it harder than it should have been."

World number 34 Fils, playing in the fourth round of a Slam for the first time, was undone by 66 unforced errors. De Minaur has defeated both Djokovic and

Rune in his career.

He got the better of the 24-time Grand Slam title winner at the United Cup in Australia this year while seeing off Rune twice in 2023, including on grass at Queen's Club. "I'll try my best and play my heart out," said De Minaur, who is a force to be reckoned with on grass having clinched the s-Hertogenbosch title in the Netherlands last month.

Tearful Svitolina wears black ribbon at Wimbledon after Ukraine hospital attack: Ukraine's Elina Svitolina wore a black ribbon and broke down in tears as she made the Wimbledon quarter-finals on Monday, hours after a Russian missile barrage killed 36 people and ripped open a children's hospital in Kyiv.

The tennis star said she hoped her win would at least provide "a small light" in the aftermath of an attack described by the French foreign ministry as "barbaric". Svitolina's sombre ribbon stood out dramatically on her white playing shirt as she completed a straight-sets win over Wang Xinyu of China.

"It's a very difficult day today for all Ukraine people," said the 29-year-old Svitolina, who wept as she

conducted a TV interview on court. As she attempted to compose herself, she received a lengthy round of applause from spectators on Court Two.

"It was not easy to focus on the match. Since this morning it has been very difficult to read the news and go on court. "So I was happy to play today and get the win. It was a good performance from my side. Thanks to everyone for their support."

Ukrainian officials said 33 people were killed and another 137 wounded in the wave of 38 missiles fired by Russia. Three more were killed by Russian fire in Pokrovsk in eastern Ukraine.

Dozens of volunteers, doctors and rescue workers dug through debris of a part of Okhmatdyt paediatric hospital in Kyiv in a desperate search for survivors after the rare day-time bombardment, according to AFP journalists at the scene.

Svitolina, a semi-finalist at Wimbledon in 2023, said she hoped her win on Monday "was a small light that brought a happy moment for the Ukrainian people" even if she had initially been reluctant to take to the court.

"I just wanted to be in

my room, just be there with my emotions," she said.

"You see the images and everything that happened. So many kids lost their lives." Powerful as governments' Svitolina said the attacks helped motivate her on Monday.

"I'm playing such an amazing event as Wimbledon. I have to think about how I can use that in a way for the Ukrainian people. "I had to show up and do my best, my very best. Every Ukrainian is using their own way to raise awareness, my way is tennis."

She added: "I feel like we are almost as powerful as some people who are representing our government. I feel honoured to be one of the faces of Ukraine." Two-time semi-finalist Svitolina's 6-2, 6-1 win took her into a quarter-final clash with Russian-born Elena Rybakina, the 2022 champion who represents Kazakhstan.

Rybakina switched allegiance from Russia in 2018. Svitolina, in line with all Ukraine players, refuses to shake hands with Russian opponents but insisted she will offer her hand to Rybakina when they clash.

PCB starts fitness tests of cricketers in 104 districts

LAHORE (APP): In a first, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has started fitness tests of the cricketers in 104 districts across the 16 regions in the country to ensure fitness regime at the grassroots level.

Over 2,300 players are appearing in the ongoing countrywide fitness tests. These tests are being conducted as per the Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi's vision to ensure a culture of fitness at the grassroots level.

In order to assemble the squads for the Regional

Inter District Senior Tournament 2024-25, 23 players in each district have been shortlisted after the Challenge Cup that took place in April and May 2024. These 23 players in each district are undergoing strenuous fitness and strength testing under the watchful eye of the respective district and regional coaches and trainers.

The players who qualify the fitness test will be summoned for a 45-day camp in their respective districts leading to the Inter District Senior Tournament in September.

PCB's Director Domestic Cricket Operations Abdullah Khurram Niazi has said the PCB has decided to conduct fitness tests at the district level instead of the regional level starting from this domestic season.

"This initiative will surely push the players to prioritise their fitness right from the start and the culture will then expand to other domestic competitions. With more fitter players participating in the tournaments the quality of cricket will also increase," he added.

Ashab Irfan beats Veer Chotrani to win Kanso Open Squash C'ship

HOUSTON (Agencies): Pakistani squash player Ashab Irfan defeated India's Veer Chotrani in the final of the Kanso Open Squash Championship in Houston recently to claim the title, months after he clinched the Rochester Proam tournament in the US.

Irfan, 20, has had an impressive run in the tournament, beating Mexico's Jorge Luis Gomez Dominguez 8-11, 10-12, 11-4, 11-2 and 11-9 to qualify for the semifinal of the tournament on Friday. He then defeated Canadian Liam Morrison 11-8, 11-6 and 13-11 to qualify for the final.

Meanwhile, Chotrani qualified for the final after beating Mexico's Alfredo Avila Vergara in the semifinal 11-3, 9-11, 11-7 and 11-7 to qualify for the final of the tournament.



The final between Irfan and Chotrani on Sunday was a close call, with the Pakistani star player prevailing over his Indian opponent after a hard-fought win.

Irfan beat Chotrani 11-7, 8-11, 12-10, 8-11 and 11-8 to clinch the trophy. Irfan could be seen screaming in jubilation after winning the match point, putting his squash racket on

the floor as he prostrated on the court amid cheers and claps from the audience.

This is Ashab's second international squash title this year. The emerging Pakistani talent clinched the Rochester Proam Squash Tournament in April this year after beating Dominguez in the final by a score of 12-10, 11-4, 9-11, and 11-9.

Mushtaq joins England U19 coaching panel

LONDON (Agencies): Former Pakistan leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed has signed a contract with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to join their under-19 cricket team on Monday.

The 1992 World Cup winner will join the England U19 team for a short stint, bringing his extensive experience as a player and coach to the young spin bowlers.

The England U19 team is currently playing the first of a two-match home Test series against Sri Lanka.

Prior to signing with England, Ahmed served as the spin bowling coach of the Bangladesh men's cricket team during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

It's worth noting that Nizamuddin Chowdhury, the CEO of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), expressed his will-



ingness to extend Mushtaq Ahmed's contract.

"We wanted him for a certain number of days. Before we communicated with Mushtaq [regarding the appointment], he had prior engagements till December which included the England U19 job. So we said that we will have him till the [T20] World Cup and then we will sit and sort it out," Chowdhury said.

"That discussion [on renewal] is still ongoing

with him. If he lets us know how many days he can be available for us till December in combination with his prior engagements, we will lock him down for those days. After December 2024, we will have a long-term agreement with Mushtaq," he added.

Ahmed has previously served as the spin bowling coach for England (2008-2014), West Indies (2018-19) and Pakistan (2020-22).

Younis reveals must-have trait for a captain

LONDON (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain Younis Khan has discussed the crucial role and necessary traits for a successful captain after Pakistan Champions' victory over India Champions in the World Championship of Legends.

While addressing the media after the match, Younis Khan dedicated the victory to Pakistan fans, who were left heartbroken after the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 debacle.

