

Two injured in blast

F.P. Report

HANGU: Two individuals were critically injured in a blast that occurred on the Main GT Road in front of the Vocational College in Hangu, media reported on Saturday. According to District Police Officer (DPO) Khalid, both injured persons were immediately rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment, where their condition remained critical.



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Executive has to comply with SC orders

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah says not implementing apex court's rulings would be 'a violation of Constitution'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Senior puisne judge Syed Mansoor Ali Shah said that it would be unconstitutional not to implement the Supreme Court verdict.

Addressing a seminar on Saturday, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah said that no one have the option to disobey the SC order. He was of the view that it is a constitutional binding to implement the verdict of the apex court. "I was called the acting chief justice of Pakistan. It is not true, I am the senior most judge, not the chief justice," he said.

He added that Qazi Faez Isa is the sitting chief justice of Pakistan and he is very good friend of him. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah said that minorities have equal rights both in Islam and Pakistan. "Our Holy Prophet (PBUH) had stopped to occupy the land of a church and gave rights to the Christians," he said.

The constitution of Pakistan also provides protection to minorities and Articles 21, 22, 23 and 25 address this subject, he added. According to Mansoor Ali Shah, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah also emphasised over the rights of minorities living in Pakistan. "The Supreme Court has also ruled that all the citizens enjoy equal rights," said Justice Mansoor Ali Shah.

He said that disregarding the apex court's rulings was also "against the separation of powers". "Separation of powers is the core component of democracy which shouldn't be disturbed. This is not a burden or a courtesy that you have to do, but a constitutional obligation that needs to be fulfilled."

"This is a delicate equilibrium which needs to be respected. We have an obligation to keep this equilibrium in balance



and there shouldn't be any executive overreach. No one has the choice or the prerogative to second guess if the judgment is right or wrong," the justice said. He said that only SC had the prerogative to decide a matter and after that the judgment has to be implemented.

There will be severe consequences if the constitutional duty of implementing the SC's orders is not fulfilled, he added. It may be noted that the ruling parties recently passed the Elections (Second Amendment) Bill, 2024, in parliament which seeks to 'circumvent' the Supreme Court's July 21 ruling that declared Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) a political party and eligible for reserved seats.

The apex court's full bench on July 21 ruled in favour of the Imran Khan-founded party in the reserved seats case, paving the way for its return to the parliament and effectively depriving the PML-N-led coalition government of its two-thirds majority in the parliament. Justice Shah had announced the 8-5 majority verdict of the SC full bench, which declared the PTI eligible to receive reserved seats for women and minorities.

President to confer award upon Arshad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari acknowledging record-setting performance of athlete Arshad Nadeem in Paris Olympics 2024, Javelin throwing category has directed to confer Hilal-i-Imtiaz upon him.

"The President will reward the civil award to Arshad Nadeem in recognition of his prominent performance in sports during a special ceremony. The President will confer the civil award under Article 259 (2) of the Constitution," said a press release issued by President Secretariat Press Wing on Saturday. Under the constitutional provision, the president can confer Pakistani citizens with civil awards in recognition of their meritorious services in different fields of life.

Upon the President's directive, a letter had been dispatched by the Aiwane-Sadr to the Cabinet Division, in this regard. President Zardari said that Arshad Nadeem, with his brilliant performance, had made the nation proud in the field of sports. Nadeem's marvelous achievement at the international level brought laurels to the nation. He had raised the name of country in athletics, said the contents of the letter, shared by President Secretariat Press Wing with media.

Govt unveils stamp honouring Arshad Nadeem

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Saturday announced the issuance of a special postage stamp to not only honour the Paris Olympics' gold medalist Arshad Nadeem, but also the freedom struggle of the Pakistani nation and its achievements on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day.

The initiative was taken on the special directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, said the minister in a news statement. Tarar said the special postage stamp has been titled "Azam-e-Istehkam" which is a testament to the country's commitment to development and prosperity.

He said a picture of the Javelin Thrower Arshad Nadeem has been added to the stamp to pay tribute to him for winning a Gold Medal and setting a new Olympic record by throwing the javelin at a distance of 92.97 meters at the Paris Olympics 2024. The minister said the freedom struggle of Pakistan's nation and its symbolic importance have been highlighted by adding an image of Minar-e-Pakistan to the stamp.

He said that the stamp issued by the Government of Pakistan on the occasion of Independence Day, would continue to remind the future generations not only about the struggle and sacrifices made by our ancestors for the freedom, but also the commitment of the government for the development of Pakistan.

IHC issues written order on Bushra's plea

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued a written order regarding the plea filed by former First Lady Bushra Bibi against her arrest in the new Toshakhana reference case.

The written order was released by Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir of the Islamabad High Court. The order stated that objections to Bushra Bibi's plea against arrest in the new Toshakhana reference case have been removed. According to the petitioner's lawyer, this plea is linked with two other pending pleas. The court noted that two petitions challenging call-up notices related to the same reference were already set for hearing.

PM lauds jawans for operation against terrorists

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday lauded officers and jawans for operation of Pakistan army against the terrorists in Tirah Valley, district Khyber and for eliminating four Khawarji terrorists.

In a statement, he said the officers and jawans of Pakistan army were eliminating the terrorists of Khawarji fitna from the soil of Pakistan. He paid tribute to Hawaldar Inam Gul, Sipahi Muhammad Imran and Sipahi Altaf Khan for embracing martyrdom in the operation against the terrorists.

He prayed for the elevation of ranks of the martyrs and for patience for the bereaved families. He said war against terrorism would continue till its complete eradication from the country. The whole nation stood shoulder to shoulder with

the armed forces of Pakistan against terrorism, he stressed. The officers and jawans of armed forces of Pakistan always gave preference to performance of duty over their lives, he said adding the whole Pakistan nation was proud of its martyrs and their families.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also strongly condemned an Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter for displaced Palestinians in Gaza city and said that the attack upon a children's school was an open aggression and barbarity which had no precedent in history.

"Israel has crossed all limits in its open aggression," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying. The prime minister called upon the international community, including the United Nations, to take practical steps to stop the ongoing Israeli aggression.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated Pakistan's demand to hold the leadership of Israel and its armed forces accountable for the genocide of Palestinians and war crimes. Israel should be given strict punishment for its gruesome crimes, he said and stressed upon implementation of a verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel.

The prime minister also reaffirmed Pakistan's all-out moral and diplomatic support to the Palestinian brothers and sisters. He prayed for the high ranks of shuhada who lost their lives in the attack and expressed condolences to the bereaved families. Earlier, in the day, according to Palestinian officials, an Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter for displaced Palestinians in Gaza city killed more than 100 people, including women and children.

People have no trust in parliament: Fazl

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F Chief Maulana Fazal Rehman has said that Pakistan's economy has been destroyed due to wrong policies. The JUI-F chief Maulana expressed these views while addressing his party workers in Kisan Convention held in Par Hoti area here on Saturday. On the occasion, the JUI-F central, provincial and local leaders and a large number of party activists attended the Kisan convention.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that China and Pakistan had a relation of long friendship that was why the Chinese leadership had planned to make Pakistan a gateway for its trade with the purpose to improve and make progress in the financial development of both countries.

On the other hand, he alleged that America and its western allied countries accelerated its efforts to stop and block the ways of finan-

cial development of both countries. He also blamed that the US and western powers had created some elements meant to make hurdles in financial development of both China and Pakistan.

The JUI-F chief reminded and claimed that he visited China in 1995 and convinced the Chinese relevant officials by some strong arguments to make investment in Pakistan. He deplored that Pakistan was an agricultural country and its economy was based on it but the country had failed to make the required development in this sector.

He pointed out that America and western powers had launched their efforts to bring geographical changes in countries of the world, adding that these powers were considering the present century as an era of geographical changes. He said that soon after coming into power, the incumbent prime minister Mian Shabaz Sharif had taken it as challenge that he would restore

financial condition of Pakistan but unfortunately had failed in his challenge so far.

Both the prime minister Mian Shabaz Sharif and army chief Asim Munir had visited China but they failed to convince its leadership for further investment over here, he said, adding that the Chinese relevant officials told that there was non-political stability in Pakistan that was why they could not do further investment here.

About rigging in the last general elections, Maulana Fazlur Rehman alleged that those people entered in Parliament of Pakistan who were not voted by people of the country. "Stability cannot be brought in the country if people have no confidence in the parliament," he added. He made it clear that they would not tolerate any action against religious seminaries. In this regard, he warned those quarters to avoid supporting and backing actions related to anti-religious seminaries.

The Frontier Post

Cop martyred in Charsadda

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of Special Branch of police was martyred after attacked by unidentified gunmen in Khanmai police station jurisdiction here on Saturday. Unknown motorcycle riders sprayed bullets at ASI Ismat Khan near his residence in Behlola area of Charsadda while he was on his way from home to join duty.



GAZA CITY: Palestinians reacting at the site of an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced people.

Fresh Israel airstrike on Gaza school kills 80

GAZA STRIP (AP): An Israeli airstrike hit a school-turned-shelter in Gaza early Saturday, killing at least 80 people, Palestinian health authorities said, in one of the deadliest strikes in the 10-month-old war between Israel and Hamas. The Israeli military acknowledged it targeted the Tabeen school in central Gaza City, claiming it hit a Hamas command center within the school. Hamas denied that.

The United Nations said the latest strike was part of Israel's increasing attacks on Gaza's schools, which have been turned into shelters for people who have been forced to flee their homes by the war. Video from the scene showed walls blown out on the ground level of a large building. Concrete chunks and twisted metal lay atop the blood-soaked floor, along with clothing, toppled furniture and other debris. A blackened car with the windows blown out was covered in rubble.

Fadel Naeem, director of the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City, told The Associated Press that the facility received 70 bodies of those killed in the strike and the body parts of at least 10 others. The Health Ministry said another 47 people were wounded. Naeem said some of the wounded had severe burns and many had to have limbs amputated.

"We received some of the most serious injuries we encountered during the war," he said. The strike hit without warning in the early morning before sunrise as people were praying at a mosque inside the school, according to Abu Anas, a witness who worked to rescue people. "There were people praying, there were people washing and there were people upstairs sleeping, including children, women and old people," he said. "The missile fell on them without warning. The first missile, and the second. We recovered them as body parts."

Three missiles ripped through the two-story building — the first floor housing the mosque and the second the school — where about 6,000 dis-

placed people were taking shelter from the war, said Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesperson for the Civil Defense first responders who operate under the Hamas-run local government. Many of the dead were unrecognizable, and many of the casualties were women and children, he said.

The UN had previously said that as of July 6, 477 out of 564 schools in Gaza had been directly hit or damaged in the war. In a report Saturday, the UN Human Rights Office said there have been at least 21 attacks on schools since July 4, leaving hundreds dead including women and children. Many of the schools were serving as shelters, the report said, adding that Israel has a duty under international law to provide safe shelter for the displaced. "There's no justification for these massacres," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement posted on the social media platform X, in reference to the strikes on schools.

Israel has blamed civilian deaths in Gaza on Hamas, saying the group endangers noncombatants by using schools and residential neighborhoods as bases for operations and attacks. Israeli intelligence indicated about 20 militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, including senior commanders, were using the Tabeen school compound to plan attacks on Israeli forces, Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman said in a statement on X. Shoshani also questioned the casualty numbers issued by the Palestinian Health Ministry.

Izzat Al-Rishq, a top Hamas official denied there were militants in the school. Israel said the targeted school was located next to a mosque serving as a shelter for Gaza City residents. A cameraman working for The Associated Press said, however, that the mosque and the classrooms were in one building, with the prayer hall on the ground floor and the school above it. A missile appeared to have penetrated through the floor of the classrooms to the mosque below and

then exploded, according to the cameraman.

The strike came as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for the two parties to achieve a ceasefire agreement that could help calm soaring tensions in the region following the assassination of top Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut, Egypt, which borders Gaza and serves as a key mediator, said the strike on the school showed Israel had no intention of reaching a ceasefire deal and ending the war. Neighboring Jordan condemned the attack as a "blatant violation" of international law. Qatar demanded an international investigation, calling it a "heinous crime" against civilians.

Late Friday, two separate airstrikes in central Gaza killed at least 13 people including three children and seven women, hospital authorities said. An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in the central city of Deir Al-Balah. One strike hit a house in the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing seven people, all but one of them women, hospital officials said. Another hit a house in Deir Al-Balah, killing six, including a woman and her three children, the hospital said.

Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,790 Palestinians and wounded more than 92,000 others, according to the Health Ministry, in the Hamas-run territory, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its tally. The war was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which militants from Gaza stormed into southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and abducting 250 others. More than 1.9 million of Gaza's prewar population of 2.3 million have been driven from their homes, fleeing repeatedly across the territory to escape offensives. Most are now crowded into ramshackle tent camps in an area of about 50 square kilometers (19 square miles) on the Gaza coast.

Iran to deliver hundreds of ballistic missiles to Russia

TEHRAN (Reuters): Dozens of Russian military personnel are being trained in Iran to use the Fath-360 close-range ballistic missile system, two European intelligence sources told Reuters, adding that they expected the imminent delivery of hundreds of the satellite-guided weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine.

Russian defense ministry representatives are believed to have signed a contract on Dec. 13 in Tehran with Iranian officials for the Fath-360 and another ballistic missile system built by Iran's government-owned Aerospace Industries Organization (AIO) called the Ababil, according to the intelligence officials, who requested anonymity in order to discuss sensitive matters.

Citing multiple confidential intelligence sources, the officials said that Russian personnel have visited Iran to learn how to operate the Fath-360 defense system, which launches missiles with a maximum range of 120 km (75 miles) and a warhead of 150 kg. One of the sources said that "the only next possible" step after training would be actual delivery of the missiles to Russia. Moscow possesses

an array of its own ballistic missiles, but the supply of Fath-360s could allow Russia to use more of its arsenal for targets beyond the front line, while employing Iranian warheads for closer-range targets, a military expert said.

A spokesman for the US National Security Council said the United States and its NATO allies and G7 partners "are prepared to deliver a swift and severe response if Iran were to move forward with such transfers." It "would represent a dramatic escalation in Iran's support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine," the spokesman said. "The White House has repeatedly warned of the deepening security partnership between Russia and Iran since the outset of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine."

Russia's defense ministry did not respond to a request for comment. Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations in New York said in a statement that the Islamic Republic had forged a long-term strategic partnership with Russia in various areas, including military cooperation.

"Nevertheless, from an ethical standpoint, Iran refrains from transferring

2024 is an election year: Omar Ayub

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Opposition Leader of the National Assembly, Omar Ayub, has stated that 2024 is an election year, and there is no deal being made with anyone.

Speaking to the media during his appearance at the Anti-Terrorism Court, Omar Ayub said that politicians should engage in politics according to the constitution, and according to Article 7 of the constitution, the state is the Majlis-e-Shura. He criticized that the PML-N and PPP are creating a rift between the public and the military.

He emphasized that the Election Commission should remain independent. He added that this year is crucial for elections, and only a strong prime minister can steer the country out of this turmoil. "The current 'Form 47 government' cannot achieve anything," he said.

Omar Ayub also pointed out that the price of electricity has increased by 2.5 rupees per unit, questioning how individuals with salaries of 20,000 or 25,000 rupees can manage to pay the electricity bills.



Governor awards degrees at university convocation

KARACHI (PPD): A special convocation of Baqai Medical University was held at Governor House under the chairmanship of Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori.

Consul Generals, Vice Chancellors of different countries, well-known industrialists, businessmen, elders of the city and others also participated in the ceremony. The Sindh governor awarded doctorate degrees to important personalities for outstanding services.

Mr Tesori was presented with an honorary doctorate degree of the Mehmood Kaat International University Niger by the Rector of the University, Dr Ibrahim. Tessori awarded Gold Medal to Pakistani Ambassador to Niger Dr Ahmed Ali Sirohi for promoting the image of Pakistan in Niger through public and economic diplomacy despite limited resources.

The Sindh governor also presented honorary doctorate degrees to prominent industrialists and businessmen Rehan Mehtab Chawla and Malik Shehbaz for their outstanding performance in the field of business and exports while Consul General of Turkey Cemal Sangu, Consul General of

Qatar Nayef Shahein RM. Sulaiti were also presented degrees for best diplomacy.

On this occasion, Tessori and Baqai Medical University Chancellor Dr Shoaib Baqai awarded gold medals to other prominent personalities in recognition of their performance. The Governor of Sindh while congratulating all the persons who received the honorary degree, expressed hope that they would continue their services in the future as well.

Tessori denounces terror attack on security forces in Tirah Valley: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori on Saturday condemned the terrorist attack on security forces in Tirah Valley. In a statement, Mr Tessori paid homage to the martyred officials and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. The governor while congratulating the security forces for killing many terrorists said that the whole nation was determined to root out terrorism.

He added: "Tartyrdoms strengthen our determination, and the sacrifices of the martyrs are a debt to the nation. The terrorists will be wiped out soon."

PA Speaker says he defender of Opp rights

LAHORE (APP): Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan has said that he is and will remain the defender of the rights of the opposition.

Talking to the media on the occasion of the inauguration of a plantation drive in Khadian Khas tehsil of district Kasur, Malik Ahmad Khan said that he is a defender of the rights of the opposition, and asks the government benches to remain silent during the speeches of the opposition leader.

He said that immoral actions of opposition members cannot be tolerated. Malik Ahmad Khan said that awareness about plantation should be created in schools and the education department can play a leading role in the plantation campaign, and the great cause should be included in the curriculum.

Marriyum meets PML-N leaders, parliamentarians

LAHORE (APP): On the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb met the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders and Members of Parliament.

She also met former federal minister Saira Afzal Tarar, former MNA Muhammad Tufail, former Punjab MPAs Chaudhry Ashraf, Dr. Muzaffar Sheikh, party leaders Taufiq Butt, Aamir Hayat, Ms. Shehrbano, Chaudhry Shehbaz along with other party leaders, assembly members including Pir Ashraf Rasool, Rana Ishaq, Sultan Tariq Bajwa, Naveed Ashraf, Shoaib Siddiqui and Taimur Ali Khan.

The senior minister also held separate meetings with Mahmood-ul-Hassan Cheema, Saeed Akbar Khan, Rana Abdul Manan, Malik Ghulam Qasim, Aoun Jahangir. Marriyum Aurangzeb also met Hamida Wahiduddin, Rana Ijaz Ahmed Noon, Mian

Muhammad Moeen Wattoo, Mansoor Azam, Mian Munir, Muhammad Sabtain Bokhari, and Gulzar Ahmed.

Matters pertaining to ongoing development projects in the relevant constituencies along with future political strategy were discussed in the meeting. The party leaders and assembly members paid tributes to CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif in making dedicated strives for the uplift of Punjab province, reduction of inflation along with undertaking record development projects across the province.

The assembly members lauded CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif for introducing an administrative revolution in the province. The party leaders also appreciated CM Punjab's commitment to uphold transparency, merit along with undertaking efforts to establish a corruption-free governance system in the province.

The senior minister said the CM Punjab had issued directions to resolve all

legitimate and genuine issues of the party leaders and assembly members on priority basis.