He advised the fans to remain patient and back the team in crucial times.

"The advice to the fans is to stay patient as change cannot happen overnight. We cannot just remove the current players and bring players from outside, this cannot work," said Younis Khan.

Babar Azam-led Pakistan team is facing massive criticism from fans and former players alike over their disastrous performance in the T20 World Cup, with many calling for a change in leadership.

Talking about the cap-



taincy, the former captain shed light on the qualities of a good captain.

"A captain should be someone who is capable of leading the side, who can handle the pressure. It's not just about batting or bowling, a captain should think of every player, even if the player is on the bench," Khan stated.

"You should know the player's technique, his energy and skills. Only then, you can get the best out of them," he added.

Moreover, he cited the examples of former Pakistan captains Imran Khan, Javed Miandad and Wasim Akram, who took the best of their players

and built a team that served the nation for years.

"We talk about the great Imran Khan, Javed bhai (Javed Miandad), or Wasim Akram. Why were they good coaches [or captains]? Because they gave us players like Saqlain Mushtaq, Abdul Razzaq, Azhar Mahmood, and Shahid Afridi. According to me, a leader should be a good motivator alongside being a good batter or bowler," Khan concluded.

Younis Khan-led Pakistan Champions are currently sitting at the top of the World Championship of Legends standings with eight points from four games.



In brief

Committee constituted to plan beautification of Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): A committee has been constituted to develop a comprehensive plan for beautification of the Federal Capital on the directions of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The committee will comprise CDA officers, environmental experts, and other professionals. The committee is tasked with providing recommendations for both short-term and long-term plans to enhance the beauty of Islamabad. The chairman directed that the installation of a dancing fountain in Ankara Park should be completed within one month. Additionally, he instructed that a plan for installing a dancing fountain in Lake View Park be submitted immediately. Muhammad Ali Randhawa also directed that the member of IT and the member of engineering should submit plans for installing fountains with modern technology.

IRSA releases 333,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 333,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 478,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1514.49 feet and was 116.49 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 261,100 cusecs and 153,500 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1192.05 feet, which was 144.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 54,700 cusecs and 16,900 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 210,500, 182,900, 128,500 and 50,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 87,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 42,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

IFA conducts 1278 raids

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) conducted 1,278 raids and inspections in the Federal Capital during June, imposing fines totaling Rs 1,724,000 on violators. Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of IFA, Dr. Tahira Saddique, revealed in the monthly performance report that these inspections targeted businesses selling harmful or low-quality food products. Over 54,014 liters/kgs of hazardous oils and other unsafe items, including expired food, meat, dairy, drinks, leftover/stale foods, and MSGs, were discarded during various raids. Additionally, 588 improvement notices were issued, and 38 food points were sealed for violations. The authority also gave 504 verbal instructions and imposed heavy fines on 107 violators. Furthermore, one FIR was lodged for not observing the standard operating procedures (SOPs) set by the IFA. Dr. Tahira stated that the IFA's ongoing efforts reflected a broader commitment to public health and consumer safety. Through increased inspections, hefty fines, and proactive awareness campaigns, the authority aimed to create a safer environment for consumers and hold businesses accountable for their products. These measures are part of a larger strategy to clamp down on unsafe food practices and promote higher food quality standards in the city, she added.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding over-billing of protected consumers. —APP Photo

Minister directs NHA to make organization profitable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to make a profitable and resource increasing organization to ensure the self-sufficient in future.

Presiding over a high-level meeting, the minister said that NHA should bring change in its reputation and become a good name for the nation and the country by working with self-reliance, hard work and honesty, said a press release.

He further said that his first priority in the department is to ensure the construction of a safe and qualitative Motorway from

Sukkur to Karachi, followed by the completion of highways from Karachi to Quetta and from Mansehra to Babusar Top, as soon as possible.

He said that from the commercial point of view, the main target of all our highways' and road network should be the countries of Central Asia which will be more beneficial for Pakistan.

Aleem Khan said that he is offering new tasks and departmental plan of action under which Government funds will not be wasted in any way and there will be zero tolerance on corruption through which maximum benefit could be attained from minimum expenditure.

He directed that for the new and ongoing projects of NHA there must be third party evaluation from multinational companies. He said the authority has to avoid the old working system and come forward to compete with the private sector.

The minister directed that trucks exceeding the allowed weight should not come on any highway of NHA moreover long queues should be eliminated by ensuring "M-Tag" on all motorways including Lahore-Sialkot sector.

Aleem Khan further said that he himself visit to Sindh and Balochistan provinces so that the speed of work on the projects of NHA could be reviewed on the spot.

Gilani pays tributes to late Abdul Sattar Edhi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani paid glowing tributes to the great humanitarian and philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi on the occasion of his 8th death anniversary.

Gilani eulogized Edhi's services for humanity, highlighting his dedication to the destitute and underprivileged, said a news release issued on Monday.

He remarked that Abdul Sattar Edhi was a great human being who served people without any discrimination. Gilani said that Edhi's contributions would be long remembered and appreciated.

Mohtasib inspection team to visit NADRA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Responding to a large number of complaints against the federal government organizations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi under the suo-moto powers, vested in him under the relevant law, has decided to constitute an Inspection Team under the Director General, Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmad, which will undertake a two-day visit of the Azad Kashmir on July 11-12.

On July 11, 2024 the Inspection Team will visit the NADRA office, Passport Office and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and would listen to the public complaints and issue on the spot instruction for their resolution. Whereas on July 12, the two member Inspection Team comprising the DG (Admn) and Consultant(Media) would hold a Khuli Katcheri in the Wafaqi Mohtasib Regional Office located at Muzaffarabad. It is expected that the Khuli Katcheri would be attended by a large number of people including the civil society and media and would help resolve public complaints.

River Kabul runs in low flood: FFC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) on Monday said that River Kabul was flowing in low flood at Warsak-Nowshera reach while all other main rivers of Indus River System (IRS) were flowing normal.

According to daily FFC report, monsoon trough along the foothills of Himalayas (India) has temporarily become insignificant for Pakistan whereas a strong trough of the westerly wave that was previously prevailing over the northern parts of Pakistan has now moved eastwards. A new trough lies over northwestern Afghanistan.

Additionally, over northeastern Balochistan and adjoining areas, a weak seasonal low also prevails causing incursion of light moisture from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal to the upper parts of Pakistan, up to 3000 feet. For the ensuing 24 hours, no significant rainfall activity over the catchments of all major rivers except some isolated rainfall of light intensity has been predicted by Federal Flood Division (FFD) Lahore.

UNHCR's delegation calls on Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): The UNHCR's high level delegation led by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi accompanied by Philippa Candler Representative of UNHCR, Pakistan called on Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Engr Amir Muqam here on Monday.

The meeting was attended by Secretary SAFRON Zafar Hasan, Joint Secretary Refugees Agha Waseem Ahmad and Chief Commissioner Afghan Refugees Muhammad Abbas Khan and other senior officials of Ministry of SAFRON and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a news release said.

Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan

acknowledge UNHCR's continued support for Afghan refugees in Pakistan for the past 45 years.

He said that Pakistan hosts millions of Afghan refugees, providing protection, education and health facilities. "Currently, there are 1.45 million registered Afghan citizens card holders and this does not include a great number of unregistered Afghan refugees and other nationals," he added.

The Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that it is a matter of concern that there is decline in support for Afghan refugees and development funds for their hosting areas in Pakistan. "We need exclusive, generous and sustainable interventions."

UNHCR's High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi lauded the

people and government of Pakistan for hosting Afghan refugees for over four decades. He said that UNHCR will organize a global dialogue likely in October to discuss the issues pertaining to refugees.

He said that Pakistan would be specially invited at this occasion. He expressed the hope that this event will create a new dimension and avenues for the support of refugees across the globe and for the rests.

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 and Mr Ewan Watson, UNHCR Head of the Global Communication Service.

Meeting held to ensure peace during Muharram

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani chaired a meeting at the Police Lines Headquarters with members of the District Peace Committee and Anjuman Tajran to ensure a peaceful observance of Muharram ul Harram.

The prominent figures such as Hafiz Muhammad Iqbal Rizvi, Pir Syed Izhar Hussain Shah Bukhari, as well as senior police officials including SSP Operations, Chief Traffic Officer, and Divisional SPs from Rawal, Sadder, and Potohar attended the meeting.

Addressing the participants, CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani stressed the importance of cooperation in maintaining peace and security during Muharram. He expressed his commitment to make Rawalpindi a model of peace during this sacred month, highlighting the crucial role of community involvement. To ensure safety, Hamdani mentioned the deployment of all available resources to secure Muharram processions and gatherings.

He also noted the commencement of special monitoring of social media to

prevent any provocative content that could stir religious or communal tensions. Strict action will be taken against anyone found violating these regulations.

SSP Operations outlined stringent security measures, including thorough body searches for participants in processions and gatherings during Muharram.

In the meeting, Ulama, the respected religious scholars, have assured their complete support to the police to maintain harmony, brotherhood, and tranquility during the sacred month of Muharram.

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Lakho, Katarian Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, CBR-II Feeder, from 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Athal, Shahpur, Trat, T&T, Bhara Kho-II, Bhara Kho-I, NIH, Galfie City, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP, FSH, I-8/4, I-8 Markaz, Industrial-I, Modern Steel, New PTN, Pak Iron Steel, Mumtaz Steel, Fazal Rubber, MG Steel, Potohar Steel, Fazal Ghee, GOR, I-10/4 Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Katarian, Bani, Holy Family Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Zaraj-I, Zaraj-II, IST, Dhok Awan, Mohra Nagyal feeders and surrounding areas.

Commissioner reviews arrangements made for Muharram

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak on Monday reviewed arrangements including security made for Muharram.

Chairing a meeting the Commissioner reviewed all the arrangements finalized in Rawalpindi district for Muharram. Muharram is the month of peace and brotherhood, Engineer Aamir Khattak said adding, during this holy month, no one would be allowed to create chaos or disturb the peace.

He informed that a control room had been established in district Rawalpindi which would be functional 24 hours and focal persons of all concerned departments would be on duty. The most important thing is coordination between all the departments concerned, he added. Training is being

done through mock exercises for better management in any emergency situation, he informed.

The Commissioner said that implementation of Muharram Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures would be ensured strictly.

All available resources would be utilized to maintain law and order situation, he informed. On the instructions of chief minister Punjab, provision of clean drinking water should be ensured for the mourners on the procession routes, he said.

The quality of arrangements should be ensured by visiting Majlis, Imam Bargahs and procession routes, he instructed the authorities concerned.

There should be no complaint of garbage, hanging electricity and telephone wires anywhere on the pro-

cession route, he ordered.

He further directed that the patchwork of the procession route should be completed and the street lights should also be fully functional. Foolproof security arrangements are being made for Muharram, he said and informed that Majlis and processions are being provided with the best security.

A copy of the Code of Conduct has been sent to all the Majlis organizers and they have been taken on board, Engineer Aamir Khattak added. Implementation of the code of conduct would be ensured at all costs, he said. Along with ensuring implementation of the loudspeakers and other restrictions, all photocopy shops have been instructed not to share any content that could spread religious hatred, he said.



ISLAMABAD: A view of water level in Rawal Lake has decreased due to below-normal rainfall in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Country's upper and central parts to receive rain from July 10

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country's upper and central parts are likely to receive rain wind/thundershower from July 10-15, as per weather experts, due to the penetration of monsoon currents from Arabian Sea.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), more monsoon currents were likely to penetrate from Arabian Sea in upper parts of the country from July 10. Rain wind/thundershower with isolated heavy falls are expected in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Murree, Galliyat, Attock, Chakwal, Tala Gang, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Wazirabad, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Narowal, Sahiwal, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Nankana Sahib, Chiniot, Faisalabad, Okara, Pakpattan, Kasur, Khushab, Sargodha, Bhakkar and Mianwali from July 10 (evening/night) to July 15 with occasional gaps.

Rain/thundershower is also expected in Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Rahimyar Khan and Layyah from July 12-14.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rain wind/thundershower with

isolated heavy falls are expected in Dir, Chitral, Swat, Kohistan, Malakand, Bajaur, Shangla, Battagram, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Hangu, Kurram, Waziristan, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan from July 11-15 with occasional gaps.

In Balochistan, mainly hot and humid weather is expected in most districts of the province. However, rain wind/thundershower is expected in eastern parts of Balochistan including Khuzdar, Kalat, Ziarat, Zhob, Barkhan, Musa Khel and Shirani from July 08 and July 09th and from July 12-14.

In Sindh, mainly hot and very humid weather is expected in most districts of the province while rain, wind/thundershower is expected in Jacobabad, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Qamber, Shahdadkot, Larkana, Dadu, Padidan, Umarkot, Tharparkar, Mirpur Khas, Badin, Sajawal, Thatta and Karachi on July 08 and 09 July with occasional gaps.

While rain-wind/thundershower is also expected in Sukkur, Larkana and Jacobabad on July 12 and July 13. In Kashmir, rain wind/thundershower with isolated heavy falls are

expected in Kashmir including Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur from July 10-16 with occasional gaps.

While in Gilgit-Baltistan, mainly partly cloudy to cloudy weather conditions at times are expected however, rainfall activity is also expected in Diamir, Astore, Skardu, Gilgit, Ghanche and Shigar from July 11-15 with occasional gaps.

About the possible impacts, the PMD said that heavyfall may increase inflows in local nullahs/streams of Murree, Galliyat, Mansehra, Kohistan and Kashmir from July 12-14. Heavyfall may cause urban flooding in low lying areas in northeastern parts of Punjab.

Landslides may disrupt roads at the vulnerable points of hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the spell. Heavy downpour/windstorm and lightning may affect daily routines, weak structures like roof/wall collapse of Kacha houses, electric poles, billboards, vehicles and solar panels etc during the period.