CM directs PRA to increase revenue by Rs50bn: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) to increase revenue by Rs50 billion without affecting the common men.

Chairing a meeting with PRA new Chairman Nauman Yusuf on Saturday, the CM directed to increase resources for maximum social welfare projects. She directed the authorities to

expand the scope of the PRA to 12 more districts of Punjab including Murree, Attock, Jhelum, Kasur, Sheikhupura, Mandi Bahauddin, Bahawalpur, Okara, Khanewal, Muzaffargarh, DG Khan and Toba Tek Singh.

The chief minister also directed to link Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for real-time integration of database. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Secretary Finance Mujahid Sher Dil and other relevant officers also attended the meeting.



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Chairman BOG inspects academic facilities at MMC

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Chairman of the Board of Governors (BoG) Medical Teaching Institution (MTI) Mardan, Prof. Dr. Arshad Javaid, visited Mardan Medical Complex (MMC) and discussed academic activities and patient care services with concerned individuals.

During the visit, Prof. Dr. Arshad Javaid held separate meetings with Associate Deans and faculty of BKMC and officials of MMC.

The Chairman BoG held indept discussions with them in the one on one meetings. Prof. Dr. Arshad Javaid led a brief visit to the BKMC building and visited various departments there.

Medical Director Prof Dr Imad Hameed, Associate Dean BKMC Prof Dr Mohtasim Billah, Associate Dean Prof Dr Sartaj Khan, Secretary to BoG Mr Azhar Khan,

Principal BKCD Prof Dr Munir Khan, Director Finance Muhammad Sheraz, Manager Human Resource Altaf Ahmad and other administrative officials accompanied him during the visit.

The Chairman BoG was informed about various facilities and departments during the visit. Prof Dr Arshad Javaid appreciated the infrastructure and services in the college and vowed to take any step necessary to ensure provision of quality medical education to the students of the college to produce best among the lot to serve the ailing humanity. Chairman also planted a sapling as part of Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign in the college.

Commissioner reviews cleanliness efforts

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Zaid Bin Maqsood conducted an inspection tour of various city areas to review cleanliness efforts.

He visited Mianwan and Wahga areas, accompanied by Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) Chief Executive Officer Babar Sahabuddin.

During the inspection, the commissioner directed the Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL), LWMC, and Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) teams to promptly clear stagnant water and litter in Mianwan. He also instructed WASA to clean the drain located between Mianwan and Ghous Garden. Commissioner Zaid Bin Maqsood emphasized that accumulated waste and stagnant water in neighborhoods contribute to odors and health risks.

He stressed that maintaining cleanliness is a shared responsibility between municipal departments and residents. Citizens are urged to keep their streets clean and dispose of waste properly in designated bins. Without public cooperation, effective street cleaning is challenging. The administrative machinery has been instructed to clear the areas promptly.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Zaid Bin Maqsood has issued instructions regarding rainfall management following reports of variable rainfall across the city. Some areas have experienced heavy rain, while others have seen minimal precipitation. For areas with significant rainfall, the commissioner directed that WASA and MCL personnel continuously monitor and ensure the operation of machinery at disposal stations.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY AS SHARIAH ADVISOR

Our Client, a Karachi based company, invites applications from individuals for advisory services as a Shariah Advisor on a contractual basis. Applicants should possess the following qualifications, experience, and meet the specified age limit:

JOB SPECIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION

Qualification:

- Holds Shahadat-ul-Alamiyyah Degree (Darse-Nizami) from any recognized Board of Madaris marks and Bachelor's degree recognized by Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan with minimum 2nd Class with at least four (4) years' experience of giving Shariah rulings in Fiqh-ul-Muamalat including the period of Takhasus fil Ifla and adequate knowledge of Islamic finance and Takaful/Re-Takaful.

- Post-Graduate Degree in Kuliyyatush Shariah or Kuliyyah Usooluddin will be a plus.

Experience:

- The candidate must have a minimum of seven (7) years of experience as a Shariah Advisor in the Takaful industry. Proficiency in English and knowledge of applicable Pakistani laws are essential. Preference will be given to those with experience of teaching Islamic Finance at reputable educational institutions in Pakistan or those holding an M.Phil or Ph.D. in Islamic Finance.

Key Responsibilities:

The Shariah Advisor will be responsible for, but not limited to, the following duties:

- Provide expert advice on the re-takaful policies and services.
- Ensure that Re-takaful operations, investments, contracts, and agreements of the Company adhere to Shariah principles.
- Ensuring that the re-takaful operations comply with any Rules, Regulation, guideline, ruling or decision issued by the SECP, with regard to Takaful/Re-takaful matters.
- Assist in the formulation and implementation of Shariah-compliant re-takaful policies and procedures.
- Provide technical advice and guidance in accordance with Shariah principles on handling facultative and treaty re-takaful policies.
- Provide training and educational sessions to officers and officials of the company, with regard to Takaful/Re-takaful matters.
- The Shariah Advisor shall be responsible for fulfilling all duties as outlined in the Takaful Rules 2012.
- Any other assignment or task as assigned by or with approval of CEO or Board.

Terms/Conditions and other related important points:

- The selection will be on basis of merit in accordance with the criteria prescribed in this advertisement and Takaful Rules, 2012.
- The interviewing committee will be the competent authority for finalizing the order of merit on basis of the performance of candidates in the interview.
- For interview, among other things, the candidates will be expected to have carried out prior detailed in-depth study of the books of accounts of Client, with regard to Re-Takaful operations.
- The advisory services will be initially for two years; however extendable further as per need of company with mutual agreement of both parties and subject to approval of BoD.
- The selected advisor will be paid fixed amount per month as consultancy fee, to be mutually decided in Interview commiserate with relevant verifiable experience of the candidate.
- The selected advisor will report to the CEO of the Company or any other officer authorized by CEO.
- The work may require travelling within or outside Pakistan however the same shall be strictly subject to prior approval by the CEO.

Age: Maximum 55 years of age on closing date of the applications.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. The appointment will initially be made for two years, further extendable upon satisfactory performance.
2. Original academic/ professional documents mentioned in resume along will be required at the time of interview.
3. The applicants working in public sector are required to provide NOC at the time of interview.
4. The candidate shall not be entitled for any TA/DA while appearing for the interview.
5. Client reserves the right to stop the hiring process at any stage without assigning any reason.
6. Only shortlisted applicants will be invited for interview and Selection will be finalized as per merit resulted by the interview
7. Any efforts made to influence the recruitment and selection process will lead to disqualify the potential candidate, who may otherwise be qualified.
8. Applications not submitted as per above instructions shall not be considered.

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Sealed bids (in accordance with PPRA Rule No. 36(b) are invited by below mentioned office for the following requirements in Pak Rs.:-

S.#.	Description & Bid No.	Fixed Bid Security (PKR)	Bid Submission Date/Time	Bid Opening Date/Time/Place	Basis PKR (Price)
01	Procurement of Multi service access transport solution (multiplexer) for AIAP Lahore (with Installation and Commissioning) I/T No. HQCAA/1992/255/XXLN	Rs. 508,000/-	09-09-2024 1100 Hours	09-09-2024 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	F.O.R
02	Procurement of Optical Fiber Cable and Allied Equipment at QIAP Quetta Airport I/T. No. HQCAA/1992/256/XXLN	Rs. 18,100/-	10-09-2024 1100 Hours	10-09-2024 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	F.O.R
03	Procurement of VHF (AM) Dual channel single cavity band pass filter / combiner qty. 10 for PCAA Airport I/T. HQCAA/1992/230/XXLN	Rs. 309,750/-	11-09-2024 1100 Hours	11-09-2024 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	F.O.R
04	Procurement of VHF Preselector P/o TDME 28R IIAP Islamabad I/T. HQCAA/1992/259/XXLN	Rs. 105,100/-	12-09-2024 1100 Hours	12-09-2024 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	F.O.R

Bids may be submitted as per conditions set out in Bidding documents available on PPRA E-PAD System <http://eprocure.gov.pk>.

Bids should be submitted electronically through PPRA EPADS web portal <http://eprocure.gov.pk> as well as physically submitted (sealed envelope) before closing time & date at below-mentioned address, otherwise the submission shall not be considered.

Bids must be submitted electronically as well as in hard format, in a sealed envelope duly filled and attached with requisite information in the specified format provided in the Bidding Document, to the address as mentioned below on or before prescribed schedule otherwise the submission shall not be considered. The sealed bids shall be opened on the same day at given time.

Note: All prospective bidders interested to participate shall immediately inform PCAA through Intimation letter (along with proof of active taxpayer list (100% compliance) [ATL for sales tax] of FBR) and GST/NTN certificates at the address below OR on email: sajid.noor@caapakistan.com.pk.

Original Bid Security must be attached with the Technical Proposal (hard format sealed envelope) and the Bid Security copy (pay order / bank guarantee) must be attached through EPADS online submission as well before submission Date & Time.

Time period for performance of contract: Till the satisfactory completion of contract and warranty period. PCAA reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids due to cogent reasons which will be communicated to bidders on request.

This advertisement is also available on CAA Website www.caapakistan.com.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk.

**Additional Director, Logistics (ANS),
Logistics Center (South), HQs Civil Aviation Authority,
JIAP Karachi Pakistan Tel: 021-99072265 Fax: 021-99242675**

PID(K)396/24

www.caapakistan.com.pk



**Government of Pakistan
Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication**

DIGITAL PAKISTAN

VACANCY Announcement

Applications are invited for the following position in Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication on contract basis

CONSULTANT (LEGAL) MP-II SCALE

Details including required qualifications, TORs/job description, conditions to apply, age limit, shortlisting criteria, etc. are available on the website of the Ministry and National Job Portal (NJP). Candidates meeting the required criteria should submit their applications at the URL address given below within Fifteen (15) days of publication of the advertisement. No hard copy of application shall be accepted and all applications must be sent via NJP online. Shortlisted candidates who are working in Government Sector are required to produce NOC at the time of interview. This Ministry believes in gender equality.

[Http://www.moitt.gov.pk](http://www.moitt.gov.pk)

<http://www.njp.gov.pk>

**(Ejaz Ahmad)
Section Officer (Admn)**

Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication

7th Floor, Kohsar Block, Pak Secretariat, Islamabad, Tele: 051-9210228

PID(I)No.979/24



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur presiding over a meeting of Elementary & Secondary Education Department at CM's House.

Chief Secretary visits Kumrat, chairs meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary on Saturday visited Kumrat Upper Dir and chaired a meeting to discuss development projects and progress on tree plantation campaign.

Deputy Commissioner Upper Dir, Naveed Akbar, Additional Chief Secretary, Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Commissioner of Malakand Division, Saqib Raza Aslam and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Upper Dir presented a detailed briefing to Chief Secretary relating to regional development projects and plantation campaign. He also highlighted measures being taken to promote tourism and protect the natural environment in Kumrat Valley besides a briefing on Kumrat Development Authority.

On this occasion, Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of continuing efforts to promote tourism and preserve natural environment in the area.

He further stressed that all government departments must ensure timely delivery of services to public. He urged officers to carry out their duties diligently and facilitate public in getting access to government offices for solving their problems.

Age limit for Vice Chancellor challenged at PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The age limit of 62 years set for the post of Vice-Chancellor has been challenged at the Peshawar High Court. The posts of Vice-Chancellor are vacant in various universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and advertisements have been published in various newspapers to fill these posts, but the age limit of 62 years has been set, which has been challenged by Professor Dr. Bashir Ahmed in the PHC.

In the constitutional petition, it has been stated

that there is no restriction on the post of Vice-Chancellor in the law, but the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has issued an advertisement contrary to the law, which is a violation of the Universities Act 2012. Professor Dr. Bashir Ahmed has served as the Vice-Chancellor of Bacha Khan University, Charsadda, and has retired as a meritorious professor from the Department of Biotechnology, University of Peshawar. He is also a recipient of the Presidential Award.

The petition stated that

there is no age limit anywhere in Pakistan. If we look at Punjab and other provinces, the age limit for Vice-Chancellor is 65 years. Moreover, there are many institutions like the Federal Shariat Court, Election Commission, and others where people above 65 years are working.

The plea added has requested the court to declare the age limit in the advertisement as illegal and allow him to participate in the race for the post of Vice-Chancellor, which is his constitutional and legal right.

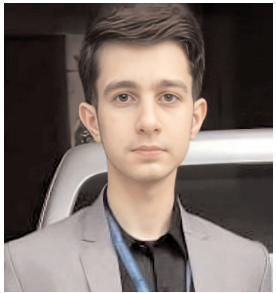
Governor expresses condolence

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed his condolences over the martyrdom of three security personnel in Tirah valley of district Khyber.

Governor Kundi prayed for the departed souls of the martyrs' ranks and offered heartfelt sympathy to their families, urging them to remain patient.

He affirmed that the sacrifices of the security forces in the fight against terrorism will not be in vain, and emphasized that the entire nation stands united with the security forces in this battle against terrorism.

Hurairah secure 1085 in 10th class



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Abu Hurairah has secured 1st position in International Islamic School in the 10th class annual examination of for the year 2024, scoring 1085 marks out of 1200.

He has achieved a remarkable feat by securing the top position in his school, International Islamic School, in the 10th class annual examination for the year 2024.

He credited his success to the tireless efforts and dedication of his teachers, as well as the blessings and prayers of his parents.

Cabinet elected

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: People's Traders Association appointed Haji Shabih Al Hussain as provincial president while added that will work for welfare of business community, on Saturday.

According to the announcement made by the provincial president Sikan-dar Iqbal, he has been given the post of provincial vice president. He is the main worker of Pakistan People's Party. In one of his statements, he has said that I will try to fulfill the trust that has been expressed in me.

The party has always solved the problems of the traders and the People's Party is a people's party. We will take them into confidence and decide the future course of action. We will also meet with the chairman FBR under the leadership of the provincial president about the fixed tax.

However, he said these

Negotiations with political parties in final stage: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said that negotiations with representatives of all political parties are in final stage to discuss with the center for securing provincial rights.

He said this during a meeting with former Senator Afrasiab Khattak, the senior leader of the National Democratic Movement (NDM). The meeting also included Ahmad Karim Kundi, the parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, and NDM leader Kifayat Azad.

The discussion focused on the current political situation in the country and the law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the importance of seeking guidance and advice from senior political leaders.

He revealed that negotiations with political parties are in final stage to discuss with the federal government for provincial rights.

He stressed the need to form a political jirga to negotiate with the federal government with strong arguments for provincial rights.

Kundi highlighted the role of Ahmad Karim Kundi in effectively representing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's interests both in the Governor's House and the provincial assembly.

He underscored the pri-

orities of promoting the province's culture, tourism, and sports, and bringing the rich Pashtun culture and hospitality into the global spotlight.

He also stressed the importance of focusing on peace to accelerate the development process, noting that intellectuals, scholars, and opinion leaders play a crucial role in this endeavor.

Afrasiab Khattak praised Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and MPA Ahmad Kundi for their efforts in advocating for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's issues.

He emphasized the necessity of political forces uniting on a single platform to address the province's challenges.

The NDM expressed its full support for Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's struggle for provincial rights and affirmed its commitment to protecting and promoting Pashtun rights, traditions, culture, and art.

Meanwhile, the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has highlighted the critical need to promote messages of peace and tolerance from mosques, minarets, and Sufi shrines.

Speaking during a meeting with Sufi leader Syed Sultan Faiz-ul-Hassan Sarwari Qadri at the Darbar Sultan Bahu Trust, Governor Faisal Kundi emphasized that the write up and teachings of Sultan Bahu are rich in principles of peace, tolerance, and monotheism.

Kundi stressed the

importance of introducing the younger generation to Sultan Bahu's teachings to protect them from disbelief and polytheism.

He lauded Sultan Faiz-ul-Hassan Sarwari Qadri for his efforts to modernize and integrate mosque and Sufi shrine systems with contemporary education at the Masjid Hussain in Jhang.

He also praised the Sultan Bahu Trust's efforts in promoting both religious and modern education and their welfare services in countries such as the UK and Pakistan.

The Governor described these efforts as exemplary and worthy of emulation.

In response, Syed Sultan Faiz-ul-Hassan Sarwari Qadri acknowledged the Governor's commendation and appreciated his commitment to serving Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on this occasion also visited the residence of Federal Minister for Petroleum, Musaddiq Malik, to offer his condolences on the death of the minister's uncle.

Former Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, Nadeem Afzal Chan, accompanied the Governor.

During the visit, Governor Kundi expressed his sympathies to Minister Malik and offered prayers for the departed soul.

Following the condolence meeting, discussions were held on the country's political situation and regional issues.

KP Advisor issues stern warning to federal govt

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Finance Advisor, Muzammil Aslam, has issued a stern warning to the federal government, stating that if promised funds are not provided, expectations of a budget surplus from the IMF will be unrealistic.

In an interview with a local TV news channel, Aslam highlighted that the province was expected to receive 400 billion rupees for merged districts this year.

However, the allocation from the Annual Develo-

pment Program and the budget totals only 70 billion rupees, with clarity on the actual amount expected only by June 30, 2025.

Aslam criticized the federal government for increasing budgets for Kashmir by 50% and for Gilgit-Baltistan by 37%, while tribal districts saw no increase. He accused the federal government of unfair treatment.

The Finance Advisor stressed that financial allocations should align with salary increases and warned that failure to meet these

commitments would jeopardize the province's ability to manage a surplus. He noted a delay in federal payments for electricity profits and royalties over the past two years.

Aslam also pointed out that the province's revenue estimate has increased from 70 billion rupees last year to 93 billion rupees this year. He urged for a new National Finance Commission (NFC) award to ensure fair share distribution but lamented that the federal government is obstructing this process.

‘Injustice become a major cause of chaos’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman, Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faiq Shah endorsed remarks of COAS Gen Syed Asim Munir Ahmed NI (M) and HI (M) in which he stated the greatest crime in the eyes of Allah is the spread of chaos on earth.

Addressing party's senior central leader and office bearers from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday, Shah said government duty is to prevent reasons of crime but none of the rulers had fulfilled this responsibility.

The party leader said Pak Army, security institutions, people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the whole nation made history by giving unmatched sacrifices to make the motherland cradle of peace.

However, he said these

sacrifices had put him on the backburner in ill-conceived policies of governments, injustice and political purposes/interests.

Faiq said adherence to sharia laws is clearly in the constitution of the country as in its beginning it was noted none of the law is contradictory to 'Qura'an' and 'Sunnah'.

But, he blamed the rulers for creating hurdles in the law and justice system.

The party leader said corruption, favoritism, nepotism and interests had properly made part of the system that created hate among people and called for elimination of root cause.

He once again made it clear that equality won't come in the political, social and economic system until provision of justice and authority to people.

Shah said his party has

brought law and justice as topmost priority in its manifesto.

He added people were facing hardships for availing speedy justice for the last 75 years.

He went on to say that injustice gave birth to chaos.

The ATP chief witnessed public rights being adversely violated.

He said all institutions including the police are only busy in services to VVIP.

Faiq said ordinary citizens were faced with suffering in courts, police stations, government departments, roads and streets.

Where do people who are deprived of basic facilities go?