The farmers are advised to manage their activities keeping in view the weather forecast.

10m SIM cards registered

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Afghanistan recently announced that 10 million SIM cards for mobile phones have been registered in the country so far. The ministry says that since the implementation of this procedure, about 60 percent of all SIM cards in use have now been registered. Officials said about 40 percent still need to be logged but that this will be done over the next few months.

The Frontier Post

Muharram 02 1446 — Tuesday, July 09, 2024

2,500 migrants returned

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan says in the last two days, 2,649 Afghan migrants have returned to the country voluntarily and forcibly from Pakistan and Iran. According to officials, the migrants entered the country through Islam Qala border in Herat Province, Pul-e-Abrisham in Nimruz Province, Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province and Torkham crossing in Nangarhar Province.

Alternative cultivation plan implemented for farmers

KABUL (TOLONews): According to the spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, a five-year alternative cultivation plan has been developed based on the decree of the leader of the Islamic Emirate, aimed at providing alternative livelihoods and introducing substitutes for poppy and other drug-producing plants for farmers.

Misbahuddin Mustaeen, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock of Afghanistan, said: "The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock calls on all citizens, the international community, and international aid organizations to always cooperate with farmers in the field of alternative livelihoods."

Some farmers who used to make a living from poppy cultivation before the leader of the Islamic Emirate's decree banning poppy cultivation in the country now said they are facing various challenges. They are seeking cooperation from the Islamic Emirate officials in the field of alternative cultivation.

"So far, nothing has been given to us. There is nothing but wheat, and opium has also been declared banned," said Juma Gul, one of the farmers.

"Our request from the Islamic Emirate is to help us with saffron seeds or something else that we can use to meet the needs of our family instead of poppy," said Baryali, another farmer.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock emphasized the distribution of improved seeds and chemical fertilizers, the creation of standard markets inside and outside the country to sell agricultural products, reducing customs tariffs, and providing alternative cultivation to farmers by the Islamic Emirate.

Merwis Haji Zada, deputy of the Chamber of Agriculture and Irrigation and Livestock of Afghanistan, told TOLONews: "Instead of poppy, use heneh, plant saffron which is the leading product in the world, or other good plants. Overall, there should also be good markets available so that our agricultural items can be exported to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India and other countries."

The third Doha meeting held last week, in addition to supporting Afghanistan's private sector, focused on the fight against drugs and providing alternative livelihoods for the country's farmers, which were emphasized by the United Nations, the delegation of the Islamic Emirate, and the participating countries.

IEA's presence at Doha meeting boosted scope for interaction



KABUL (Ariana News): Takayoshi Kuromiya, the ambassador of Japan in Kabul, said that the Islamic Emirate's participation in the third Doha meeting has increased the scope for interaction between the Islamic Emirate and the

international community.

The Japanese ambassador raised this issue in a meeting with Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the IEA's deputy prime minister for political affairs.

Kuromiya said the third Doha meeting was in favor of the Islamic Emirate and

that all conditions and demands of the Islamic Emirate have been accepted by the United Nations.

He hoped that Afghanistan's banking restrictions would be lifted soon. The political deputy of the IE also emphasized that they want to

interact with all countries.

The lifting of banking restrictions, unfreezing of foreign reserves and the fight against drugs had been key agenda points at the latest meeting which was held last week in the Qatari capital.

Distribution of E-ID cards for Afghans in UAE started

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate has announced the commencement of the distribution of electronic ID cards (Tazkira) in the United Arab Emirates. The Deputy Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the system for distributing electronic ID cards for Afghans has been inaugurated by the Islamic Emirate's embassy in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

According to Zia Ahmad Takal, the acting head of the Islamic Emirate's embassy in Abu Dhabi, Afghans residing in the UAE have been assured of various kinds of cooperation. The Deputy Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said: "From now on, electronic ID cards will be issued to Afghans in the UAE, benefiting them with a significant convenience."

Some Afghan traders and citizens in the UAE have expressed satisfaction with this initiative and have requested the establishment of electronic ID card distribution centers in other countries as well.

Haji Obaidullah Sader Khail, head of the Afghan business council in the UAE, said: "This is a matter of happiness for everyone, and we want the Afghan embassies and consulates in other countries to start this process, providing a convenience in obtaining electronic ID cards for Afghans."

"I am very happy about the commencement of the electronic ID card process, which makes it very easy for our compatriots to obtain them," said Abdulwaris, an Afghan residing in the UAE.

"It has become easier for our compatriots as they can now access electronic ID cards in Abu Dhabi province," said Samiullah, an Afghan residing in the UAE.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Haleem Rafie, the spokesperson for the National Statistics and Information Authority, said they are working to establish ID card distribution centers in other countries such as Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey in the near future.

The spokesperson for the National Statistics and Information Authority said: "The National Statistics and Information Authority plans to establish new centers in Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey after the UAE."

According to the statistics of the National Statistics and Information Authority, 10 to 11,000 electronic ID cards are distributed daily in 34 provinces of the country.

The spokesperson of the authority said that since the commencement of the distribution of electronic ID cards, 13.6 million people have received ID cards across the country.

Handcarts make Jalalabad roads narrow

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Handcarts make the footpaths narrow and leave no room for pedestrians in Jalalabad city, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, residents say, urging the municipality to take measures in this regard.

Local residents say women also face problems while walking on roads encroached by handcart owners and there are many places where walking is not possible due to huge crowds.

On the other hand, Jalalabad municipality officials also say occupation of footpaths by handcart owners has caused them problems, but added places for the sellers have been determined in relevant areas and this problem will be solved soon. Some residents of Jalalabad city told Pajhwok that stalls on footpaths were main reason behind congestion and clogging of footpaths.

Awal Khan, a resident of Jalalabad city, said he visited the third district to buy goods, but faced problems due to narrowed space.

He added handcarts had blocked footpaths on roads, with women and men facing difficulties in walking in front of shops. He said some handcarts could be seen standing in the middle of the road, creating problems for motorists. "The municipality should create an organized system for them". Another resident, Rafiullah, also complained about the problem and asked the municipality to build special places for handcart sellers in different areas of the city.

On the other hand, handcart owners also admit some people use their handcarts in wrong places, but the majority of handcart owners stand in places marked for them by the

municipality.

Shamsul Rahman, who sells fresh vegetables at the Talashi intersection of Jalalabad city, said there were even bigger crowds in this area in the past, but places had been determined for handcarts and the problem had been solved to some extent.

Jalalabad Municipality spokesman Bakhti Jan Murad also said stalls on footpaths were being removed. "We are working to solve this problem, we conducted campaigns, specific areas have been chosen for them and some areas have been cleared."

He said poverty and unemployment were biggest problems and that was why many people had started doing business on handcarts and due to this the number of stalls on footpaths had increased in the city.

Farah security halts drug smuggling, arrests hundreds

FARAH (TOLONews): Farah security officials said they have prevented the smuggling of 10,000 kilograms of drugs in the past three months and arrested 100 people in connection with these incidents.

According to authorities, during this period, 480 acres of land were cleared of poppies.

Mohammad Nasim Badri, the spokesman for Farah security command, said: "The Farah security command has prevented the smuggling of hundreds of kilograms of drugs, including methamphetamine, heroin, and opium, to Iran over the past three months and arrested 100 people in connection with these incidents."

The spokesman added that in the past three months, nearly 250 other individuals have been arrested on charges of theft, kidnapping, alcohol consumption, and various other crimes.

Nasim Badri said: "Additionally, in the past three months, 250 people have also been arrested for various crimes such as theft, kidnapping, and alcohol consumption. Over the past three years, at least 3,000 drug addicts have been treated, and currently, 500 addicts are in Farah hospital."

Meanwhile, Farah residents and some civil activists are demanding serious and legal action from authorities against these individuals.

"We urge the interim government to take serious and legal action against the detained individuals; otherwise, other young people will also turn to addiction," said Abdul Baqi Hemat, a civil activist.

"Security in Farah has improved compared to the past. We ask the Farah authorities to make more efforts in arresting criminals and preventing crimes," said Nematullah, a resident of Farah.

"Despite the Farah Police Command's efforts to reduce crime levels, they should also pay more attention to the districts and the center," said Mohammad, another resident of Farah.

According to Farah security officials, nearly 3,000 addicts have been treated in the past three years, and currently, another 500 addicts are under treatment at the addiction treatment center.

Some Badakhshan historic sites direly need restoration

FAIZABAD (Pajhwok): The Information and Culture Department of northeastern Badakhshan province of Afghanistan has evaluated 10 historical sites located along the Silk Road route and found them on the verge of collapse.

Eng. Zabihullah Amiri, director of the department, said he travelled to the Pamir-i-Kochak and assessed historical sites in Warduj, Ishkashim, Wakhan and Pamir districts.

During the trip, he visited a caravanserai in Markan village of Warduj district, the tomb of Ras-ul-Mulk, Ismailia Mosque in Khandod Wakhan area, a fort and Zahir Shah's wooden palace in Qala-i-Panjah, Belhasi caravan tomb.

"These historical monuments are in serious need of restoration and they are on the verge of collapse," he added.

He said the historic bridge (bricks bridge) of Faizabad City also needed restoration and asked the leadership of the Ministry of Information and Culture to pay attention to its reconstruction.

Amiri held a meeting with district chief of Wakhan, the commander of border patrol in Qala-i-Panjah and some other border forces and asked them to protect and maintain the historical and ancient monuments of Afghanistan and prevent smuggling of artifacts.

Meanwhile, Ustad Abdul Wahid, a resident of Wakhan district, said historical sites in the district were not in good condition for being exposed to natural disasters.

"If the government does not pay serious attention, it may collapse".

He urged the Islamic Emirate to restore monuments teetering on the verge of collapse in order to preserve the history.

Private schools for girls not allowed to reopen

KABUL (Pajhwok): Over the past few days, reports are circulating on social media that 47 private schools have been allowed to provide secondary education to girls.

However, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Kabul has scorned such reports as baseless and far from true.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) closed girls' schools above sixth grade after it came to power in August 2021.

The decision has been widely criticised, but the authorities have repeatedly said girls' education would be allowed to resume once a suitable environment was created for them.

Claim: 47 private schools in Kabul allowed to teach girl students above sixth grade.

Some people say 47 private schools have been given permission to provide education to girls above sixth grade in Kabul.

Last week, political affairs analyst Salim Paigar told a private media outlet: "There is a matter I want to share with you, I'm very happy today. My daughter was promoted to 9th grade today."

He added: "Questions may arise for some people with permission granted to 47 private schools. My daughter sat the exams,

conducted by a representative of MoE. It was not under the name of any school, education centre or seminary.

"Give it whatever name you want to, but believe me, my daughter remained at school from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. Schools previously offered 40 percent religious studies and 60 percent modern education, but the equation is now 50-50."

After Paigar's claim, some other people also came up with similar statements on social media platforms.

Sonia Niazi wrote on X: "Good news, yesterday 47 schools in Kabul were allowed to educate girls above the sixth grade. The residents of Kabul are very happy that their daughters have resumed secondary education. These 47 schools are private and have a suitable environment."

Nadima, another X user, wrote: "We were hoping for this day when schools will open for Afghan girls. Today our dream has come true ... We hope public schools will also reopen for girls."

Some other social media users held similar views in this regard.

Fact check

In a statement, MoE said some people and media released untrue reports the

ministry had given permission to 47 private schools to teach girls above the sixth grade.

It said: "The Ministry of Education rejects such reports as untrue and far from credible."

The MoE leadership once again asked all media outlets in the country to prepare and publish their reports based on the accepted principles of journalism and Afghan society.

Preparing reports on the basis of truth ensured the dignity and credibility of journalists on the one hand and helped the media play a constructive role in enlightening the minds of the people on the other, the ministry commented.

MoE called on all Afghans to join hands and take concrete steps for the reconstruction, prosperity and development of their war-torn country.

Outcome: Various sources said that the MoE had allowed 47 private schools to provide education to girls above sixth grade, a claim was rejected by the ministry.

Verdict: Reports about permission granted to 47 private schools to provide education to girls above the sixth grade are untrue, because the MoE itself has rejected it.

IEA hopes for upswing in relations with Iran

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Kabul-Tehran relations will see an upswing under the new Iranian president, hopes the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) congratulated the government and citizens of Iran on the election of the new president.

In a statement, MoFA said: "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan hopes with a new government in power, relations between the two neighbouring and Muslim countries will be further strengthened in various fields." Reformist Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's presidential run-off vote with

more than 16 million ballots after the killing of Ibrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in East Azerbaijan.

According to the Iranian poll panel, more than 30.5 million votes were cast in the election, with Pezeshkian polling about 16.4 million ballots and Saeed Jalili 13.5 million.

Polio vaccination drive started



KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) of Afghanistan has said that a 4-day anti-polio

vaccination campaign launched on Monday in 23 provinces of the country. Dr Sharafat Zaman, a

spokesman for the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in a video clip said: "The four-day anti-polio vaccination campaign launched on Monday (July 8) in 23 provinces."

He said nearly eight million children under the age of five would be vaccinated in this drive.

"We have not registered any positive polio case in the country this year, of course, there were some positive environmental samples and we are striving to prevent this disease by applying the vaccine," Zaman added.

In 2023, five positive polio cases have been recovered in Afghanistan.

NPC gives go-ahead to a dozen projects

KABUL (Pajhwok): The National Procurement Commission (NPC) of Afghanistan has given the go-ahead to a dozen projects worth around five billion afghanis.

NPC met under the

chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, his office said.

The meeting reviewed 22 projects. Of them, contracts for 12 projects worth

approximately five billion afghanis were approved. Three were amended.