Shah said his party's legal and ethical assistance and public demands will bring it to limelight.

I.Day festivities bring flourishing trade to car painters, henna artists

PESHAWAR (APP): As the nation are all set to celebrate the 77th Independence Day of Pakistan on Wednesday, the festive spirit has brought great boom to local businesses and trade in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Inam Ali, a 55-year-old car painter from Nowshera, is experiencing a surge in demand for his services on the joyous occasion of Independence Day celebrations.

Ali, who typically paints 10 to 12 vehicles daily, has seen orders soar to 25 per day, thanks to the influx of customers eager to decorate their vehicles in green and white, the colors of the national flag.

Complaining about load shedding, Ali has hired generator on rent besides additional workers and extend his working hours late into the night.

Meanwhile, henna tattoo artists are also thriving during the Independence Day celebrations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Shagufta Bibi, a 55-year-

old henna expert, reported a significant rise in her business as both boys and girls seek to adorn themselves with patriotic designs.

Shagufta, who operates a shop on Jinnah Street in Peshawar Cantonment, noted that her special henna stock from Lahore has been in high demand, with customers opting for green and white designs to express their national pride.

Her usual fee of Rs300 per customer has remained unchanged despite the heightened demand.

Sidra Bibi, a customer from Wapda Town, expressed her enthusiasm for celebrating Pakistan's Independence Day with great pomp and show.

"I came here to get my face painted with the colours of our national flag because I want to look different on this special day," she said. The day, she added, is marked with great national pride and enthusiasm as Pakistan commemorates its journey since independence achieved on August 14, 1947.

The advertisers and graphic designers have also witnessed an economic turnaround after Peshawar was made green and white on occasion of independence day.

Attracting substantial orders of advertisement and printing of national flags, posters, graphics designing, promotional cards, stickers, badges, billboards, panaflex and souvenirs from government departments, private organizations, educational institutions and civil society, the printers, publishers and graphic designers made roaring business during last 10 days in Peshawar where Jashn-e-Azadi materials were sold like a hot cake.

The printers of Mohalla Jahangi, a hub of printing, papers and graphic industries near historic Qissa Khawani bazar received heavy printing orders from all 37 districts including seven merged tribal districts in KP.

They have rolled out hundreds of thousands of

national flags, posters, banners and decorative accessories since the start of this month while vendors made quick profits on streets.

Zahid Shah, a vendor of independence day related accessories at historic Qisakhwani bazaar said the youth and children were taking great interest in green badges, stickers and masks having colours of national flags.

He said interest of youth in models of buildings of Pakistan Movement including Minar Pakistan was overwhelming.

Known as Shah Ghee in local market, he said that previous stock were sold out and his brother brought more from Lahore as special Independence Day offer.

They said that Pakistan has given them identity and prestige and it is our collective duty to work hard for its prosperity.

They said we should not forget martyres of Pakistan Movement who laid down lives our safe and better future.

Heavy rains likely to generate flash floods in several nullahs, streams

PESHAWAR (PPI): Pakistan Meteorological Department predicted on Saturday that heavy rains might generate flash flooding in local nullahs and streams of Sialkot, Narowal, Jhelum, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Lahore, Hafizabad, Murree, Galliyat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Kohistan, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, Kohat, Karak and Kashmir on 10 and 11th August.

Heavy Downpour may cause urban flooding in low lying areas of Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Sia-

lkot, Narowal, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, Nowshera and Peshawar.

Landslides may cause roads closure at the vulnerable hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the forecast period.

Synoptic Situation: Monsoon currents from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal are penetrating upper parts of the country at lower tropospheric levels and likely to penetrate in central parts from today. A westerly wave is affecting upper and central parts of the country.

Saturday weather: Inter-

mittent rain-windstorm or thundershower (with few heavy falls) is expected in Islamabad, Kashmir, north-east Punjab, Potohar region and KP. Rain-windstorm or thundershower is likely at isolated places in south-central Punjab, northeast-south Balochistan and southeast Sindh.

Sunday weather: Rain-wind or thundershower is expected in Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Potohar region, Islamabad, northeast-south Balochistan and southeast-south Sindh while, few heavy falls also likely during the period.

Post 24 Hours Weather:

Rain-wind or thundershower occurred at isolated places in Islamabad, Punjab, eastern Sindh, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, eastern Balochistan and Kashmir. Hot and humid weather prevailed over other parts of the country.

Rainfall (mm): Bokra 104, Saidpur 65, Golra 51 & Zero point 09, Airport 01, Kacheri 93, Chaklala 30 & Shamsabad 13, Faisalabad 21, Sahiwal 11, Murree 04, Okara 03, Mangla & Jhang 01, Tharparkar (Diplo 24, Islamabad 05), Mithi 07, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa: Balakot 10, Bar Khan 05, Lasbella 02, Kashmir: Garhi Dopatta 04.



PESHAWAR: Workers of 1122 watering to plants at Sadar Road.



In brief

Man killed in house blast F.P. Report

D I KHAN: A man was killed and four family members including woman and children in a blast inside a house here on Saturday. According to details, blast caused due to unknown reasons rocked a house located in Gilani Town of Dera Ismail Khan. As a result of explosion, a man died on the spot while four others including three children and a woman were injured. The rescue teams reached the scene and shifted the body and injured to hospital. Reasons of the blast could not be ascertained and police after registering a case into the incident have started investigations.

2 most wanted terrorists held F.P. Report

LARKANA: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has arrested two most wanted terrorists belonging to a banned organization in Naudero, Larkana. As per details, the CTD recovered 350 grams of explosive material, 6 detonators, Kalashnikov powder, wire, nut bolts, and a grenade from the terrorists' possession. According to the Counter-Terrorism Department, the arrested terrorists, Jamil Sheikh and Habibullah Jatoti, residents of Mehrabpur, were involved in the May 29 blast at the DSP office. During interrogation, the terrorists revealed that they had received training in Kandahar, Afghanistan and they were planning to carry out a bomb blast at the Ladies Jail and the Larkana Stadium on August 14. The CTD has registered a case against the terrorists under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

27 acres state land reclaimed F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: The local administration has reclaimed 27 acres of state land from Qabza mafia in Tehsil Jaranwala. Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed, presiding over a meeting here on Saturday, said that accused had grabbed state land of 27 acres near Chak No.534-GB Jaranwala for the last three decades. She said that a special team comprising officers of district administration, forest department, revenue department and police conducted an operation against the land grabbers and retrieved 27 acres of state land. She appreciated the performance of district administration against the Qabza mafia and announced planting maximum plants on the retrieved land on August 14. She said that school-boys, farmers and activists of civil society to be invited on August 14 to make a record by planting the maximum number of trees at the land by in one minute. She also announced a tree plantation competition at the divisional level on Yaum-e-Azadi and said that cash prizes and commendation certificates would be awarded to the district administration which wins the contest by planting the maximum number of trees across the district. She also directed the irrigation department to release sufficient water for the trees and plants of the forest department. Additional Commissioner Coordination Musawwar Ahmad Khan Niazi, Divisional Forest Officer Ansar Rasool and Assistant Commissioner General Dr Abid Mumtaz Khan Sial were also present in the meeting.

Govt projects with sub-standard materials demolished



F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The District administration, Khyber demolished scores of government projects after detection of utilizing sub-standard construction materials in the ongoing schemes in Bazaar Zakha area of tehsil Landi Kotal last day.

On complaint lodged by the locals on occasion of public previous day, the Deputy Commissioner under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal, Adnan Mumtaz formulated and an

inquiry team, comprised of C&W officials and technical experts

The team visited various construction sites and after thorough examination and test, declared the construction materials poor quality and substandard being used in current government schemes in Bazaar Zakha Khel. Scores of new built projects including protection walls, spell ways, small overpass etc. were bulldozed with heavy machinery, the administration said.

Deputy Commissioner,

Khyber Capt (Retd) Sanullah Khan said that no compromise will be made in negligence of public welfare developing schemes and all uplift projects will be approved as per its PC one. Under the Integrated Program of Bazaar Zakha Khel, many mega projects are under construction in the area. The tribesmen lauded the positive initiative of the district administration and said it will curb corruption in government schemes and the schemes will be placed as per its PC one.

JKLF holds torchlight rally in Muzaffarabad

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the Students Liberation Front (SLF) organized a torchlight rally in Muzaffarabad, the capital of AJK, to show solidarity with the illegally detained party chairman, Muhammad Yasin Malik, held in New Delhi's notorious Tihar Jail.

The rally was led by Khawaja Manzoor Ahmad Chishti, the central secretary of Finance for JKLF. The event, held in the Chhatar area of Muzaffarabad city, saw a substantial turnout of youths who chanted slogans demanding Yasin Malik's release and denounced the ongoing Indian state terrorism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the rally, Khawaja Manzoor Ahmad Chishti and other speakers condemned the Modi government's actions against Yasin Malik as a blatant act of political vendetta. They

criticized the inhumane and undemocratic practices of the BJP-led Indian government under Narendra Modi and called on the international community and human rights organizations to exert pressure on India for Malik's release.

The rally was attended by JKLF Muzaffarabad District President Raja Asim, SLF central spokesperson Faheem Bhaya, District President Nauman Mir, City President Moez Raja, and several other leaders and activists.

Meanwhile, the Pir Panjal Freedom Movement and the Muhajireen Ittehad Forum organized a martyrs' conference in the city of Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The conference titled 'Shuhada-e-Jammu Pir Panjal Conference' was chaired by Qazi Imran, Vice Chairman of the Pir Panjal Freedom Movement, with Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Convener of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu Kashmir (APHC-AJK)

chapter, serving as the chief guest.

The event was attended by a large number of refugees from occupied Jammu and Kashmir as well as local residents. In his address, Ghulam Muhammad Safi stated that the martyrs of Jammu and Kashmir are the pride of the Kashmiris and that their sacrifices will eventually bear fruit. He emphasized that the mission of honoring the great martyrs would continue until occupied Jammu and Kashmir is freed from India's oppressive rule.

Other speakers, including Qazi Imran, Raja Khadim Hussain, Zahid Safi, Khawaja Ayaz, Zabeer Jarral, Ijaz Mir, Bashir Shagu, Shabbir Chichi, Dr. Riyaz, Maulana Atiq, Rehman Chichi, Aftab Arif, Muhammad Asif, Muhammad Farooq, Asif Ansari, Shabbir Furqani, reiterated that the sole mission of the Kashmiris is to achieve freedom from India, for which they continue to make immense sacrifices.

Press club elects new cabinet

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Press Club Registered Toba Tek Singh held annual 2024 elections, in which Chaudhry Mohammad Afzal Gujjar was elected as Chairman, Manzoor Ahmad Naaz President, Dr. Naveed Akhtar Ghazi Senior Vice President, Rana Imran Ahmed Vice President, Rana Muhammad Khan General Secretary, Muhammad Hassan Saeed Joint Secretary, Muhammad Iqbal Bal Secretary Broadcasting, Mian Muhammad Imran Manzoor Khazan, Hafiz Hafeezur Rahman librarian.

Moreover, Waheed Kokab, Muzzamal Mehmood, Mian Muhammad Irfan, Rana Mudassar Iqbal, Naveed Musa, Iftikhar Ahmed, Shahid Nadeem, members of the executive committee, Mian Muhammad Akram was chosen as guardian and Umar Farooq Bajwa as legal advisor.

All the officials and

members congratulated each other from the bottom of their hearts and expressed hope that we all will use our pen for justice and truth.

Disaster Management Authority ready for potential floods: On the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, preliminary preparations are underway to deal with the possible flood situation and urban fielding from monsoon.

In this regard, a meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority was held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu to review the preparations of the district administrative departments.

In which Assistant Commissioners, Chief Officer, Municipal Officer, Rescue 1122 Emergency, SDO Irrigation, Civil Defense Officer Mehmood

Gull, Deputy Director Agriculture Noshair Khan and District Information Officer Shahbaz Ansari including heads of relevant departments participated. Irrigation, while briefing about the possible flood situation in Ravi River, said that the water situation in Ravi River is normal now, there is no danger.

Arrangements with reference to Urban Fielding in Sonhas been finalized as per SOPs of Punjab Govt. On this occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih said that all the available machinery should be kept in functional condition and the operation to eliminate encroachment from flood dams should be completed as soon as possible.

The Department of Health and Livestock should have an ample stock of medicines. While the Chief Officers of Municipal Committees were ordered to clean the sewage drains to deal with urban flooding due to monsoon rains.

Okara police make arrest in 32-year-old murder case

OKARA (INP): What could be termed an instance of justice delayed, but not denied, police in Gogera, Okara have arrested a man 32 years after he committed a murder, police said on Saturday.

SHO Nasir Javed has said that raids are being conducted for the arrest of other persons nominated in

the FIR. He has said that the name of the man taken into custody is Muhammad Hayat alias Mamma, who had murdered Lal Hussain in connivance with his wife who wanted to contract second marriage with him.

The officer has informed that the suspects first buried Hussain's body

and then threw it into a river. The SHO has further said that the deceased's brother, who was hitherto in the dark about the murder, came to know about it when one of the suspects in the case confessed before him to have murdered his brother after he had a fight with a co-suspect.



HYDERABAD: Youngsters jumping and bathing in a Canal to get some relief from scorching hot and humid weather in the city.

Commissioner plants sapling in TMA Office Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah Saturday planted a sapling in the green area of Tehsil Administration Authority (TMA). Commissioner Kohat Division Mutasim Billah Shah said on this occasion that planting trees not only beautifies the environment but also secures our future.

"Every tree we plant is a new hope for life. Let's all together make our earth green and realize the dream of a better world for future generations." He said, through this campaign we all can lay the foundation of a green and prosperous future together.

Commissioner Kohat specially mentioned the Provincial Government's Green Growth Strategy Billion Tree Plus Plantation Campaign for Clean and Green Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and said that every member of the society should play its role to make this campaign of the Provincial Government a success. It is a matter of a better future for our future generations, he added.

Mother of five poisoned to death

MURIDKE (INP): A mother of five children allegedly was poisoned to death in Muridke, relatives said on Saturday. The relatives of the deceased protested by blocking GT Road in front of THQ Hospital against administration for not doing autopsy.

According to the relatives, the hospital administration said that the lady doctor is on leave for a month, the autopsy should be done elsewhere. The relatives of the deceased alleged that 45-year-old Shakeela was poisoned while led to her death. They further alleged that the accused kidnapped the deceased four months ago. Later he killed her and was burying the dead body secretly but they reached the spot suddenly, the relatives said. However, police claimed that they have arrested accused Rana Boota. While staging the protest, the relatives of the deceased appealed Punjab chief minister and IG Punjab for provide them justice.

Youth commits suicide

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): A youth committed suicide by consuming toxic pills over dispute of hefty electricity bill, police said on Saturday.

According to details, the incident took place in Bhutta Colony of Chishtian in district Bahawalnagar where two brothers exchanged hot words over heavy power bill.

The elder brother alleging younger brother of consuming more electricity and paying less bill disconnected power connection of room of the younger brother. Disheartened over attitude of elder brother, Sajid consumed toxic pills due to which his condition deteriorated. The youth was rushed to Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital where he was referred to Bahawalpur due to critical condition but expired soon after reaching Bahawalpur.

Proposed sale of university land ANP to call All Parties Conference

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Awami National Party (ANP) announced to call all parties conference on the issue related to the provincial government's plan to sell a piece of land of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

ANP leader Imran Manduri said that they met with leaders of different political parties including PTI, bar associations, trader union leaders and media persons and apprised them about the public reservations about the issue. He thanked to the leaders who showed their positive response and extended their full cooperation on the above mention issue.

He claimed and pointed out that the all parties con-

ference was scheduled to be held on August 16, at 3.00 p.m. in Executive Club Sheikh Maltoon Town with the purpose to bring unity among all political parties and civil society members on the university land issue as well as to provide them an opportunity to adopt a uniformed policy about it.

He said that PTI leaders were claiming in past that they would not only impose education emergency in the country but also concert the houses of governors and chief ministers into universities. "Now Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is going to sell the land and properties of educational institutions," he added.

Residents hold protest against power outage

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: People of the city Hafizabad protested against suspension of electricity supply to city on every Wednesday and Saturday which not only caused business lose but also other multiple problems due prolonged load-shedding.

Social workers including Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman have demanded the GEPCO Chief to take notice of unjustly suspension of electricity twice a week so that factory workers and other business community could continue their jobs and business without unnecessary

interval.

DC directs completion of repair works: Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Sundas Irshad visited government girls' primary school Qila Saahib Singh and reviewed standard of cleanliness and available academic facilities being provided to students in the school. She directed the headmistress of the school to ensure completion of repair work before opening of school after summer vacations and improve hygienic condition of school particularly to improve cleanliness of washrooms in the school.

Latte, DC visited disposal

works on Kolo Road and newly constructed parking shed for machinery of Municipal Committee. On this occasion, she said that World Bank was given new machinery worth millions of rupees to MC Hafizabad and parking shed was necessary for safety of machinery. She directed the Municipal Officers to park all machinery under the shed in order for saving from climate change.

During the visit of disposal works, she directed the Municipal Officers to improve drainage system to ensure drain of rainwater at the earliest so that citizens could not be confronted difficulties.

IG Major General visits Sholam hospital

F.P. Report

WANA: Inspector General Frontier Corps (FC) South Major General Haroon Hameed Chaudhry visited Sholam Hospital in Birmal, South Waziristan, where he inspected the healthcare facilities established with the support of paramilitary forces. During his visit, Major General Chaudhry met with the hospital staff and commended them for their

dedicated service to the community.

Sholam Hospital plays a crucial role in providing healthcare services to the local population, offering a range of medical and surgical treatments, including emergency care. However, the hospital's operations faced significant challenges in 2023 due to financial constraints.

Thanks to the efforts of Frontier Corps KP (South), funding was secured to

address these issues. The hospital's solar power system was repaired, and new electricity connections were activated, ensuring a more reliable power supply.

Furthermore, the hospital has expanded its services, now offering specialized surgeries for women, treatment for hepatitis and kidney diseases, and the addition of a modern laboratory to enhance diagnostic capabilities.

PFA seizes 2300 litre adulterated milk

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARGARH: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has recovered 2300 litre adulterated milk during a special campaign launched across the district on Saturday.

A special team of PFA under the supervision of Director Operations South Punjab, Shahzad Magsi, on Saturday launched a special operation against milk suppliers and set up picket at entry points of the district. The team collected samples of milk from 84 milk supplier vehicles out of which adulteration proved in the milk loaded on eight different vehicles.

The PFA teams disposed off the recovered 2300 litre milk which was going to be supplied to different milk shops. Director South Punjab Shahzad Magsi said that checking of milk quali-

ty at entry points of the district would continue and stern action would be taken against adulterators. He said that as per directives of the DG PFA Asif Javed, the food safety teams visiting all markets of the city to ensure availability of good quality food items to masses.

AJK gears up for grand celebrations of Pakistan's 77th Independence Day: With just four days left to commemorate Pakistan's 77th Independence Day, Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) is abuzz with enthusiastic preparations. The region is set to celebrate the historic day with great zeal and fervor, highlighting the emergence of a separate homeland for Muslims in the subcontinent on August 14, 1947.

Elaborate programs have been planned across the liberated territory, including

Mirpur division's three districts, to mark the occasion. Speakers will emphasize the day's significance and reaffirm the Kashmiris' resolve to continue their freedom struggle until the liberation of occupied Jammu Kashmir from Indian control.

The celebrations will feature national flag hoisting ceremonies, with the AJK President leading the event at the President's House in the capital city. Similar ceremonies will be held in Mirpur and other districts, with public and private organizations participating. Despite restrictions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir (IIOJK), people there are also preparing to celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day, hoisting national flags atop their houses to demonstrate their solidarity with Pakistan.



Russia struggles to repel Ukraine's deep Kursk incursion

MOSCOW (AFP): Ukrainian troops remained in Russia's western Kursk region, as its surprise cross-border offensive into Russia came to the end of a fourth day. The Russian defence ministry said it was "continuing to repel" Ukraine's military, which it claimed had lost more than 280 personnel in the past 24 hours - a figure that has not been independently verified.

Reports suggest that Ukrainian troops are operating more than 10km (six miles) inside Russia - the deepest cross-border advance by Kyiv since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Ukraine has not openly admitted the incursion, but President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Moscow must "feel" the consequences for its invasion. Fighting in Kursk has edged gradually closer to a nuclear power plant, prompting the UN nuclear agency to release a statement urging the two sides to "exercise maximum restraint".

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi appealed to all sides to take measures "to avoid a nuclear accident with the potential for serious radiological consequences". Some residents of the Kursk region were evacuated by authorities, with a group pulling into Moscow's central train station. One unnamed resident told AFP news agency: "It's terrible. They are bombing." Overnight, Ukraine's military said it had struck a military airfield deep inside Russia, destroying a warehouse containing hundreds of glide bombs.

The targeting of the Lipetsk air base, more than 350km (217 miles) from Ukraine's border, is the kind of operation Kyiv has been wanting to do for some time. The weaponry it managed to destroy in the attack is the very kind Russia has used to terrorise Ukrainian towns, cities and military positions for most of its invasion. The military's statement also said the airfield was known for housing Russia's Su-34, Su-35 and MiG-31 war planes. Russian authorities nearby said a state of emergency was in place in the area, confirming what they described as "detonations" at an "energy infrastructure facility". Residents of four nearby villages were being evacuated.

Hours after Ukraine's strikes, Russia

responded by striking a shopping centre in the Ukrainian town of Kostyantynivka, close to the frontline in the eastern Donetsk region, killing at least 14 people and injuring 43, Ukrainian officials say. Residential buildings, shops and more than a dozen cars were also damaged in the attack. Shortly after Ukraine's offensive was launched on Tuesday, the Russian defence ministry said its forces were managing to suppress "raid attempts by enemy units".

But a video checked by BBC Verify shows a different picture, with a 15-vehicle Russian convoy damaged, burned and abandoned on a road through the town of Oktyabr'skoe, roughly 38km (24 miles) from the border on the Russian side. The early morning footage also shows Russian soldiers, some injured, possibly dead among the vehicles. A "federal state of emergency" has been declared in the Kursk region - a move that underlines how grave the current situation is. Russia said that up to 1,000 Ukrainian troops, supported by tanks and armoured vehicles, entered the Kursk region as the offensive began.

Despite the deployment of reserve troops and orders to evacuate, Russia has been unable to slow the momentum of this Ukrainian advance. This is more than the probing attacks we have seen in the past. It is a committed assault which has shocked Russia's military and the Kremlin. For the last 18 months, it has been Moscow dictating the dynamics of this war. Now it is having to contain this attack, as well as domestic criticism for not preventing it in the first place.

Despite long-time Western worries of an escalation, the consensus among Ukraine's allies is that this operation falls within its right to defend itself. While he is yet to directly reference the assault, President Zelensky said in a video address: "Russia has brought the war to our land and should feel what it has done." But with his Ukrainian forces still outnumbered by the Russians on the battlefield, the line between masterstroke and miscalculation is a fine one. The Russian rouble was down 2.5% against the dollar, with traders telling AFP news agency that Ukraine's Kursk offensive was one of the reasons behind the fall.

Turkey says Somalia, Ethiopia to resume talks on port deal

ISTANBUL: The Somali and Ethiopian foreign ministers will meet in Ankara next week to discuss disagreements over a port deal Ethiopia signed with the breakaway region of Somaliland this year, Turkey's foreign minister says.

"Tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia would come to an end with Ethiopia's access to the seas through Somalia as long as Ethiopia's recognition of Somalia's territorial integrity and political sovereignty is secured," Hakan Fidan said at a news conference in Istanbul. Turkey is mediating talks between the East African neighbours, whose ties were strained in January when Ethiopia agreed to lease 20km (12 miles) of coastline from Somaliland in exchange for recognition of its independence. Somalia says Somaliland is part of its territory.

The agreement grants Ethiopia a 50-year lease on a naval base with access to Somaliland's Berbera port. It was signed on January 1 in Addis Ababa by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Somaliland leader Muse Bihi Abdi. In April, Somalia announced the expulsion of Ethiopia's ambassador from the country. It also shut down Ethiopia's consulates in Hargeisa, the largest city and capital of Somaliland, and Garowe, the capital city of the semi-autonomous region of Puntland.

Ethiopia is one of Africa's most populous countries with 120 million people, but its economy has been restricted by a lack of access to the sea. It was cut off from the Gulf of Aden after a three-decades-long war that saw Eritrea secede in 1993, taking all of the country's former coastline with it. In return for the deal, Ethiopia said it would provide an "in-depth assessment" of Somaliland's quest for official recognition as an independent nation, marking the first time any other country has offered to do this. — Aljazeera

Poland appeals to Nigeria to free students

WARSAW (AP): Polish diplomats said they were making progress as they appealed for the release of seven citizens who were detained in Nigeria in what Warsaw believes was a misunderstanding that happened as protests were underway in the West African country.

Six Polish students and a lecturer from Warsaw University, who were taking part in a program to study the Hausa language, were detained earlier this week in the state of Kano in northern Nigeria. Nigeria's secret service said they were arrested for carrying Russian flags during a protest — something Polish officials say they find unlikely. The Polish consul in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, met with the detained students as Poland sought to clarify their legal situation.

"They are feeling well and in good condition. They are currently living in a hotel in a good district of the city," Poland's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "No charges have been brought against them, and procedures are underway to conclude the investigation."

Begum, head of Runnymede Trust, a race equality and civil rights think tank.

"And now they have been identified as a cultural threat to British democracy based on ages-old tropes on the Muslim civilisation being barbaric." Over the years, mainstream politics and some media soaked up that narrative which paved the way for the "normalisation" of an Islamophobic rhetoric in the UK and therefore the dehumanisation of Muslims, she explained. As political attention shifted towards a rise in undocumented migrants crossing the Channel, many say brown and Black asylum seekers have been thrown into the same category. Muslims, refugees and non-white people were attacked at random in the riots.

According to Chris Allen, an associate professor of criminology at the University of Leicester, both Labour and the Conservatives have con-



BEIRUT: People walking near the building that was hit by an Israeli air strike in Lebanon.

Fugitive ex-Catalan leader said to be in Belgium

BARCELONA (AP): Former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont was back in Belgium, his lawyer said, after he evaded arrest in Spain for the second time in seven years with a dramatic dash into a getaway car following a public appearance in Barcelona.

Puigdemont made a much-anticipated return to Spain this week despite a pending arrest warrant against him for his role in a 2017 independence referendum deemed illegal by Spanish courts. In an astonishing turn of events, he disappeared shortly after speaking to hundreds of supporters in central Barcelona under the eyes of almost as many journalists and police officers who had intended to arrest him after the speech.

The heads of Catalonia's regional police, which had deployed 500 officers in preparation for the fugitive's pre-announced return, defended their actions following the failure to catch Puigdemont and said an investigation had been launched to look into what went wrong. Joan Ignasi Elena, the acting head of Catalonia's interior department, which oversees the regional Mossos D'Esquadra police, defended the force and criticized Puigdemont.

"We didn't expect such inappropriate behavior from someone who has been the first authority of (Catalonia)," Elena told journalists

during a two and half hours long press conference. Mossos chief Eduard Sallent said the large crowd and the presence of local dignitaries, including the president of the Catalan Parliament, escorting Puigdemont as he arrived to give his speech made it difficult to detain him at that moment.

Police expected he would then march to the Catalan Parliament — as had been publicly announced by Puigdemont himself as well as an announcer talking to the crowd on loudspeakers. Police hoped to have a better opportunity to execute the arrest warrant there. Instead, the Catalan leader rushed off the stage, into an adjacent tent where he put on a straw hat like many of his supporters were wearing and quickly got into a white car that had been waiting for him.

Police chased the car but then lost track of him, Sallent explained. Two police officers were detained for their involvement in the escape, including one whose car was used by Puigdemont to flee. One of them has since been released. The white car used by Puigdemont to flee carried a wheelchair in the front seat, allegedly to facilitate parking in disabled spots, police said.

Puigdemont had announced that he planned to return to Spain. But Jordi

Turull, a fellow separatist and member of Puigdemont's legal team, told Catalan radio that Puigdemont had in fact been in Barcelona since Tuesday. Turull was in the car with Puigdemont when he fled, police said. Gonzalo Boye, Puigdemont's chief lawyer, told The Associated Press his client was back in the Belgian town of Waterloo. An AP journalist who rang the doorbell of the house that had been Puigdemont's residence was told the Catalan politician was not there.

Elena, the head of the interior department of Catalonia who is also a member of the left-wing separatist Esquerra Republicana (ERC) party, questioned the purpose of Puigdemont's "show." "What he did yesterday, what does it add? A farce, revenge ... what does it bring to the independence movement?" Puigdemont's first escape from Spain in 2017 became the stuff of legend among his followers, and a huge source of embarrassment for Spanish law enforcement. Earlier this year, Puigdemont denied that he had hidden in a car trunk to avoid detection while slipping across the border in 2017 after the referendum. The subsequent legal crackdown landed several of his cohorts in prison until Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's government pardoned them.

UK terror suspect deported from Kenya after jail stint

LONDON (BBC): A British terror suspect has been deported to the UK after completing a lengthy prison sentence in Kenya. Jermaine Grant, 41, was arrested in London after arriving on a flight from Kenya's capital, Nairobi.

He was jailed in 2011 after bomb-making equipment was discovered in his flat in Mombasa, a Kenyan coastal city. Grant is thought to have shared the flat with Samantha Lewthwaite, who is dubbed the "White Widow" and is wanted in connection with London's 7/7 bombings. After he was arrested in 2011, Kenyan police accused Grant of plotting to bomb tourist hotels on the country's coast.

In 2019, a court acquitted him of conspiracy over the alleged plot, but convicted him of possessing

bomb-making materials. The UK's Metropolitan Police confirmed that Grant had been detained in London under the Terrorism Act. In a statement, the force said: "We can confirm that on 8 August, officers from the Met Police arrested [a] 41-year-old man who was wanted on recall to prison in relation to breaching licence conditions linked to a previous conviction. "He was arrested at Heathrow airport as he arrived back into the UK on a flight from Kenya. The man's licence conditions were revoked in August 2005 following the initial breach."

Grant was also arrested on suspicion of being a member of al-Shabab, an Islamist militant group, the Met Police said. He remains in police custody. Meanwhile, Ms

Lewthwaite has not been seen since 2011 and is wanted by police in both Kenya and the UK. She was nicknamed the "White Widow" following her marriage to London suicide bomber Germaine Lindsay. The Muslim convert, who spent her childhood in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, remains one of Kenya's most-wanted fugitives.

She is suspected of having links to al-Shabab, a Somalia-based militant group, and a string of attacks. Grant is believed to have become radicalised after spending time in prison with Richard Reid, a well-known extremist known as the "shoe bomber". Reid is serving a life sentence in the US following a failed plot to blow up a transatlantic flight with explosives in his shoe.

Peru enacts law restricting prosecution of crimes

LIMA (AP): Peru's government enacted a law that prevents the prosecution of crimes against humanity committed before 2002, a decision that favors former President Alberto Fujimori as well as hundreds of military personnel investigated or prosecuted for massacres and murders during the country's internal armed conflict (1980-2000).

The law, which had no comments from President Dina Boluarte, was promulgated, despite a July order

from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the highest regional court in this matter, indicating to Boluarte, Congress and the Judiciary that they should annul what was then still a bill, because it contravened international law. The United Nations denounced the enacting of the bill.

Peru's new law "contravenes the country's obligations under international law and is a troubling development, amid a broader backlash against

human rights and the rule of law in Peru," said Volker Türk, UN human rights chief, in a statement. "Crimes against humanity and war crimes are among the most serious violations of international law and neither amnesties nor statutes of limitations should extend to them," the statement added. "Those responsible for atrocity crimes must be held accountable, consistent with international law."

'I feel fear': Muslims in UK question sense of belonging after riots

LONDON: A holy day for Muslims, fewer women are attending prayers at their local mosques across the United Kingdom. Those who dare out are exchanging safety tips. Move in groups, avoid crowds, keep your car windows closed.

Here in Liverpool, the sun is bright and the school summer holidays are in full swing. But it is one of the English cities where far-right race riots exploded this week. There is an eerie mood. There are hardly any children on the streets. The gates of a historic church are locked. "I'm quite a strong person, and yet I feel fear, you know? I feel scared," said Saba Ahmed, a resident who works for a multicultural hub that serves local communities.

"It just doesn't feel right." Fears spread over the city as Islamophobic and racist riots took place in the wake of the killing of three young girls in Southport, less than one hour's drive from here. Rumours on social media

falsely claimed that the suspect was a Muslim and an asylum seeker. The disinformation, since neither is true, fuelled the worst bout of violence to hit the nation in years. The riots, which took place in dozens of areas, have been extinguished thanks to the thousands of antiracism protesters who outnumbered them in a show of solidarity with those affected. Police have handed heavy sentences to rioters, which has also dissuaded others from joining in.

But several Liverpooldians, and many other Britons, are now questioning years of integration. Observers have blamed politicians and some sections of the media for railing against immigration while demonising Muslims and asylum seekers. "After the 'War on Terror', the political conversation and legislation around counterterrorism was about targeting Muslim communities as a threat to national security," said Shabna

Begum, head of Runnymede Trust, a race equality and civil rights think tank.

"And now they have been identified as a cultural threat to British democracy based on ages-old tropes on the Muslim civilisation being barbaric." Over the years, mainstream politics and some media soaked up that narrative which paved the way for the "normalisation" of an Islamophobic rhetoric in the UK and therefore the dehumanisation of Muslims, she explained. As political attention shifted towards a rise in undocumented migrants crossing the Channel, many say brown and Black asylum seekers have been thrown into the same category. Muslims, refugees and non-white people were attacked at random in the riots.

According to Chris Allen, an associate professor of criminology at the University of Leicester, both Labour and the Conservatives have con-

tributed to the vilification of Muslims, clearing the way for the general populace to slur minority groups. "This is partly the legacy of the Brexit Leave campaign's toxic rhetoric on popular views about immigration that continued right up to the recent general election," Allen said, adding that politicians have failed to call out Islamophobia when they see it. On a recent popular morning television show, Labour politician Zahra Sultana was asked why identifying Islamophobia and the racialised nature of many attacks was important in tackling racism. As she tried to answer, she was interrupted by the panel, which many on social media said exemplified an attempt to silence discussions on racism. "We need to call this racism, and we need to call this Islamophobic, because if we don't, we fail to address what is going on. Language is really important," Sultana said on the programme.

TellMAMA, which monitors anti-Muslim hate crimes, said Islamophobic incidents have more than doubled in the past decade. During Israel's continuing war on Gaza, anti-Muslim hate crimes have increased — according to TellMAMA, such incidents tripled in the first four months of the conflict. Research by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue also shows a sharp rise in anti-Muslim content across online platforms during the same period. Similarly, UK groups that monitor anti-Jewish hate crimes have reported a rise during the war.

According to Imam Adam Kelwick, the missing element is dialogue. Standing outside Liverpool's Abdullah Quilliam mosque, he has just returned from an unusual meeting over coffee. He had sat across the table from a far-right protester who was among the dozens who rallied outside the mosque recently.

At the time, Kelwick confronted

the situation by crossing police lines and offering burgers and chips to the angry crowd. He hugged protesters and promised more dialogue. "What happens when you come together is that you start talking and listening. You start to find out that many of the concerns that the other side has are also your concerns," said Adam. "All it takes is a human interaction."

He plans to open the mosque's gates on Saturday to engage in more discussions with members of the far right. But as he attempts to talk, others need time to heal. "There was a feeling that we were so embedded in the community — all the progress of the past years seemed to have dashed in the course of one evening," said Tawhid Islam, a member and trustee of the Liverpool Region Mosque Network. "A seed of doubt has now been planted and people ask themselves, 'Am I part of this community if I am not white?'" — Aljazeera

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Rioting criminals and UK govt

NOT for the first time, attention is being drawn to the fact that the recent rioting occurred mainly in areas with the highest levels of deprivation. Some analyses – at least in the past – have flirted with the suggestion that violence is virtually justified if the people committing it are unemployed. The prime minister was right in stating that there was no excuse for the recent rioting. Crime is crime, he said, echoing a phrase made famous by Margaret Thatcher, though in a very different context. Although it was unclear whether his assertion applied retrospectively to the riots of 2011 or 1981, when sociologists and politicians fell over themselves to blame austerity and Thatcherism respectively for the unrest.

Over the years a narrative has emerged that says that “working class” communities, while being the most deprived, are also the most intolerant of immigrants, as well as the most likely to take to the streets to complain about their lot. A major problem with this is that few people know how to define “working class”. Traditionally it referred to unskilled or semi-skilled and manual labourers, mostly people living in council or social housing. Since the early 1980s that has changed. “Working class” is now seen as a catch-all term to describe what is in reality the “under-class”, a large group of people subsisting on benefits and whose opportunities for education and employment are a mere fraction of those available to everyone else.

In other words, the very opposite of “working class”, which used to refer exclusively to people who were working. Which is why political parties, particularly Labour, never refer to “working class” people or communities any more. Policies are now aimed at “working people” or, more frequently, “hard-working” people or families. “Class” is the topic that no longer dares speak its name.

Unless we’re talking pejoratively. Few people even utter the phrase “working class” without referring to the obvious downsides of those so named: poverty, unemployment, fecklessness, violence, anti-social behaviour, squalor. It’s a far cry indeed from the 1970s, when I grew up on a council estate because my parents – both working – believed that that was a better environment for their family than scrimping and scraping to pay a mortgage. At the time, the few individuals who didn’t even pretend they were looking for work and who were content to live off “the dole” were known in our large community and were disparaged for it. Work – seeking it, sticking to it, because you had a responsibility to do so – was simply a principle so obvious, so accepted that it didn’t need to be stated. The mass unemployment that accompanied the first Thatcher government was as much a social shock as an economic one.