It said a committee was also tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of contracts for seven other schemes.

The approved projects include the construction of health centres in remote areas in various provinces, asphalted the second section of the Badghis-Faryab highway, building retaining walls along the route and

installing insulators at the Noor-ul-Jihad substation in Herat.

The projects are financially supported by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) with its own revenue.

Kawsar, a student, said:

Southern districts become no-go areas for KP police

Umaid Muhammadzai

PESHAWAR: The southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have become no-go areas for the police. In the evening, the Taliban are seen patrolling the streets and setting up checkpoints, while the police are limited to their stations. The area is at the mercy of the Taliban from evening to morning.

The local police are also focused on saving their own lives, and as a result, there has been an increase in incidents of robbery, theft, and murder. Recently, there has been a significant change in the tactics of terrorist organizations, and they are now claiming responsibility for their actions under new names. This is attributed to Pakistan's pressure on Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has set a price of Rs 3 billion and 31 crore on the heads of 2251 terrorists.

There has been an increase in the presence and movement of the Taliban (TTP) including Bannu, North and South Waziristan, Tank, Lakki Marwat, and Dera Ismail Khan, which is the ancestral district of chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Ameen Gandapur, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Gandapur. Traveling on the Indus Highway has become extremely difficult after evening, and passengers traveling to Balochistan are also facing many dangers.

Intelligence agencies, journalists, and other sources agree that local recruitment has increased in Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, Waziristan, and Lakki Marwat in recent months, and hundreds of local youth have joined TTP and other organizations. Most of them are uneducated and poor youth, but there are also reports of educated youth joining TTP. Similarly, wanted criminals in various cases have also joined TTP in the form of groups.

According to the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), extremists have carried out 273 attacks on police and other forces in the province this year, resulting in the martyrdom of 70 police officers and injuring 91. The CTD has conducted around 1400 intelligence-based operations, arresting 322 terrorists and killing 124. However, despite these operations, the Taliban are still present in the area and have been seen setting up checkpoints and patrolling in various locations, including Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat: sometimes on the Indus Highway, near the Yarak Pizeo area, Banuu and in Tank

in the Phatan Kot and Drazinda areas, on the Miranshah Road.

In North and South Waziristan, the police are limited to specific checkpoints during the day, and most police officers are absent from duty. Information has also emerged that more than 50 small and large groups have joined the Taliban (TTP) so far. An alliance has also been formed between the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group and the TTP, and they have jointly claimed responsibility for 11 attacks this year.

According to local journalists, there are reports of the presence of 22 extremist groups in Dera Ismail Khan. The two Gandapur groups, led by Faisal Gandapur and Omar Khattab, respectively, are active in the Kalaachi area of the district. The Sarayagi group (Iqbal Khoraha group) and the Storani group, which operate on the border of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have also joined the TTP. Similarly, the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group is active in North Waziristan and Bannu, the TTP is active in South Waziristan and Tank, and the TTP's Tipu Gul group is active in Lakki Marwat.

"According to a senior officer of the institution, the number of active extremists in these areas is estimated to be between 2500 to 3000. A police officer deployed in Dera Ismail Khan told Frontier Post on condition of anonymity that criminals are carrying out robberies and murders under the guise of the Taliban, and often kill their opponents as well. He confirmed that they have been instructed not to leave their stations after evening, and this is why the police cannot even investigate ordinary crimes or take action against any accused."

A police officer deployed in Lakki Marwat told us on condition of anonymity that all actions against forces in the district are being carried out by the TTP. He said that new young recruits are more eager to work for the Taliban than to wield weapons, and they also supply them with food and other necessities, making it difficult for the police to identify them. He lamented that the police lack essential equipment such as night vision goggles, bulletproof jackets, and helmets, and only have access to thermal cameras.

Mashatq Yousafzai, a senior journalist who told Nathe frontier post that when the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan and Pakistan signed a peace agreement with the TTP, thousands of Taliban members, mostly

Mehsud and Marwat tribesmen, entered Pakistan. During this time, hidden extremists and their facilitators also emerged and organized themselves. He said that after Operation Zarb-e-Azb, the government claimed to have eliminated the extremists, but later, the TTP regrouped and started recruiting on a local level, purchasing weapons on a large scale. Meanwhile, our government remained silent. He stated that the police in the southern districts do not have the necessary equipment to fight against the Taliban.

One thing that has been observed is that several terrorist incidents in the mentioned areas have been claimed by unknown new organizations, such as the attack on a police check post in Dera Ismail Khan last month, which was claimed by the Tehreek Jihad Pakistan, and the kidnapping of laborers from the Gomal Zam Dam, which was claimed by an organization called Al-Dam. It seems that the TTP is doing this as part of a plan to reduce the pressure on Pakistan from the Afghan government. The organization has demanded that the electricity generated by the dam be provided to the local areas in exchange for the release of the kidnapped laborers.

Security expert and senior journalist Iftekhar Firdous told Naya Daur that after the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 2021, various extremist groups turned their attention to the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During this time, Afghans also joined them, and most of the suicide attackers who carried out attacks in these areas were from Afghanistan. He said that all these extremist groups want to establish a shadow government and base in these areas, which is why the Gul Bahadur group is carrying out attacks in Bannu and Lakki Marwat after leaving its area. He added that since the people in these areas are already dissatisfied with the government, it is not difficult for these groups to establish their rule.

He clarified that it is not the case that the entire southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has become a no-go area, and the presence of police and other forces is still maintained. However, he confirmed that extremist groups can set up checkpoints on any road they want, whenever they want. Attempts were made to contact Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Information Advisor Barrister Saif, Police Chief, and several other police officers to know their official stance, but no one responded.



PESHAWAR: KP Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur called on by Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication, Ayesha Raza Farooq.

Power shortfall reaches 5,600MW

E.P. Report

MULTAN: The country is grappling with a significant electricity shortfall of 5,600 megawatts, leading to extensive load shedding across both urban and rural areas. According to sources in the Power Division, the national power demand stands at 25,000MW, while production is lagging at 19,400MW.

As a result, electricity load shedding has reached up to eight hours in urban areas and 10 hours in rural regions. In areas experiencing high line losses, residents are enduring even longer durations of 12 to 14 hours without power. Power generation breakdown: Hydropower sources: 700MW, Thermal power plants: 540MW, Private sector power plants: 7,600MW, Wind power plants: 900MW, Solar power plants: 172MW, Bagasse-based power: 123MW

Despite diverse sources of power generation, the supply remains insufficient to meet the soaring demand. With the ongoing load shedding, the daily life of citizens has been significantly disrupted, affecting businesses, education, and general well-being.

SC allows LHCBA to become party

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has allowed the Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA) to become a party in an appeal against termination of civilians' trials in army courts.

Headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan, a 7-member bench of the top court comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Shahid Bilal on Monday heard the appeals of federation.