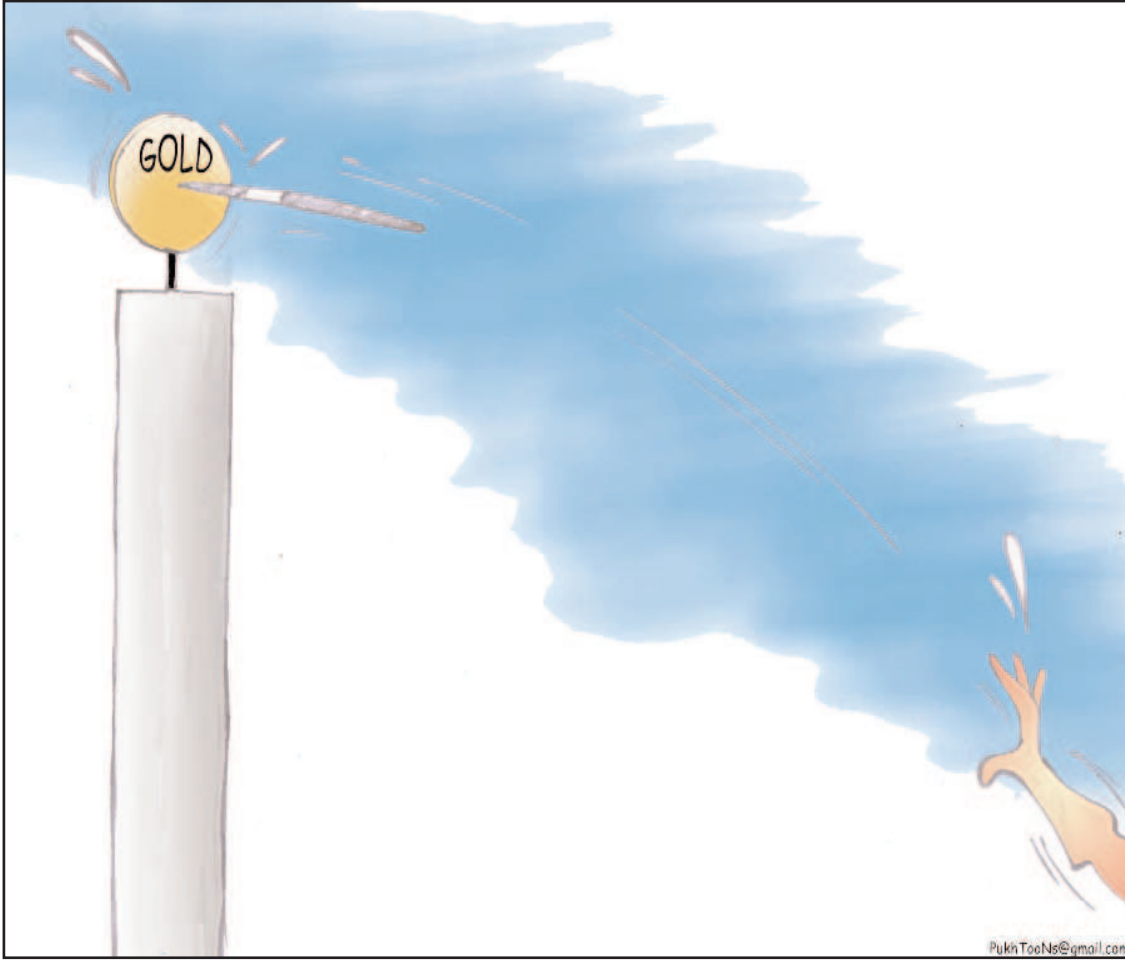
And yet social acceptance of mass worklessness – now labelled “economic inactivity” as the preferred euphemism – prevailed. Not only that, it has become socially unacceptable to do anything other than affirm to those in that position that they are living a life mandated by the government, that they have no agency and that they are victims of the way the economy is run. It is a lie. And we, as a society, turn a blind eye to those communities where that lie has been allowed to fester and grow. We tell ourselves that the mental health crisis that has condemned nearly three million people to the scrap heap is an acceptable and inevitable element of modern life. And we condemn as heartless those politicians (and columnists) who put their heads above the parapet to point out the harm this state of affairs inflicts, not just on society but on those individuals concerned.

The pride in being “working class” in the past no longer exists. It used to be a term that was synonymous with civic pride, pride in your own community, pride in your advancement up the ladder of the career you had chosen. Now it is the “everything else” category, used to dump every negative and unpleasant stereotype. The only time the phrase is used in the media now is to describe rioting gangs of racists. When “social housing” is used as a dumping ground for anyone without a job and who can’t afford a mortgage, that’s hardly surprising. Those who can afford to live in their own house but who chooses to remain in their council house are unfairly denigrated as grifters, a practice that only serves further to isolate and sideline such estates.

Class may be something that has become unfashionable to discuss, let alone acknowledge. But it remains the only important fault line in politics, far more so than sex, gender or race. No accurate assessment of what is required policy-wise can be made unless class is taken into account. But for a country that is famed globally for being class-obsessed, we haven’t half made a mess of it.

Important Notice

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



Anti-racists saved Britain, now it’s time for Starmer to take action

Shaista Aziz

THOUSANDS of anti-racists took to the streets across the north and south of England on Wednesday evening, reclaiming our towns and cities back from the far-right rioters who have been terrorising British Muslims, people of colour, refugees and migrants over the past eight devastating days.

In doing so, anti-racists have also reclaimed the narrative back from the politicians and media operatives who have emboldened these violent racists with their inflammatory rhetoric on migration, making it clear that the majority in Britain does not buy into their hate-mongering and that our multiracial neighbourhoods and communities are “no go zones” for the far-right.

This unprecedented show of force from the decent people of Britain came on the back of a warning from police that more than 100 far-right gatherings were planned across the country on Wednesday. It was said that the far right, who have already been causing havoc across the country in so-called “anti-immigration” demos for days, were planning to attack the offices of immigration lawyers and refugee and migration charities as well as mosques and community buildings.

People who have been horrified by such attacks earlier, as well as the widespread looting and violence against police officers that accompanied them, said enough is enough. Combined with a determined response from the police (more than 400 rioters have been arrested and some 140 have already been charged) the presence of anti-racists and anti-fascists on the streets in large numbers proved enough to intimidate the far-right thugs. In the end, in many localities where such violent gatherings were planned, only a handful of far-right rioters showed up.

It seems the race riots are now over, and those who participated in them or even encouraged them from afar are starting to feel the “full force of the law”, as Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised. While this victory against racists and fascists, this reclama-

tion of Britain’s identity, should undoubtedly be celebrated, there is also an urgent need to ask: How did we end up with far-right riots on our streets, and what can we do to prevent the repeat of this atrocity?

Many in Britain have pointed to online disinformation as the source of the far-right riots. Indeed, misleading, inflammatory social media content scapegoating Muslims and refugees for all that is wrong with the country, from the rising cost of living to lack of housing and even heinous crimes against children, has played an important role in emboldening the worst in our society to take over our streets.

Nonetheless, British Muslims and those belonging to other ethnic minorities in this country know for a fact that the hate that led to the events of this past week is much older than social media. These riots triggered old traumas in our communities that go back at least half a century. Indeed, those of us who are the children of working-class migrants invited to Britain to rebuild the country after World War II feel like we experienced first hand in this past week the discrimination, hate and intimidation our parents faced in this country in the 1970s and 1980s.

Our parents had told us how elders, youths and women from our communities were told to stay home when far-right thugs were out in the streets, looking for targets, victims. Last week, that sad history repeated itself. There have been warnings for Muslim women and elders, and everyone else who happens to look as if they may be Muslim or a “migrant”, to stay at home, to avoid certain streets and neighbourhoods. We feared we might be harassed, beaten up, or even face acid attacks as we tried to go about our daily business.

This past week has also reminded us that the especially potent anti-Muslim hate and bigotry that was unleashed in the aftermath of 9/11 did not go anywhere despite years of anti-racist efforts to curtail it. After al-Qaeda’s attack on New

York’s twin towers 25 years ago, the United States and its allies, including the United Kingdom, embarked on a so-called “war on terror”, unleashing unimaginable terror and suffering on Muslim communities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and across the Middle East. Simultaneously, Muslims also began to be demonised in political and popular culture, which fully normalised and mainstreamed anti-Muslim bigotry. This two-pronged campaign of destruction and dehumanisation inevitably also had a profound impact on Muslims living across the West, including the UK.

Post-9/11, in most of Europe, Islamophobia became state policy. States started banning the niqab, the hijab, the building of mosques and the call to prayer. There were several attempts to ban halal meat across different countries. For years, most mainstream media in Europe proudly disseminated Islamophobia, publishing without consequence false stories and hysterical headlines to fuel bigotry against Muslim communities.

In the UK, anti-Muslim, anti-immigration and anti-refugee voices in media and politics have been as loud as those on the continent, but there has always also been a widespread effort to defend multiculturalism and all the communities, including Muslims, that make Britain great.

In the past few years, however, there has been a concerted effort to undo the anti-racist gains made in our country since 9/11. The politicians and the media tried their best to demonise Muslims and baselessly present our communities as a threat to the future of our nation. Especially since the beginning of Israel’s war on Gaza, we have seen a return to the dark days in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. The anti-genocide marches calling for peace and a ceasefire were branded as “hate” and British Muslims demanding an end to the killing were branded as “hate-mongers” by those in political power as well as in mainstream national media.

All this led to the horrific

explosion of hate we have seen on our streets in the past week. Indeed, the race riots were an inevitable consequence of all this – thanks to the efforts of anti-racists they lasted only a week, but they were decades in the making. Now that the far-right threat on our streets appears to have been quelled, affected communities are trying to catch their breath and process what they have experienced.

So how can we prevent the repeat of this horrific explosion of hate against Muslim and other minority communities? The only way to ensure the UK never sees such racist riots again, the only way that our communities can feel fully safe and secure in this country, is for the government to embark on a war against dangerous far-right ideologies.

The government must take the far right and its Islamophobic bigotry head on, defend and uphold the internationally recognised rights of asylum seekers and migrants. It must create a new asylum and immigration system that is aligned with international law and respectful of the dignity and humanity of all people. Further, it must make its stance on Islamophobia clear.

Unless the leaders of this country recognise that hatred of Muslims, migrant and refugees is a source of domestic terror, that it is threatening the very fabric of British society, I am certain that there will be other weeks of shame in this country’s future when minorities are told to stay home for their safety. The government must now thank the British people who stopped the far right in its tracks, and take immediate action to ensure their efforts were not in vain.

Starmer and his cabinet must defend multiculturalism and simultaneously take action to address the deep-seated inequalities and injustices affecting the UK’s multiracial working classes that allow for far-right ideologies to take hold in our country. Anything else would be capitulating to far-right extremists and handing power to them over all our lives.

Aljazeera

Turkiye carves out a distinct role in ‘new Cold War’ era

Sinem Cengiz

AFTER months in the making, through an unprecedented international collaboration, including secret and complex negotiations, Western nations and Russia conducted the largest prisoner exchange since the Cold War which took place in Türkiye, a third-party location that was kept confidential until the last moment.

The scenes from the prisoner swap that captured international headlines would be familiar to anyone who has seen movies depicting Cold War-style prisoner exchanges. The choice of Ankara as the location for the swap operation was both politically and symbolically significant. During the Cold War, prisoner swaps typically occurred in Berlin, a city divided between East and West. The choice of Türkiye for the latest exchange similarly highlights its own geographic and political divisions between East and West, demonstrating its role as a bridge between two sides, rather than a wall dividing them.

In an increasingly polarized international system, which resembles a new Cold War and involves competition among more than just two actors, very few states can maintain open dialogue channels with all parties: Türkiye is certainly one of those states. Türkiye’s geopolitical significance, its delicate relations with both Western nations and the Russia/China/Iran axis, and its history of mediation facilitated a crucial role in facilitating the critical prisoner swap.

Turkiye has often frustrated its NATO allies by not taking a hard stance against Russia, causing many to question whether Türkiye is aligned with Russia or the West. However, the answer for this question depends on how the West or Russia perceives Türkiye’s position. Türkiye’s balancing act has shifted over time, with periods of alignment with the West and other times of closer ties with Moscow. The core of Türkiye’s relationship with the Kremlin is energy, while NATO remains significant in terms of ties with the US. When dealing with both sides, Türkiye wants to remain strategically autonomous in its policies. Therefore, both the US and Russia have acknowledged Türkiye’s balancing act.

Additionally, despite Western criticisms, Ankara’s delicate ties with Moscow have enabled its involvement in the latest exchange, once again highlighting its value as an ally to the West despite several countries arguing that it should not be part of NATO. While Türkiye may not — or may not be willing to — meet all the expectations of the West, whether the EU or NATO, it possesses significant military, economic, and diplomatic leverage over several countries that the West considers important allies. The White House said it negotiated the trade with Russia, Germany, Belarus, Norway, Poland and Slovenia; but Türkiye was the country that coordinated the exchange. Washington praised Türkiye’s role as “a vital partner and ally,” expressing gratitude for Ankara’s involvement in the swap deal.

US Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer noted that despite the swap deal, Washington-Moscow relations remain “in a very difficult place,” and emphasized that “there was no trust involved in this relationship or negotiation,” as he told CNN. Türkiye’s role becomes particularly crucial here; although it may not be fully trusted by either the US or Russia, it is a country that both sides rely on thanks to its decades-long behind-closed-doors intelligence sharing and cooperation. Türkiye’s Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan praised the country’s National Intelligence Organization — which he formerly led — for its role in the prisoner swap, which appeared tense and highly complex. At one stage a European official reported a plane from Moscow to Ankara had turned back, raising fears that the deal might fall through. Fortunately, this turned out to be a false alarm. There were also reports that prisoners, who were handed over on Turkish tarmac, were impressed by the behavior of Turkish intelligence officers, describing them as “very professional.”

One might assume that in this decade, states would move away from using prisoner swaps as a foreign policy tool. However, as noted, the world has entered a new phase reminiscent of the Cold War, where even though tactics and actors may have evolved, the fundamental nature of politics remains unchanged. In an era when hard-power tools often overshadow soft-power ones, Türkiye’s commitment to mediation and diplomacy underscores its significant role on the international stage.

Turkiye previously oversaw a September 2022 exchange between Ukraine and Russia that led to the release of 215 Ukrainian prisoners of war and the return of besieged Ukrainian Azov Brigade commanders from Mariupol, acting as a largely neutral broker in this instance.

Turkiye’s aspirations to be a diplomatic actor extend far beyond its neighborhood, as it is also working to mediate conflicts in Africa. Following the US-Russia prisoner swap, Fidan met with Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Addis Ababa, where Türkiye is advocating for peace talks between Ethiopia and Somalia. Fidan then made a significant diplomatic trip to Egypt where he hinted at a possible negotiation over relations between Cairo and its southern neighbor.

In the context of the most recent prisoner swap, Türkiye’s role as a mediator extends well beyond mere diplomacy. Ankara seemingly sought to kill two birds with one stone: to strengthen its ties with both sides while maintaining a neutral stance to foster trust, and to protect its political and economic interests, as exemplified by its relations with Russia. It remains to be seen how much Türkiye will gain from its efforts in Europe and Africa, but certainly its role as a mediator is making a strong case for Western nations, as well as Russia, to recognize its strategic importance and ability to manage complex negotiations.

US ‘dual citizenship’ creates double standards. It should end

Ray Hanania

ISRAEL is waging a massive propaganda war not only against the Palestinians but also against the fundamental precepts of what it means to be a true American. Unfortunately, many Americans are so blinded by pro-Israel propaganda, and their politicians so inundated with pro-Israel money, that they cannot, or do not want, to see it.

The foundation of Israel’s propaganda war is that killing Israelis is wrong, but killing of non-Israelis is not. The killing of Israelis by Hamas and the killing of non-Israelis by Israelis all falls on the shoulders of the Palestinians. One way to do this is to inject “American patriotism” into the Israeli propaganda. And the Israelis do that by asserting that many Israelis killed in the violence are “Americans.”

This assertion is based on the American and Israeli policy of “dual citizenship,” which is a contradiction of each country’s fundamental

patriotism and loyalty laws. But it works. When a Hezbollah missile struck a Druze school in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, Americans were immediately outraged and accused Palestinians of being “inhuman.” The media blasted the stories across front pages and lead TV broadcasts, showcasing children and women who were killed.

They quoted Israeli officials at length decrying the inhumanity of the Palestinians and going so far as to describe anyone who criticizes Israel, like the student protesters, as being “antisemitic” and “pro-Hamas.” In stark contrast, when Israel’s military killed scores of civilians, women, and children who were in a “safe zone” near Rafah, a place where Israel’s military had ordered them to go, most Americans shrugged off the meager news media reporting as a consequence of war.

The more Israel can claim Arabs hate Americans, the easier it is to sell the lies and

propaganda to the American public and get the American news media to act as Israel’s cheerleaders. That is where “dual citizenship” comes in. Dual citizenship allows a person who has pledged his or her loyalty to America to also pledge their loyalty to a foreign country, such as Israel.

When Israeli-American “dual citizens” enjoy lands and property stolen by Israel from the Palestinians, they are “Israeli.” When these “dual citizens” are killed while serving in Israel’s military, they are described as “American.” Many of the hostages held by Hamas are dual citizens who are both Israeli and American. But “dual citizenship” allows Israel, the news media, and politicians who receive millions in campaign donations from Israel’s political lobby, to blame it all on Hamas and Palestinians.

What is “dual citizenship?” How can a person claim loyalty to two foreign

countries? It is a contradiction of the term loyalty because you cannot be loyal to two countries that have different governments, foreign policies and citizenship laws. Every country requires a loyalty oath. Those born in the US are automatically citizens and a “loyalty oath” is implicit. Immigrants who seek American citizenship must take an oath.

Israelis who defend this contradictory policy exploit the fact that the US Constitution does not specifically address “dual citizenship” or loyalty because the American founding fathers believed the Constitution is a declaration of loyalty and allegiance. In 1940, however, the US government realized it had to address this loophole.

At the start of the Second World War, and in the face of the large presence of American citizens who were of German, Italian and Japanese ancestry, American

lawmakers feared those “Americans” might act to protect their ancestral homelands because of past loyalty and allegiance to their heritages. The US government feared they would betray America for Germany, Italy or Japan. Thousands of Japanese, especially because they were not white European like Germans and Italians, were forced to live in internment camps. Few were permitted to serve in the military.

African Americans were also restricted in their service, but for reasons of rampant white racism that plagued the US. Ironically, “antisemitism” was greatest not in the Middle East, but in Europe and the US itself.

When the war ended, the US and Europe did not want Jewish refugees from Nazism to settle in their countries. They supported sending those refugees elsewhere, to the Arab world and to Palestine. Section 2 of the Act (March 2, 1907) addresses immigrants who might

support one of the foreign Axis countries, stating that if an American citizens “expatriates” themselves (leaves the country for citizenship in another country) shall lose their citizenship. It states “that any American citizen shall be deemed to have expatriated himself ... when he has taken an oath of allegiance to any foreign state.” To prevent a mass emigration of Germans, Italians and Japanese, and to keep them under surveillance or in internment camps, it further mandated that “no American citizen shall be allowed to expatriate himself” when his country is at war.”