The apex court during the hearing sought arguments from LHCBA's lawyer Hamid Khan on next date of hearing. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail while addressing the lawyer of Shuhada Foundation was of the opinion that according to the records Jinnah House Lahore was also set on fire during May 9, incidents. It will be seen later that how many days Quid-e-Azam stayed in Jinnah House, he remarked.

The court asked the lawyer that Quid-i-e-Azam's residence was set on fire in Ziarat, where was the Shuhada Foundation on that incident and how many applications did it file? The top court, however, also accepted the request of foundation to become party in the case.

Israel pushes deeper into Gaza

GAZA (AP): Israeli forces advanced deeper into the Gaza Strip's largest city in pursuit of militants who had regrouped there, sending thousands of Palestinians fleeing on Monday from an area ravaged in the early weeks of the nine-month-long war.

Hamas said it had shown flexibility in indirect talks over a ceasefire and hostage release and accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of setting "obstacles," including the latest escalation. The incursion into Gaza City came after Israel and Hamas appeared to draw closer to bridging gaps in negotiations.

Israeli troops were again battling militants in areas that the army said had been largely cleared months ago in northern Gaza. The military ordered evacuations ahead of the raids, but Palestinians said nowhere feels safe. Most of the population of 2.3 million has been displaced, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands are packed into sweltering tent camps. Israel ordered the evacuation of northern Gaza in the first weeks of the war and has prevented most people from returning. But hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remain, living in shelters or the shells of homes.

"We fled in the darkness amid heavy strikes," said Sayeda Abdel-Baki, a mother of three who had sheltered with relatives in the Daraj neighborhood. "This is my fifth displacement." Residents reported artillery and tank fire, as well as airstrikes. Gaza's Health Ministry, with limited access to the north, did not immediately report casualties.

Israel issued additional evacuation orders for areas in other neighborhoods of central Gaza City. The military said it had intelligence showing that militants from Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad group were in the area, and called on residents to head south to the city of Deir Al-Balah. Israel accuses Hamas and other militants of hiding among civilians. In Shijaiyah, a Gaza City neighborhood that has seen weeks of fighting, the military said troops raided and destroyed schools and a clinic that had been converted into

militant compounds.

The war has decimated large swaths of urban landscape and sparked a humanitarian catastrophe. Israel and Hamas seem to be the closest they have been in months to agreeing to a ceasefire deal that would pause the fighting in exchange for the release of dozens of hostages captured by Hamas in the Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war.

CIA Director William Burns returned to the region Monday for talks in Cairo, according to Egypt's state-run Qahera TV, which is close to the security services. An Israeli delegation was also heading to the Egyptian capital, Israeli media reported. But obstacles remain, even after Hamas agreed to relent on its key demand that Israel commit to ending the war as part of any agreement. A key part of that shift, officials told The Associated Press, is the level of destruction caused by Israel's rolling offensive.

Hamas still wants mediators to guarantee that negotiations conclude with a permanent ceasefire, according to two officials with knowledge of the talks. The current draft says the mediators — the United States, Qatar and Egypt — "will do their best" to ensure that negotiations lead to an agreement to wind down the war. Israel has rejected any deal that would force it to end the war with Hamas intact — a condition Netanyahu reiterated Sunday.

Hamas said in a statement Monday it is "offering flexibility and positivity" to facilitate a deal, while "Netanyahu is putting more obstacles in the way of negotiations, escalating his aggression and crimes against our people and persisting in attempts to forcibly displace them in order to thwart all efforts to reach an agreement." The two officials said there's also an impasse around whether Hamas can choose the high-profile prisoners held by Israel that it wants released in exchange for hostages. Some prisoners were convicted of killing Israelis, and Israel does not want Hamas to determine who is released.

China pushing for peace in Yemen

LONDON: The Chinese

charge d'affaires in Yemen has said Beijing is working closely with all parties in a push for peace in the country. Shao Zheng, in an interview with Asharq Al-Awsat published on Monday, said China was in discussions with UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg and the five permanent UN Security Council members regarding resolving the years-long conflict in the country.

He also urged all sides in Yemen to negotiate and sign a peace agreement as quickly as possible and end all attacks on commercial shipping through the Red Sea. Zheng praised the "positive" efforts of Saudi Arabia and Mohammed Al-Jaber, his "dear friend" and the Kingdom's ambassador to Yemen, in trying to bring about a peace settlement.

He told the newspaper that while China's military base in Djibouti is not involved in current Red Sea operations, its navy has protected more than 7,200 ships in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast over the past 15 years, with the involvement of 35,000

Chinese soldiers.

"We must ensure the Red Sea's security and make our position clear to the Houthis and other parties. The Red Sea crisis has lasted nearly six months, causing significant losses. We call for an end to these attacks," he said. "China believes the Red Sea crisis is linked to the conflict in Gaza. We urge immediate peace in Gaza and humanitarian aid to prevent the crisis from spreading. We must achieve peace in Gaza, respect the sovereignty of Red Sea countries like Yemen, and raise security awareness among commercial ships," he added.

When asked about a Houthi attack on China-flagged ship MV Huang Pu in March, Zheng said China was continually monitoring the Red Sea situation. "The foreign shipping market is complex, and identifying a ship's nationality can be difficult. We urge an end to attacks on commercial vessels to avoid disrupting global supply chains," he said.

"The international community must ensure Red Sea peace according to international law. Civilians must not be targeted," he added.

Zheng highlighted ongoing efforts by Beijing to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Yemen amid the conflict, which he witnessed himself during a recent visit to the country where he attended the arrival of Chinese medical aid.

"I saw significant local progress, like improved internet speeds, but Yemen still faces challenges such as electricity generation," he said. "In Aden, I met with the prime minister and other government officials for extensive discussions on bilateral relations and the situation in Yemen. We support the legitimate government and the Presidential Leadership Council," he added.

Zheng told Asharq Al-Awsat he was optimistic about the future of Chinese-Yemeni relations, saying they faced a "bright future" and would continue to develop. "This year marks the 68th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Yemen. We've seen fruitful cooperation in political and economic areas, both countries support each other regionally and internationally," he said. — Arab News

IHC serves notices to PTA, PEMRA

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday served notices to Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and three journalists over social media campaign against Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri.

Headed by Chief Justice Amir Farooq, a 7-member bench of Islamabad High Court comprising Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz heard the social media contempt case. Justice Jahangiri was not part of the full court bench.

The court during the hearing called Additional Attorney General Munaur Iqbal to explain the stance of the government on the matter. Chief Justice IHC Amir Farooq expressing concern over the government's silence on the social media campaign targeting judges said that it seems that the government was behind this campaign.

Justice Gul Hasan Aurangzeb asked the Additional Attorney General "The government's silence suggests that they are involved in this." Issuing notices to PEMRA, PTA and three journalists, the IHC adjourned the hearing until after the summer vacations.

Russian missiles kill 36 in Ukraine

KYIV (AFP): Russia struck cities across Ukraine on Monday with a missile barrage that killed three dozen people and ripped open a children's hospital in Kyiv, an assault condemned as a ruthless attack on civilians.