The fact is that “dual citizenship,” where a person swears an oath of allegiance to a foreign country, contradicts what it means to be an American. It is illegal. But, as I noted, Israelis are engaged in much worse illegal activity, such as war crimes, land theft and genocide, so that the illegality of “dual citizenship” is far down the list of American morality.

America’s promises of racial justice remain unfulfilled and untrustworthy

Donald Earl Collins

IT appears that the corner the United States supposedly turned in 2020 in recognising and addressing its systemic racism was just another dead end – an illusion that provided the nation with a brief feel-good moment and nothing more. For all the promises to tackle discrimination in education, employment, housing and law enforcement made in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter mass protests, and a particularly contentious presidential election in 2020, very little has actually been achieved in bridging the deep racial fissures in American society.

It would seem that all the promises American leaders made four years ago were only meant to stall for time. “We can deliver racial justice,” President Joe Biden said after his election in 2020, but his promise was clearly a hollow one. Biden hoped that the national conversation would shift, the US would return to business as usual, and its massive racism problem would be swept back under the proverbial rug.

That all the ambitious antiracism promises have been abandoned in just a short few years is not surprising, as the same has happened many times before in American history. Just months after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in December 1964, for example, Malcolm X told a crowd at the University of Oxford that he did not expect the bill to bring meaningful change.

“[T]he same things are happening to us in 1964 that happened in 1954, 1924 and 1884...No matter how many bills pass, [Black people’s] lives are not worth two cents.” One can easily add 2024 to the mix of “the same as it ever was” on the issue of persistent racism and discrimination in the US.

Yes, 2020 saw unprecedented protests and equally unprecedented promises from American leaders to deliver racial justice. Yet, in a June

2024 Pew Research survey, three out of four African Americans still said they experience discrimination “regularly” or “from time to time”, and that “these experiences make them feel like the system is set up for their failure”. A Washington Post-Ipsos poll from April, meanwhile, showed that one-third of Black folk believe integration has not “improved the quality of education received by Black students”, mostly because persistent residential segregation has defeated efforts at school desegregation. Whether in 1964 or 2024, the half-measures and mediocre promises of the federal government and other American institutions to deal with systemic racism are not worthy of trust. It’s hard to believe that just four years ago, the United States experienced what some believed to be a seismic social justice shift. The police murders of Black Americans, like Breonna Taylor and especially George Floyd, led to months of Black Lives Matter-driven protests with calls for abolishing the police and defunding law enforcement. Cities like Minneapolis and Washington, DC initially acquiesced in what many believed to be a commitment towards defunding law enforcement in favour of mental health services and other forms of non-violent de-escalation for vulnerable populations.

But in the four years since, every major city where “defund the police” had made some inroads has increased its law enforcement budget. The Biden administration has committed billions of dollars to “fund the police” even more. Barely a year after the mass protests, politicians in Minneapolis, in Portland, Oregon, and in Congress abandoned those initial commitments, citing increases in crime in 2021. Despite all the conversations around restorative justice, leaders across the US have

opted for the same racist, classist and ableist policing that led to the killing of George Floyd in 2020. All while ignoring how the decline in crime rates actually came alongside a decline in law enforcement employment – through retirements and resignations – in the cities it was observed.

In 2020, Americans also witnessed so many make commitments to undertake “antiracism” work. Corporations and private foundations invested millions of their dollars in programming around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). They invited prominent antiracism scholars like Ibram X Kendi and Robin DiAngelo to speak at scores of workshops and trainings, and poured money into antiracism and DEI centres housed in NGOs and at universities with the intent of “dismantling racism for good”. Four years later, as the Black Lives Matter signs on the front lawns of liberal Americans have begun to fade, so have the efforts to dismantle endemic and systemic racism through DEI trainings and antiracism workshops. Kendi’s Boston University Center for Antiracism Research, for example, had “gone from raising \$40 million in 2020 to a fraction of that — \$420,000 —” in 2021.

On June 20, Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama hosted its first Major League Baseball (MLB) game, in honour of the old Negro Leagues and their stars. This tribute coincided with MLB’s decision to finally mesh all Negro Leagues records with all MLB records, a move that should have occurred decades earlier, as the percentage of Black major leaguers has plummeted from 18 percent in 1991 to 5.7 percent today. During the pregame broadcast on Fox Sports, Hall of Famer and all-time great Reggie Jackson spoke on his memories of playing minor league baseball in Birmingham back in 1967.

“Coming back here is not easy. The racism when I played here...I wouldn’t wish it on anybody...I would go to a hotel and they’d say ‘that [n-word] can’t stay here,’” the 78-year-old Jackson said.

The enforced segregation and racial discrimination that a 21-year-old Reggie Jackson faced in 1967 is still happening to affluent and famous Black folk like molecular biologist Dr Raven Baxter and actor Wendell Pierce in 2024. In May, Dr Baxter posted on X, “My real estate agent’s BROKER just called me at 9pm on a Friday to tell me that the seller doesn’t want to sell a house to me because I am BLACK,” this after a contract agreement and a downpayment for a home in Virginia Beach, Virginia. A few weeks later, Pierce of The Wire, Tremé, Suits, and Jack Ryan fame reported a similar experience. “Even with my proof of employment, bank statements and real estate holdings, a white apartment owner DENIED my application to rent the apartment....in Harlem, of all places,” Pierce posted on X in early June. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 be damned, along with the additional Civil Rights Act of 1968 [PDF], which specifically prohibits housing discrimination, and the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. At least as far as America’s latticework maze of systemic racism is concerned.

Malcolm X was right. The federal government, private corporations and colleges and universities will never do the hard work of dismantling systems and structures that allow racism to flourish. Whatever antiracist efforts they commit themselves to are half-hearted, mostly symbolic, and extremely short-lived. For this middle-aged Black man of meagre wealth with a nanosecond of fame, it means my chances and my 21-year-old son’s chances of seeing the US turn the proverbial corner on race might as well be a 300 million-to-one shot of winning a Powerball jackpot.

You know who else should be on trial for UK’s far-right riots?

Jonathan Freedland

ONE man is missing. Of course, it’s good that so many of those responsible for a week of terrifying far-right violence are facing an especially swift and severe form of justice – but there’s one extremely rich and powerful suspect who should join them in the dock. If the UK authorities truly want to hold accountable all those who unleashed riots and pogroms in Britain, they need to go after Elon Musk.

To be sure, direct guilt belongs to the culprits on the ground, those currently being fast-tracked in their hundreds through a usually glacial court system – moving from arrest to charges, trial, conviction and (heavy) sentencing in a matter of days. Guilt belongs to those who surrounded hotels housing migrants and refugees, attempting to set them on fire and threatening to kill those inside. It belongs to those who saw fit to trash and loot not only shops, but also libraries and advice centres, many of them lifelines for those who have next to nothing. It belongs to those who smashed and threatened mosques, terrifying those within and whole Muslim communities beyond with a kind of menace many will have heard about in stories passed down from parents or grandparents, but which they will have hoped belonged to a long ago past.

And yet, consider how all this happened. It began as it always begins, with a lie – in this case, the lie that the wicked stabbing attack on a children’s dance party in Southport, which left three little girls dead, was the work of a Muslim migrant who had come to Britain on a small boat. I say “always” because this kind of lie has been told for the best part of a thousand years.

In 1144, it wasn’t Southport but Norwich, and the victim was a 12-year-old boy called William. When he was found dead, the accusing finger pointed instantly – and falsely – at the city’s Jews. Over the centuries that followed, the defamatory charge of child murder – the blood libel – would be hurled against Jews repeatedly, often as the prelude to massacre.

There are differences, of course, starting with the fact that, so far and thankfully, these riots have not killed anyone – although given the attempts to burn down buildings with people inside, that seems more a matter of luck than mercy. But the common element in events nearly a millennium apart is that lies can wreak havoc when they spread. And that spreading now takes seconds.

News of the murders in Southport had barely broken

when that false claim about the alleged killer’s identity began coursing through the veins of the internet, advancing virally across social media. It was not organised by one of the official groups of the far right, which remain tiny and fragmented. Nor is there much evidence that it was directed by a malign state actor, with a shadowy facility in St Petersburg pulling the strings. Its method, and that is the wrong word, was different – and much more effective.

“This was individuals, acting individually and anonymously,” says Joe Mulhall of Hope Not Hate, which has long monitored the far right. All of them were doing their own thing, but the overall result was collective movement in one direction, “like a school of fish”.

What gave the phenomenon scale were the “super-sharers”, big-name figures with large online followings who act as “nodes” for the dissemination of lies. Witness the role of Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, who styles himself Tommy Robinson, and Andrew Tate, both of whom amplified the initial bogus claim. Thanks to them, it was seen by millions. As Mulhall notes, these are people capable of making the weather: “One individual can create a mass panic.”

It has become a habit to speak of social media generically, but the core of the problem is more specific. It’s X (previously Twitter). That’s where “Robinson” has nearly a million followers. When he was banned from X and other mainstream platforms, he had to make do with the likes of Telegram, where his reach was more limited. “He was in the wilderness,” says Mulhall. Now that he’s back on X, he can find his way into the phones of tens or even hundreds of millions of people at a stroke. And what happens online carries over into the real world, as we saw at the end of last month, when Robinson addressed a crowd estimated to be in the tens of thousands at Trafalgar Square – and saw again this week.

Let’s remind ourselves who brought Robinson and a whole slew of far-right agitators back in from the cold, thereby putting X out of step with the likes of YouTube and Facebook. It was Musk, of course. He decided to make X a safe space for racism and hate almost as soon as he bought it. The effect was instant. One analysis of tweets found a “nearly 500% increase in use of the N-word in the 12-hour window immediately following the shift of ownership

to Musk”. The same study also found that posts including “the word ‘Jew’ had increased fivefold since before the ownership transfer”, and something tells me those tweets weren’t tributes to the comic style of Mel Brooks.

But Musk has not just ushered in the super-sharers of the far right: he is one himself. It was he, on his own X account, who shared with his 193m followers a fake Telegraph headline, falsely claiming that Keir Starmer planned to create “detainment camps” for rioters in the Falkland Islands, and doing it by quote-tweeting the co-leader of the ultra far-right Britain First organisation. It was Musk who inflamed an already incendiary situation by tweeting of the UK, “Civil war is inevitable”.

What’s the answer to this problem? Ideally, all politicians, journalists and influencers would defect en masse from X and use somewhere else as the global exchange for instant news and opinion. So far that’s presented a collective action problem: even governments who loathe X don’t want to leave while it remains a central forum.

It’s clear that schools should be teaching information hygiene, so children learn to avoid fake news the way they would avoid poisonous food. Clear, too, that we need online safety legislation with teeth and if, as Sadiq Khan has suggested, that means toughening up laws so new they are yet to be fully implemented, so be it. I like the idea of fines for social-media companies that don’t honour their own declared standards, though many are so rich they won’t feel it: better to fine the directors of those companies, hitting them in their own pockets. And, as Lies That Kill, a timely new book by Elaine Kamarck and Darrell West argues, given that this is a global problem, it will require a global solution: which “means that countries need to negotiate with each other on ways to cooperate in the fight against disinformation”. If 2025 sees Starmer sit down with a President Kamala Harris, this should be one of the first items on the agenda.

For now, though, there needs to be clarity on the nature of the problem. Lies can indeed kill and, though there are of course many others, one of the world’s most prolific enemies of truth is Elon Musk. He is surely the global far right’s most significant figure, and he holds the world’s largest megaphone. As he may put it, a battle to defeat him is now inevitable – and it has to be won.

The Guardian

Bangladesh upheaval will only add to Rohingya fears

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

THE ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has plunged Bangladesh into a state of uncertainty. It raises questions about the future direction of the country, especially concerning one of its most pressing humanitarian issues: the Rohingya crisis.

The Rohingya, a stateless Muslim minority who have fled persecution in Myanmar, now find themselves in an even more precarious position following the current upheaval. Over the years, Bangladesh has become a reluctant host to almost 1 million Rohingya refugees, primarily in the sprawling camps of Cox’s Bazar, which constitute the largest refugee settlement in the world. This population influx began in earnest during the Rohingya genocide when Hasina’s administration allowed these desperate individuals to seek shelter within Bangladesh’s borders.

The presence of such a large refugee population has always been a contentious issue in Bangladesh’s political landscape. Successive governments have struggled with the logistical, economic, and social burdens that the refugees impose. The lack of a coherent plan for their repatriation or integration has exacerbated these challenges, leaving the refugees in limbo. The situation is further complicated by Bangladesh’s own struggles with overpopulation; limited resources; and the adverse impacts of climate change which are steadily eroding its landmass.

While Hasina’s administration faced significant criticism for the lack of a long-term strategy, there was also an understanding that the humanitarian response aligned with the principles of her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country’s founding father. This alignment often stifled dissent within the political sphere, as Hasina’s decisions were seen as an extension of her father’s legacy.

However, with the anticipated ascension of a new leadership, this implicit consensus is likely to dissolve. The political calculus is expected to shift dramatically, as the new leadership will not be as tethered to the historical continuity of the founding father. This opens the door to a more critical assessment of Hasina’s policies, especially concerning the Rohingya refugees.

Economically, the burden of hosting the Rohingya is staggering. Reports estimate that Bangladesh spends close to \$1 billion annually on maintaining the refugee camps and providing basic necessities. This expenditure is a significant drain on a country still grappling with poverty and development challenges. It is highly probable that a new leader, seeking to assert their independence and responsiveness to domestic concerns, will push for more aggressive measures to address this financial drain.

One potential avenue for action is increased diplomatic pressure on Myanmar to begin repatriations. While previous efforts have been largely unsuccessful,

a new leadership might leverage Bangladesh’s growing regional influence and its relationships within ASEAN to forge a more robust international response. This could involve more direct appeals to global powers, more stringent demands for international aid, and a concerted effort to hold Myanmar accountable for creating conditions conducive to the safe return of the Rohingya.

However, this is easier said than done. The geopolitical dynamics of Southeast Asia, particularly the influence of China and India, complicate any unilateral action Bangladesh might wish to take. Furthermore, the Rohingya crisis is not just a bilateral issue, but a multifaceted humanitarian disaster requiring coordinated international efforts. The new leadership in Bangladesh will need to navigate these complex waters carefully, balancing domestic pressures with the realities of international diplomacy.

The uncertainty surrounding the future of the Rohingya in Bangladesh highlights the broader implications of Hasina’s ouster. As the country prepares for a new era of leadership, the incoming government will face the daunting task of addressing both the immediate needs of nearly 1 million stateless people and the long-term strategic interests of the nation. This transition period is fraught with risks, but also offers an opportunity to reset and potentially resolve one of the most protracted refugee crises of our time.

Arab News

No better time for a pipeline across the Caspian

Luke Coffey

THE first pipeline connecting the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea opened in 1906. Stretching from Baku in Azerbaijan to Batumi in Georgia and originally carrying kerosene, it has since been replaced by a network of oil and gas pipelines that deliver energy resources to global markets.

However, one crucial piece has always been missing from this puzzle: a pipeline connecting the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea to its western side. This project may now finally be realized after decades of discussion. Turkmen and Turkish officials agreed last week to drastically increase their gas trade volume over the next two decades, following an initial deal in March 2024 to boost energy cooperation.

To start, Turkmenistan will begin exporting 2 billion cubic meters of gas per year to Türkiye as part of a swap deal with Iran. In this arrangement, Turkmenistan sends gas to Iran, which then uses a different pipeline network to send the same amount of gas to Türkiye. However, both sides agree that a new pipeline will eventually be needed to increase gas trade. This is where the construction of a Trans-Caspian Pipeline comes in.

Both countries stand to benefit significantly from increased energy cooperation and the construction of a Trans-Caspian Pipeline to deliver gas to global markets. Turkmenistan is thought to have the world’s fourth-largest natural gas reserves, but it remains one of the poorest countries

in the world. The continuing failure to diversify its economy, attract foreign investment, and seek new markets for its oil and gas has created a poor economic environment. A Trans-Caspian Pipeline and the foreign investment it would attract would be a step in the right direction to get the economy back on track.

Meanwhile Türkiye is striving to position itself as the region’s main energy hub. The gas deal with Turkmenistan, along with the construction of the infrastructure needed to bring Turkmen gas to Türkiye and then on to global markets, would solidify that goal.

The broader region would also benefit from a Trans-Caspian Pipeline. Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the EU has been seeking alternative sources for energy, particularly natural gas. There is already an agreement with Azerbaijan to double the amount of gas sent by Baku through the existing pipeline network to Europe by 2027. However, even this will not be enough to satisfy Europe’s growing energy needs. Direct access to Turkmen natural gas could play a significant role in improving the bloc’s energy security.

But the construction of a Trans-Caspian Pipeline is easier said than done. After all, discussions have been ongoing for decades, with no meaningful progress. Fortunately, the challenges are not technical. The distance between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan is relatively short, and the

depth of the pipeline would not be a major factor. Instead, geopolitical limitations have prevented construction.

As neighboring Caspian countries, Iran and Russia have blocked the project for years. Their official reasons are environmental, including the potential impact on the increasingly fragile Caspian ecosystem. However, the real motive is probably that neither country wants to compete with Turkmenistan’s gas exports.

Another challenge has been Turkmenistan’s reluctance to diversify its energy exports and attract the foreign investment needed for such a major pipeline project. Currently, almost all of Turkmenistan’s gas exports go to China. Despite the construction of a pipeline connecting major gas fields in Turkmenistan to the Caspian Sea, Ashgabat has been hesitant to push for the construction of a Trans-Caspian Pipeline.

A further challenge comes from Europe. While European politicians and officials frequently talk about seeking alternative energy resources away from Russia, they have been slow to sign the deals and contracts necessary to realize this goal. The EU needs to play a more active and direct role in the region and start signing contracts if it wants to see countries producing more energy to be exported to Europe.

Finally, there is the issue of capacity. The existing natural gas pipeline network, the Southern Gas Corridor, which connects Azerbaijan to Italy,

will be at full capacity by 2027. Even if a Trans-Caspian Pipeline were constructed and completed, it is unclear how much additional gas could reach Europe. This means any discussion about constructing a Trans-Caspian Pipeline must also consider new infrastructure linking it to the rest of the world. While this may be a sizeable challenge, it also creates an important opportunity.

For decades, Armenia has missed out on all regional energy and transport infrastructure projects because of tensions with Azerbaijan. However, with Armenian-Azerbaijani normalization looking closer than ever, there is an opportunity to help Armenia integrate into the regional energy and transport infrastructure for the first time in decades. Any new pipeline system should consider involving Armenia. Such an ambitious project could help integrate the region and build trust among old adversaries.

A pipeline is the only economically viable way to move natural gas across the Caspian Sea. Transporting it by ship as liquefied natural gas is not profitable over such a short distance. There is no better time to push for the construction of a Trans-Caspian Pipeline. Russia and Iran are less focused in the Caspian because of challenges elsewhere and Europe is in desperate need of new energy sources. Turkmenistan and Türkiye, working with their regional partners, have an opportunity to re-shape the energy landscape on the Eurasian landmass. Time will tell if their talk will finally be turned into action.

families, which traditionally are large, polygamous, multigenerational and multihousehold. The government not only failed to consult with the Maasai people already living in Msomera about its plans to resettle other people there, but displaced several families, labelling them “trespassers” and “squatters” and threatened them with arrest and eviction if they protested or talked to the media. The overlapping claims over the limited land by the existing residents and the newly resettled ones have resulted in tensions and clashes between the two communities. “The relationship with the people from Ngorongoro is so bad,” a Msomera man said. “They take our places, our farms, our homes.”

When people from either community speak out against the relocations, they have faced reprisals, threats and intimidation from government rangers and security forces, creating a climate of fear, in a country where criticism of the government is already highly risky. “You’re not allowed to say anything,” one Msomera resident said, noting that people have “fear in their hearts.”

Even if the government’s concerns about land use pressures on the biodiversity of the conservation area are valid, addressing them should not justify human rights abuses. The government should instead engage with these communities to devise rights-respecting solutions for the preservation of their traditional livelihoods instead of continually uprooting them from their homes.

Tanzania’s conservation concerns do not excuse violations of Maasai rights

Oryem Nyeko & Juliana Nnoko

“We are tired of moving.” This is what several Maasai men and women residing in the Endulen village in Tanzania’s Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) told us last July when we asked them about the government’s ongoing efforts to relocate their community. “Our grandfathers left Serengeti for conservation,” a local councillor said. “Our fathers lived inside the Ngorongoro Crater and they were removed from there, too. We worry about moving again. We want to have a stable life.”

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area feels like a place outside of time with its lush and otherworldly Ngorongoro Crater, and Maasai boma – traditional homesteads – scattered along winding roads and tucked into hillsides. The conservation area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and has prehistoric footprints of early upright walking humans as well as a rich mixture of wildlife roaming in and outside the crater. Indigenous Maasai have lived there for generations, but Tanzania’s government has plans to change that, flagging the increase of people and livestock within the area as a conservation concern.

Since 2021, the government has moved and resettled hundreds of people from the conservation area in northern Tanzania to Msomera, a village near the country’s eastern coast. The government claims the relocations are voluntary and touts the measure as promoting conservation.

Human Rights Watch research, conducted since 2022, however,

found that the relocations are far from voluntary and that the government has undermined the rights of Maasai residents from both the conservation area and Msomera, including rights to education, healthcare and to preserving their culture.

The government has used several tactics to push residents out of their homes. For example, it has systematically reduced the availability of adequate education and health services, which were already fewer and of poorer quality than elsewhere in the country.

In 2022, it downgraded Endulen Hospital to a mere dispensary. The 110-bed hospital managed by the Catholic Church since 1965 was the only hospital providing comprehensive medical services in the area. Now it has such a serious shortage of medicines that staff dole out pain and fever relievers for every ailment, residents and staff told us. The government has refused to release funds or issue permits to improve and renovate schools in the area, many of which have old and dilapidated buildings, overflowing latrines and not enough desks.

The authorities have also restricted movement in and out of the conservation zone, arbitrarily requiring residents to show various types of identification to enter the area. They have restricted residents, who depend primarily on herding livestock for their income, from grazing animals in specific areas and also blocked their access to important cultural and traditional sites.

Government rangers indiscriminately attack, beat and harass residents who don’t comply. The authorities have denied entry to nongovernmental organisations or followed and monitored their representatives in the area, effectively blocking them from supporting the affected communities.

Despite government claims the relocations are voluntary, officials have not sought the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous communities as required under international human rights law. Residents said the government did not properly consult them during and after the review of a multiple land-use plan for the conservation area in 2018, and refused to consider alternatives to relocation. When Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa met with community leaders in February 2022, people present said there was no discussion or consultation and he only gave instructions on how to register for relocation.

Ultimately the government decided where people would be relocated to, and built houses without any input from affected communities. In Msomera, the government has provided each relocated family with a three-room house and about two to five acres (0.8 to 2 hectares) of land to farm, in addition to constructing and renovating roads, a primary school, dispensary, postal service, police post, water supply system, electricity, and a cellular network to service the area.

But the houses do not reflect the needs or complexities of Maasai



'FoodAg 2024': Participation of 75 states evinces trust in Pakistan

KARACHI (INP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan has said the second edition of International Food and Agriculture Exhibition 2024 was participated by hundreds of delegations and companies from 75 countries which evinces their trust in Pakistan. He commended participation of women especially from Balochistan in the expo.

While addressing a press conference during the FoodAg at Expo Centre on Saturday, he said that the

exhibition of such level had been held for the first time in the history of the country.

Jam Kamal Khan said that the representatives from European Union, African countries, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and others had been participating in the three days exhibition. He said that along with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Turkish ministers were also present in the opening ceremony.

The visitors in the exhibition had not come from only one region but 800 del-

egations had come from 75 countries, he added. The commerce minister said that they would also organize exhibitions in other cities of the country. The minister said that this expo would help improve agriculture and exports related to it.

He said that it would also have a positive effect on the farmers and the country's economy. He said that the success of the exhibition was due to hard-work of the Ministry of Commerce and missions posted in different countries.

Jam Kamal said that the world was interested in doing business with Pakistan. He said that it was a fact that the country was facing challenges and problems. He further said that in spite of these challenges the economy had stabilized and the inflation had decreased.

The minister said that there were many opportunities in food and agriculture sector and big groups from other sectors of the country also wanted to come to this sector, which would also benefit the farmers.

Govt must take steps to strengthen industry to help grow businesses

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) senior vice chairman Shabbaz Aslam has proposed the central bank to review its credit policies by fixing a special quota to finance the small and medium enterprises, contributing around 40 percent to the national gross domestic product (GDP).

Shabbaz Aslam said that the government with a view to help grow the businesses will have to take solid measures to strengthen the industry, especially the SMEs, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with the small industries. The government will have to make a visible reduction in markup rate to help grow the businesses, particularly the SME sector, as Pakistan needs millions of jobs annually.

We need to highlight the critical role of small & medium enterprises

(SMEs) in driving sustainable economic development in Pakistan. With an estimated 5.2 million businesses, the SME sector is a cornerstone of our economy, fostering employment, growth, and export diversification.

The FRIA senior vice chairman observed that despite their significance, more than 5 million SMEs face a significant credit gap, receiving limited credit, far below the neighboring countries. The State Bank of Pakistan is committed to increasing SME credit share to 17% by 2023. To achieve this, we must advocate for targeted and fixed SME allocations in concessional financing schemes, particularly those aimed at the export-oriented sector.

Shabbaz Aslam said that the State Bank of Pakistan has launched various policies for the promotion of SME finance, but the required results were still

awaited. It was unfortunate that banks were always reluctant to provide financing to SMEs as their financing continued to show negative growth.

In its endeavor to provide concessional financing to the export-oriented sector, the SBP has introduced the Export Finance Scheme, offering financing as low as 3%, in stark contrast to the earlier Export Refinance Schemes' (ERF) markup rates that reached 21%. However, it is a matter of great concern that a substantial portion of this financing has been availed by large corporate industries, leaving no room for SMEs. The current economic challenges demand a targeted approach to support the SMEs, as they are among the hardest-hit and in desperate need of assistance.

Shabbaz Aslam said that a small section of public sector and Islamic banks and few DFIs were active

in financing SMEs sector. Despite significantly contributing to the GDP, exports and employment generation, the financing percentage of SMEs remained pathetic in general. He urged the government that SME policy should focus on addressing specific issues faced by the SME sector and help check reluctance of financial institutions to provide financing to SMEs.

He called for early and speedy access to finance for SMEs, including creation of enabling regulatory framework, market development, awareness creation and capacity building programs for banks and SMEs and introduction of SME financing targets for banks and DFIs.

He stressed that a separate and comprehensive policy for the SME sector was the need of the day to promote contribution of SME sector for inclusive growth.



ISLAMABAD: Vendor displaying national flag badges and other festive items to attract customers.

AIKO introduces N-Type ABC modules

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: AIKO, a global leader in photovoltaic technology, is expanding into Pakistan with the introduction of its top-efficiency N-Type ABC Modules. This move highlights AIKO's dedication to providing cutting-edge, sustainable energy solutions to growing markets.

The launch event, held at a local hotel in Lahore on Friday 09th August and honoured by the presence of Ch. Shafay Hussain, the esteemed Minister of Industries, along with prominent government officials, leading importers, distributors, and key EPC companies, highlighted the strong interest and support from Pakistan's renewable energy sector.

"AIKO's launch of high-efficiency solar modules represents a significant advancement for our renewable energy sector," said Ch. Shafay Hussain, Chief Guest and Minister for Industries, Commerce, Investment & Skills Development Department, Government of Punjab. "These innovative modules will be crucial in helping Pakistan achieve its renewable energy goals and enhance our energy infrastructure. Their introduction will also foster greater investment and development in the sector, benefiting our economy and environment while addressing our energy needs."

Shanghai Aiko Solar New Energy Co., Ltd., known as AIKO, has been a leader in solar technology for over 15 years, providing high-efficiency solar cells, N-Type ABC modules, and integrated energy solutions worldwide. AIKO's N-Type ABC Modules, boasting a world-record efficiency of 24.2%, are designed without front grid lines to maximize light absorption and power output.

KCCI, ITC sign deal to empower women

KARACHI (PPI): The Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) Geneva has announced a new partnership aimed at setting out the framework of cooperation between the ITC and the KCCI on women's empowerment in particular to increase the market competitiveness of women-led businesses and women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

The MoU was signed on August 8th 2024, at KCCI. The signatories included Iftikhar Ahmed Shaikh, President KCCI, Mr Escipion Joaquin Oliveira Gomez, Director of the Division of Enterprise Competitiveness and Institutions at the International Trade Centre; and Junaid Makda, former President KCCI &

Chairman of the Special Committee for International/Legal Affairs & Implementation of MOUs/ICC/WCF.

During the ceremony, Iftikhar Ahmed Shaikh, President KCCI extended a warm welcome to the esteemed guests, expressed enthusiasm for the deepening relationship between KCCI and ITC, and highlighted a strong commitment to enhancing collaboration.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Junaid Makda, former President of KCCI and Chairman of the Special Committee for International/Legal Affairs & Implementation of MOUs/ICC/WCF, extended a warm welcome to the esteemed representatives from the International Trade Centre. He said this strategic partnership

between KCCI & the ITC will further strengthen their collaboration, and emphasized that this landmark milestone will pursue deeper cooperation and advance their mutual objectives in the future.

In conjunction with the MoU, the International Trade Centre (ITC) conducted a specialized training workshop on Digital Marketing & Canva at the KCCI on August 8th-9th 2024. This event, in partnership with the KCCI, has provided invaluable insights into branding and design fundamentals, optimizing online presence, and crafting impactful marketing materials. This training has benefited more than 50 women-led businesses in Karachi, with a focus on those in the textile & apparel, women's accessories, and home décor sectors.

REAP, TDAP celebrate achievement

KARACHI (PPI): The Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), in association with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) celebrated a USD 4 billion export achievement milestone.

The event titled "FOUR - The Quadra Legacy" was held at the historic Mohatta Palace, marking the first time a sustainability-focused event.

The celebration honored the achievement of USD 4 billion in rice exports by REAP, showcasing the remarkable success of Pakistan's rice export industry. The event also paid homage to the rich heritage and symbolism of the number 4 in Islamic architecture, with Mohatta Palace as the backdrop.

Emphasizing eco-conscious practices, the event featured zero waste initiatives, utilizing recyclable and compostable materials, renewable energy sources, and informative displays on sustainability. It symbolically represented the immersive experience of "chaar bagh" (four gardens), intertwining the four elements of nature: earth, air, water, and fire. The event also featured an exclusive performance by the legendary Shafqat Amanat Ali, along with Khumariyaan and Lenny Massey an opening act designed to engage all senses and celebrate Pakistan's rich cultural heritage.

Chela Ram Kewlani, Chairman, Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), shared his thoughts as saying, "Our journey to achieving USD 4 billion in rice exports is a story of perseverance and vision. We also look forward to pushing the USD 4 billion achievement to USD 6 billion in the coming months".

Students of Roots Ivy meet with Chairperson



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Students of Roots Ivy met with Christina Von Sriel, Chairperson KKAUF to discuss drug awareness and prevention. The meeting was part of the "Roshan Mustaqbil" (Bright Future) project, a

student community action service initiative aimed at spreading awareness.

The meeting was attended by students Haseebullah Khan, Rahim Amin Khan, Hadi Fahad Malik, Hashim Waheed, Abdul Wasay Adam, Raja Hanan Amir, and Madzar Razwan.

The meeting helped to encourage and guide the students. The discussion focused on drug awareness and the problems caused by drug use. The Chairperson appreciated the students' efforts and encouraged them to continue their work in this regard.

Hedge funds pile into bearish stock bets

NEW YORK (Reuters): Hedge funds added bearish bets in Japanese stocks at the fastest pace in over five years for a week between Aug. 2 and Aug. 8, as the Nikkei opens new tab on Aug. 5 faced the worst day for the index since Black Monday in 1987, Goldman Sachs, opens new tab said.

The bank said equity long/short hedge funds added 1.7 shorts, or bets stocks will fall, for each long position sold for the week between Aug. 2 and Aug. 8.

Japanese stocks collapsed on Monday amid a sell-off triggered by economic concerns and the unwinding of a popular yen trade that was financing investment in stocks, which reverberated across markets worldwide.

Portfolio managers net sold Japanese stocks in four of the five-trading day week finished on Aug. 8, as Tuesday was the only day they more bought than added shorts. Goldman Sachs said hedge funds' net exposure to Japanese equities was on Thursday at 4.8%, down from 5.6% a week earlier.

As the turmoil spread overseas, hedge funds for the fourth consecutive week continued bearish on global equities, adding more short positions, bank added.

Cisco to lay off thousands more in second job cut

NEW YORK (Reuters): Cisco, opens new tab will cut thousands of jobs in a second round of layoffs this year as the US networking equipment maker shifts focus to higher-growth areas, including cybersecurity and AI, people familiar with the matter said.

The number of people affected could be similar to or slightly higher than the 4,000 employees Cisco laid

off in February, and will likely be announced as early as Wednesday with the company's fourth-quarter results, said the sources, who were not authorized to speak publicly.

Reuters exclusively reported the job cut that San Jose, California-based Cisco announced in February, prior to the company announcing it.

The company employed around 84,900 people as of July 2023, according to its annual filing. That number does not account for the February layoffs.

Cisco did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Its shares fell nearly 1% after Reuters first reported the cuts. The stock was down over 9% this year as of Thursday's close.

Cisco, the largest maker of the routers and switches that direct internet traffic, has been grappling with sluggish demand and sup-

ply-chain constraints in its mainstay business.

That has pushed the company to diversify with moves such as its \$28-billion buyout of cybersecurity firm Splunk, which it completed in March. The acquisition will reduce its reliance on one-time equipment sales by boosting its subscription business.

The company has been trying to incorporate AI products in its offerings and in May reiterated its target of \$1 billion worth of AI product orders in 2025. In June, it launched a \$1-billion fund to make investments in AI startups such as Cohere, Mistral AI and Scale AI. The company said at the time it had made 20 AI-focused acquisitions and investments in the last several years.

The layoffs are the latest in the tech industry, which has been cutting costs this year to offset big investments in AI.

LONDON (BBC News): Delta Airlines has expressed frustration with CrowdStrike in a new letter, as the two companies continue to trade jabs after last month's global network failure.

The US-based carrier accused the cybersecurity company of "negligence", saying it was forced to cancel thousands of flights because and had lost at least \$500m (£392m) as a result.

CrowdStrike had denied it was solely responsible for Delta's flight disruptions, which it said continued after other carriers came back online.

Delta has since been hit by a class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of affected passengers.

The global glitch originated from CrowdStrike on 19 July, after it had sent out a corrupted software update to customers.

Microsoft estimated it disabled 8.5 million Windows devices around the world.

Delta Airlines' services were affected for days after, even as other airlines appeared to have recovered. It cancelled around 7,000 flights over five days until 24 July, and is now being investigated by

the US Department of Transportation over the disruptions.

The airline has since blamed CrowdStrike and Microsoft for the disruptions, and has threatened legal action. Both firms have rejected the claim that they were responsible.

Delta's CEO Ed Bastian wrote in a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission on Thursday that what happened was "unacceptable".

"Our customers and employees deserve better," Mr Bastian wrote, adding that the technology meltdown affected 1.3 million of Delta's customers.

CrowdStrike said on Sunday that it would defend itself "aggressively" should Delta take legal action against it.

Microsoft also said it would fight back, and added that its preliminary review shows Delta, unlike its competitors, was operating with an outdated IT infrastructure.

In response, David Boies, a lawyer for Delta, wrote in a letter to CrowdStrike on Thursday that "there is no basis - none - to suggest that Delta was in any way responsible for the faulty

software that crashed systems around the world".

He added that Delta Airlines had invested billions of dollars in its technology, and said it struggled to restore operations because of its reliance on Microsoft and CrowdStrike.

CrowdStrike accused Delta of pushing "a misleading narrative".

A lawsuit has also been filed against Delta on behalf of passengers whose flights were cancelled.

The legal action stated that "no other US airline had cancelled one-tenth as many flights".

It also claimed that Delta failed to properly compensate passengers, and that it had asked them to sign waivers releasing Delta of all legal claims.

Many airlines rely on Microsoft's Office365 for scheduling. The CrowdStrike failure crashed those systems, meaning firms had to use manual scheduling.

CrowdStrike has since been sued by its shareholders, who accused the company of making "false and misleading" statements about its software testing. CrowdStrike has denied the allegations.

Former YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki dies

NEW YORK (Reuters): YouTube's former chief executive and long-time Google executive Susan Wojcicki died on Saturday at the age of 56 after a two-year battle with lung cancer.

"It is with profound sadness that I share the news of Susan Wojcicki passing. My beloved wife of 26 years and mother to our five children left us today after 2 years of living with non-small cell lung cancer," Dennis Troper, Wojcicki's husband, said in a Facebook post.

"Over the last two years, even as she dealt with great personal difficulties, Susan devoted herself to making the world better through her philanthropy, including supporting research for the disease that ultimately took

her life," Google (GOOGL.O), opens new tab Chief Executive Sundar Pichai said in a blog post, opens new tab.

One of the most prominent women in tech, Wojcicki joined Google in 1999 to become one of the first few employees of the web search leader, years before it acquired YouTube.

Google bought YouTube in 2006 for \$1.65 billion.

Before becoming CEO of YouTube in 2014, Wojcicki was senior vice president for ad products at Google.

After nine years at the helm, Wojcicki stepped down from her role at YouTube in 2023 to focus on "family, health, and personal projects". She was replaced by her deputy, Neal Mohan, a

senior advertising and product executive who joined Google in 2008. Wojcicki at that time planned to take on an advisory role at Alphabet, Google's parent company.

"Twenty-five years ago I made the decision to join a couple of Stanford graduate students who were building a new search engine. Their names were Larry and Sergey.... It would be one of the best decisions of my life," Wojcicki wrote in a blog post, opens new tab on the day she left YouTube, referring to Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin.

"Today we at YouTube lost a teammate, mentor, and friend, Susan Wojcicki," Mohan said in a post on X, opens new tab.