Dozens of volunteers including hospital staff and rescue workers dug through debris from the Okhmatdyt paediatric hospital in a desperate search for survivors after the rare day-time bombardment, AFP journalists on the scene saw. President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia launched dozens of missiles toward five towns and cities, in the south and east of the country, as well as the capital.

Ukrainian officials said 33 people were killed and another 137 wounded in the wave of 38 missiles. Three more were killed by Russian fire in Pokrovsk in eastern Ukraine. The air force said air defense systems had downed 30 projectiles.

Zelensky called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council over the barrage and urged Ukraine's allies to deliver "a stronger response to the blow that Russia has once again delivered on our population, on our land and on our children." The UN condemned the "unconscionable" Russian strikes while the EU slammed Moscow for "ruthlessly" targeting civilians and the French foreign ministry called the bombardment of a children's hospital "barbaric."

Canadian Prime Minister

Justin Trudeau described the attack as "abhorrent." Kyiv said the children's hospital had been struck by a Russian cruise missile with components produced in NATO member countries and announced a day of mourning in the capital. Russia hit back claiming the extensive missile damage in Kyiv was caused by Ukrainian air defense systems.

Moscow said its forces had struck their "intended targets," which it added were only defense industry and military installations. Medical staff acted quickly to move patients and personnel to the facility's basement after air raid sirens rang out over Kyiv on Monday. "For some reason, we always thought that Okhmatdyt was protected," said Nina, a 68-year-old hospital employee.

"We were 100 percent sure that they would not hit here," she told AFP, as she described the frantic rush as staff moved children with IV drips to the bunker. Officials in Kyiv said the attack had also damaged several residential buildings and an office block in Kyiv where AFP reporters saw cars on fire and shredded trees in charred courtyards.

DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company, said three of its electrical substations had been destroyed or damaged in Kyiv. Russian strikes on electricity infrastructure have already halved Ukrainian generation capacity in recent weeks compared to one year ago. Russian forces have repeatedly targeted the capital with massive

barrages since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022, and the last major attack on Kyiv with drones and missiles was last month. The emergency services said 22 people were killed in Kyiv on Monday, including at both medical facilities hit in the attack and that another 72 had been wounded.

In Zelensky's hometown of Kryvyi Rig, which has been repeatedly targeted by Russian bombardment, the strikes killed at least 10 and wounded over 41, officials there said. In Dnipro, a city of around one million people in the same region, one person was killed and six more were wounded, the region's governor said, when a high rise residential building and petrol station were hit. And in the eastern Donetsk region, where Russian forces have taken a string of villages in recent weeks, the regional governor said three people were killed in Pokrovsk — a town that had a pre-war population of around 60,000 people.

"This shelling targeted civilians, hit infrastructure, and the whole world should see today the consequences of terror, which can only be responded to by force," the head of Ukraine's presidential administration, Andriy Yermak, wrote on social media. Zelensky and other officials in Kyiv have been urging Ukraine's allies to send more air defense systems, including Patriots, to the war-battered country to help fend off deadly Russian aerial bombardment.

Civilians trial: 'No provision in constitution mandates 11-month remand'

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Hafeezullah Niazi, the father of one of the civilians whose cases are awaiting trial by military courts, raised the question before the Supreme Court on Monday that his son was on physical remand for 11 months which is against the constitution.

He appeared before a larger seven-member bench of the apex court which is hearing appeals against trials of May 9 arson accused in military courts with a copy of the constitution in his hand. He narrated a quote of Maulana Abul Kalam that the greatest injustice occurs in the fields of war or in the courts of justice.

Niazi's son Hassan has been in jail for his alleged involvement in the May incidents. He requested the court to entertain his miscellaneous plea. Justice Aminuddin said the bench is hearing appeals, it cannot entertain his

plea as there will be more requests if his request is accepted. Niazi told the bench that he met his son once on court's intervention.

At the outset of hearing, PTI's lawyer Salman Akram Raja submitted that the families had not been allowed to meet the accused for five weeks. Advocate Latif Khosa said the accused had been kept in bad conditions. Justice Mandokhail asked him that if the meetings had not taken place for five weeks, how he came to know that the accused have been kept in bad conditions.

Advocate Khosa replied that those who met earlier said the hands of the accused were tied behind their back. Later, Attorney General Mansoor Awan came to the rostrum. He expressed his surprise that why the families are not allowed to meet the accused because the issue had been resolved.

He submitted that if the [government's] appeal is admitted, the accused will be able to appeal against the decisions. They will be able to approach the high courts and the Supreme Court in addition to the military courts. Justice Mandokhail remarked that the place where Jinnah Sahib [Quaid-i-Azam] spent last days of his life was set to fire.

He asked the Advocate General for Balochistan, who filed an appeal against the decision of the military courts, that does he want a parallel judiciary? Justice Shahid Waheed asked him about the scope of appeals in the light of the decision of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah in the practice and procedure case. Can we hear the provinces in such an appeal, Justice Waheed continued.

He asked Advocate Hamid Khan how his request to be a party to the case can be heard. On this, the lawyer

replied that he requested to become a party on behalf of the Lahore High Court Bar Association. Justice Mandokhail said he (Hamid Khan) could be amicus curiae in the case. Why do you want to become a party on behalf of the Bar? Advocate Hamid Khan replied that the Bar had its own position on the matter. Justice Mandokhail remarked that if that was the case, he should have been a party when the case started.

Justice Waheed remarked that even the provinces should not have been heard in the intra-court appeals. Justice Mandokhail told Advocate Hamid Khan don't waste time, let the case proceed. Later, the court sought Advocate Faisal Siddiqui's opinion on the request of Hamid Khan. But he excused himself and said that he had filed a separate application for live telecast of the case.

Justice Aminuddin said the facility

of live broadcasting is only in Court Room One. Later, Faisal Siddiqui withdrew the request to telecast the hearing live. He said the court should decide the case soon, I do not follow such a request. Later, the court approved Hamid Khan's request to become a party by a 5-2 majority.

On this occasion, the decision of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah regarding the intra-court appeal was read by the attorney general in court. Justice Waheed inquired him whether the case was hearing the appeal as a "review" or as a full appeal. He observed that the Supreme Court was supposed to make rules related to intra-court appeals by now. Intra-court appeal cannot be combined with the Law Reforms Act.

Justice Waheed observed that the points which were not raised before the bench which decided the original case cannot be added in the arguments. He

questioned the attorney general that he argued that cabinet approval should have been sought when the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government withdrew its appeal. Did the provinces who filed appeals get approval from the cabinet? The attorney general said that in his view, cabinet approval was not required for appeal. The court directed him to ensure meetings of the family members with the accused. Later, the court adjourned the hearing of the case till July 11.

It may be recalled that the seven-judge bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, which is hearing appeals, includes Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Shahid Waheed, Irfan Saadat and Shahid Bilal. In October last year, a five-member larger bench declared null and void the trial of 102 civilians involved in the May 9 incidents in military courts.