Flour rate further decreased

FAISALABAD (APP): The government has made further decrease in the rate of flour bags of 10 kilograms (kg) and 20 kg to facilitate consumers.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh said here on Saturday that on special direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, flour rate was further decreased and now the 10-kg bag would be available at rate of Rs.805 instead of Rs.820 whereas 20-kg flour bag could be purchased at Rs.1610 instead of Rs.1640.

He said that district administration has also activated price control magistrates and officers of food department to ensure availability of flour bags at subsidized rates across the district, he added.



In brief

Ali eyes comeback in national team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Test fast bowler Muhammad Ali is determined to make a successful comeback to the national team, saying that although it's not easy, but his past experiences have prepared him for the challenge. Ali, who played two Tests against England two years ago, has been included in the Test squad against Bangladesh. Before that, he will feature in the first four-day match against Bangladesh A. In an interview with PCB Digital, Ali reflected on his previous stint with the national team, saying, "I accepted being dropped from the team, thinking maybe I wasn't ready for the big stage at that time, which affected my performance. However, he bounced back by delivering strong performances in domestic cricket, earning him a recall to the team. Ali recently took six wickets for Pakistan Shaheens in a four-day match against Bangladesh A in Darwin, showcasing his impressive form. Despite not taking wickets in the first innings of both matches, he remained confident and delivered a standout performance in the second innings, especially after teammate Kashif Ali was ruled out due to injury. Ali credited his coach and mentor, Mansoor Amjad, for their invaluable support and guidance in refining his bowling action and overall game. He also advised young cricketers to prioritize education alongside their cricketing pursuits, emphasizing its benefits during and after their playing careers. With his sights set on the upcoming series against Bangladesh, Muhammad Ali is poised to make a lasting impact on the national team.

Spain beat France

PARIS (INP): Substitute Sergio Camello struck twice in extra time to settle a remarkable Olympic men's football final on Friday as Spain beat France 5-3 to take gold after Thierry Henry's hosts had earlier staged a dramatic comeback. It had looked as though Spain were going to run away with victory at the Parc des Princes in Paris when they recovered from conceding an early goal to lead 3-1 by half-time. Enzo Millot put France in front, but a Fermin Lopez brace and an Alex Baena free-kick turned the final completely on its head. However, France staged a memorable comeback with Maghnes Aklouche pulling a goal back before Jean-Philippe Mateta converted a stoppage-time penalty awarded following a VAR review. That took the final into extra time, where Rayo Vallecano forward Camello emerged as the hero by giving Spain the lead again in the 100th minute of an absorbing game, and then running away to seal their victory at the death. Silver medalists in Tokyo three years ago, it is the second time Spain have won Olympic men's football gold after their victory in Barcelona in 1992 with a squad featuring Pep Guardiola and Luis Enrique. France had hoped for a second gold of their own, 40 years after winning in Los Angeles, but instead have to settle for silver. The victory completes a glorious summer on the pitch for Spain's men after their triumph at the Euros in Germany last month. They also recently won the Under-19 Euros by getting the better of France in the final.

Usman shines as Shaheens register first win in T20 series

PERTH (INP): Pakistan Shaheens registered a 17-run win over Perth Scorchers in their opening game of the Top End T20 series 2024 on Saturday at the DXC Arena in Darwin. In pursuit of the 189-run target, Scorchers' batters, Teague Wyllie (4, 5b, 1x4) and Sam Fanning (13, 11b, 2x4s) departed in the third and fourth overs, respectively. Joel Curtis (17, 21b, 1x4) and Corey Wasley (54, 27b, 6x4s, 3x6s) threatened the Shaheens bowling attack with a 58-run fourth-wicket stand which was eventually broken by legspinner Arif Yaqoob in the 11th over. In the following over, Jahandad Khan dismissed the aggressive Wasley as well with Scorchers requiring 96 runs in 51 balls. Baxter Holt (24, 21b, 1x4, 1x6) and Keaton Critchell (24, 18b, 2x4s, 1x6) found the boundary on regular intervals for their 33-run fifth-wicket partnership before Holt was dismissed by

Mohammad Abbas Afridi in the 16th over. Critchell departed for 24 off 18, hitting two fours and one six while Matthew Spoors, who remained unbeaten for 27 off 15 balls clubbing five fours, failed to make ends meet as Scorchers fell 17 runs short. Abbas and Jahandad picked up two wickets each while Mohammad Imran Jnr and Arif had one each to their name. Earlier, after opting to bat first, the Pakistan Shaheens posted a competitive total of 188-7 in the allotted 20 overs courtesy of 35-ball 57 from Usman Khan. Usman, batting at four, walked in to bat at the end of power-play, struck four boundaries and three sixes in this outing keeping the Shaheens innings intact. Shaheens racked up 47 runs during the field restrictions, losing Haseebullah (12, 10b, 2x4s) and Tayyab Tahir (5, 11b, 1x4) in the course. Soon, Sahibzada

Farhan too departed in the eighth over leaving Shaheens 58-3 in 7.3 overs. Skipper, Mohammad Harris (25, 19b, 3x4s) and Usman came together to put on 45-run fourth-wicket partnership off 28 balls before the former fell prey to Keaton Critchell in the 13th over. An over later, Mohammad Irfan Khan departed for a mere two off five balls, before Arafat Minhas played a powerful cameo of 31 runs facing 16 balls hitting three fours and one six. Usman and Arafat departed on consecutive deliveries before Mohammad Abbas Afridi (12 not out, 3b) belted two sixes in the last over to help Shaheens finish the innings with momentum. For Scorchers, Matthew Spoors bagged three wickets while Critchell, Luke Holt, Lucas Martin and Jhye Richardson picked up one each. Pakistan Shaheens will face Melbourne Stars in the second match tomorrow.

China completes Olympic table tennis gold clean sweep



PARIS (AFP): China completed a clean sweep of the Olympic gold medals in table tennis Saturday by winning the women's team title in Paris, the sixth time the Chinese have collected the full set. The Chinese women withstood a brave Japanese challenge but eventually overpowered their opponents 3-0, their fifth gold from five competitions at the Games. The first tie, a doubles match pitting China's Chen Meng and Wang Manyu against Hina Hinata and Miwa Harimoto, went down to the wire, the Chinese edging it 12-10 in the deciding fifth game.

Individual silver medalist Sun Yingsha was also pushed hard by her Japanese opponent, Miu Hirano, but prevailed 3-0. Then Wang finished off the job, beating Harimoto 3-1 to write another golden chapter in Chinese table tennis history. Wang Chuqin and Sun started the Chinese gold rush in Paris, defeating the North Korean pair of Ri Jong-sik and Kim Kum-yong in the mixed doubles final. Chen then beat compatriot Sun in the women's singles final exactly one week ago. Fan Zhendong overcame a brave challenge from the competition's surprise package,

Truls Moregard from Sweden, to win the men's singles the next day. The men's team dominated Sweden 3-0, leaving just the Japanese women's team standing in the way of the clean sweep. The gold won by Chinese great Ma Long in the team event was his sixth. That took him past divers Wu Minxia and Chen Ruolin, and gymnast Zou Kai, as the Chinese athlete with the most golds at the Olympics. China have completely dominated table tennis ever since it was introduced as an Olympic sport in 1988 in Seoul. They won every medal on offer at Sydney in 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, London 2012 and Rio 2016. Japan dethroned China in the mixed doubles at the delayed Tokyo Olympics. And China has not always had it all their own way in the men's singles. South Korean Ryu Seung-min won in Athens, Jan-Ove Waldner from Sweden took gold in Barcelona, and Yoo Nam-kyu, also from South Korea, triumphed in Seoul.

Algerian gender-row boxer Khelif storms to Olympic gold



PARIS (Agencies): Algerian boxer Imane Khelif defied a major gender controversy to win gold at the Paris Olympics on Friday in front of a pulsating Roland Garros crowd that roared her to victory. Khelif claimed a unanimous points decision win over China's Yang Liu in the women's 66kg final for her first Olympic medal. Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting, who together with Khelif was disqualified from last year's world championships after failing gender eligibility testing, fights in the women's 57kg final on Saturday. There were large numbers of Algerian fans at the 15,000-seated Court Philippe Chatrier, usually home to Grand Slam tennis but instead there to witness one of the most controversial athletes at the Games. Standing 1.79 metre (5ft 9in), Khelif had enjoyed a height and strength advantage over the three opponents she comfortably dismantled

on her way to the final. Yang was a different proposition, the 32-year-old being nearly as tall and also having pedigree as a world champion. Loud cheers went up when the 25-year-old Khelif entered the arena, shadow-boxing her way towards the ring as chants of "Imane, Imane" rang out. Khelif dictated most of the first round from the centre of the ring and unloaded a flurry of punches on Yang two-thirds of the way through to take the early initiative. The second round started in the same way, with Khelif's punches appearing to carry more snap, power and menace. The Algerian was ahead on all the judges' scorecards heading into the third and final round, and she just needed to avoid serious trouble to claim gold. The two embraced at the bell, and after Khelif's comprehensive victory was confirmed, she was paraded

around the arena on the shoulders of an Algerian team member. What's the controversy? Khelif and Lin both fought at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago but there was no controversy at the time and neither won a medal. Both were thrown out of last year's world championships, which was run by the Russian-led International Boxing Association (IBA), but were cleared to compete in Paris. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has overseen the sport at the Games because of concerns over the IBA's running of boxing, including questions over its finances, ethics and judging of bouts. The gender controversy ignited in the French capital when Khelif defeated Angela Carini in 46 seconds in her opening bout, the Italian reduced to tears and abandoning the fight after suffering a badly hurt nose. The IBA's Kremlin-linked president Umar Kremlev claimed at a chaotic press conference this week that Khelif and Lin had undergone "genetic testing that shows that these are men". The IOC has leapt to the defence of both boxers, with president Thomas Bach saying they were born and raised as women, and have passports saying that. Neither is known to identify as transgender, and they have enjoyed strong support back home.

'Free Afghan Women': Olympic refugee breakdancer disqualified for slogan



PARIS (AFP): Olympic Refugee Team breakdancer Manizha Talash from Afghanistan was disqualified from the breaking competition after she wore a cape saying "Free Afghan Women", the World DanceSport Federation told AFP on Saturday. B-girl Talash, 21,

unveiled the blue top with the slogan on Friday just before the first duel of the whole competition, against India Sardjoe of the Netherlands. "Refugee athlete B-girl Talash... was disqualified for displaying a political slogan on her attire in violation of Rule 50 of the

Olympic Charter," the association said in a statement to AFP. That rule states that "no kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas". Born in Kabul, under Taliban control since 2021, Talash fled the country to

live in Spain with her two brothers. Before arriving in Spain, she spent a year in hiding in Pakistan because she did not have a passport. "I didn't leave Afghanistan because I'm afraid of the Taliban or because I can't live in Afghanistan," she said before the competition. "I left because I want to do what I can for the girls in Afghanistan, for my life, my future, for everyone." In Kabul, she discovered breaking online and joined a local club, where she was the only girl. Despite the risks -- the troupe was forced to switch practice venues after receiving death threats -- she was determined to pursue her passion. "I took the risk of becoming a target. I have fear in my heart but I won't give up," she told AFP in 2021. Six athletes represented Afghanistan -- including three women not acknowledged by the Taliban government -- at the Paris Olympics in cycling, athletics, swimming and judo.

Shahid Afridi leads KSL trials

ISLAMABAD (APP): The organizers of the Kashmir Supreme League (KSL), the most prestigious and eagerly anticipated cricket league in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, have announced a revised schedule for their upcoming trials, taking into consideration the recent changes in weather conditions. The trials are now set to begin on August 17, 2024, at the iconic Muzaffarabad Cricket Stadium, said a press release issued here on Saturday. The first phase of trials will be conducted on August 17 and 18 at the Muzaffarabad Cricket Stadium for aspiring cricketers from Muzaffarabad and Neelum districts. Following this, the trials for Bagh and Jhelum Valley districts are scheduled for August 20 at Bagh Cricket Stadium. On August 22, Rawalakot Cricket Stadium will host the trials for Haveli and Rawalakot districts. The cricketing action will then move to Kotli on August 24, where the trials for Kotli and Pallandri districts will be held at Kotli Cricket Stadium. Finally, the trials will conclude on August 26 at Mirpur Cricket Stadium for participants from Mirpur and Bhimber districts. Shahid Khan Afridi, a globally celebrated cricketer and former captain of Pakistan's national team, continues to be the brand ambassador for the Kashmir Supreme League. His involvement has added significant prestige to the league, attracting widespread attention from both local and international cricketing communities. Legendary wicketkeeper and former captain, Moin Khan is also deeply involved in the league's operations, ensuring that the KSL is managed with the highest standards of professionalism and excellence. The Kashmir Supreme League is more than just a sporting event, it is a significant opportunity for the region's emerging cricket talent to showcase their skills on a grand stage. The league is expected to feature some of the most distinguished national and international cricket stars, who will not only compete but also mentor the young talent from Kashmir, sharing their vast experience and knowledge. Beyond the cricketing realm, the league is expected to draw prominent figures from various fields, both nationally and internationally. The presence of such esteemed personalities underscores the league's broader mission to promote mutual relations, tourism, and sports activities within Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Since the league's announcement, there has been a palpable wave of excitement among the youth of Kashmir. Young cricketers from across the region have been diligently preparing for the trials, eager to earn their place in what promises to be a historic cricketing event.

Bangladesh team to reach Pakistan "early" for two-match Test series

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has confirmed that the Bangladesh men's cricket team will arrive early in Pakistan to prepare for the two-match Test series, scheduled to commence on August 21. The two-match series is part of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) and will be played in Rawalpindi and Karachi from 21-25 August and 30 August-3 September, respectively. Originally scheduled to arrive on 17 August in Islamabad, the Bangladesh team will now land in Lahore on the morning of 13 August. Bangladesh team will train at the Gaddafi Stadium from 14-16 August before travelling to Islamabad on 17 August to hold practice sessions at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from 18-20 August. The PCB had extended an invitation to the Bangladesh Cricket Board

(BCB) to send their team earlier, ensuring they have adequate and fair training opportunities ahead of the ICC World Test Championship matches. "Sports is not only about winning and losing, it's also about comradery. I remain confident that the extra training sessions in Lahore will allow the players to showcase their best skills and talent on the global stage," said PCB Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer. "We are delighted that the BCB have accepted our offer and we look forward to welcoming the Bangladesh men's cricket team in Lahore on 13 August with our traditional hospitality. This will allow them to have three additional days of training and practice at one of our iconic venues before proceeding to Islamabad as originally planned," he added. BCB Chief Executive Nizam Uddin Chowdhury

thanked the PCB for providing their national team with an ample opportunity to train adequately for the upcoming series. "We thank the PCB for giving the Bangladesh cricket team the opportunity to have additional training in Pakistan. This will certainly help the players to acclimate to the conditions and prepare better for the ICC World Test Championship series." This will be Bangladesh's first tour of Pakistan since 2020 when they played three T20Is in Lahore and one-off Test in Rawalpindi. Bangladesh also played two ACC Asia Cup 2023 matches in Lahore against Afghanistan and Pakistan. Bangladesh is one of the seven sides that will feature in next year's ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan. The other six sides are Afghanistan, Australia, England, India, New Zealand and South Africa.

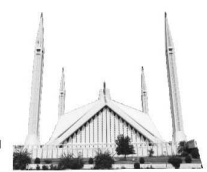
Man City edge Man Utd on penalties to win Community Shield



LONDON (AFP): Manchester City avenged their FA Cup final defeat to Manchester United to lift the Community Shield 7-6 on penalties on Saturday, after a 1-1 draw at Wembley. The game exploded into life in the final 10 minutes as Alejandro Garnacho gave United the lead before Bernardo Silva levelled in the 89th minute. Pep Guardiola's men then edged a marathon shoot-out as Jadon Sancho and Jonny Evans failed to score for United. City have won the Premier League for a record four consecutive seasons but it is the first time in that run that they have won the season opener after defeats to Leicester, Liverpool and Arsenal in the past three years. The English champions were severely hampered by the absence of a series of key players due to their late return to pre-season after competing at Euro 2024

and the Copa America. City's England trio of Kyle Walker, John Stones and Phil Foden, as well as Spain midfielder Rodri are yet to return to training following their efforts in reaching the final of Euro 2024. By contrast, United boss Erik ten Hag showed his desperation to win more silverware by thrusting teenager Kobbie Mainoo straight back into the heart of the action after his starring role for England in Germany. Despite also leaving Kevin De Bruyne and Silva on the bench, City controlled the game early on with the electric Jeremy Doku causing havoc down the left. James McAtee could be handed his chance to shine this season by Pep Guardiola with Julian Alvarez set to join Atletico Madrid. And McAtee, who spent last season on loan at Sheffield United, was inches away from making his

mark with a curling effort that came back off the post midway through the first half. United rue missed chances. Ten Hag's job is widely believed to have been saved by beating City back in May and he will feel his side should have got the better of their rivals once more. United were being starved of possession but still managed to create the better of the chances. Amad Diallo should have gone for goal himself rather than trying to square to Bruno Fernandes with the goal gaping as half-time approached. Fernandes started in an unfamiliar centre-forward role due to the absence of Rasmus Hojlund through injury and a lack of match fitness for Joshua Zirkzee. The United captain thought he had opened the scoring with a stunning strike on the hour mark that was ruled out for offside. Garnacho was introduced for the final half-hour and brought more pace and invention to the United attack. The Argentine teed up Marcus Rashford, who could only hit the post with just Ederson to beat. Garnacho thought he had won the game on 82 minutes as he jinked inside the City defence and fired low into the corner. However, City rallied and levelled in the final minute of the 90 when Oscar Bobb's cross was headed in by Silva.



In brief

ANF recovers 21 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting two operations managed to recover 21 kg drugs, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday. He informed that 1.1 kg ice was recovered from a parcel booked for New Zealand at a courier office in Rawalpindi. In another operation, 20 kg opium was recovered from a vehicle intercepted in the Nokundi Chagai area. Investigations are under process to register cases against the accused, he added.

Police arrest two bike lifters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters and street criminals and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, R.A. Bazar Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Bilal and Zeeshan and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar, Nasir Nawaz said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

386,300 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 386,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 460,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1542.00 feet and was 144.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 285,500 cusecs and 227,500 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1208.85 feet, which was 160.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 26,500 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 330,100, 429,800, 384,500 and 115,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 75,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 55,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

DC visits Nullah Lai

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hassan Waqar Cheema here on Saturday visited Nullah Lai and reviewed the water level after heavy rain in the twin cities, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. He said that the situation was normal and the authorities concerned were monitoring the situation. He informed that Rawalpindi received 72 MM rainfall on Saturday. In Nullah Lai, the water level was recorded up to 9.5 feet at Gawalmandi and 11.8 at Kattarian. The Officers and personnel of all the departments concerned including Rescue-1122 and WASA were on high alert at all 19 vulnerable points particularly in low-lying areas to cope with any emergency. He urged the citizens not to go near drains. All the arrangements were in place to deal with urban flooding, he informed. 13 relief camps were established in Rawalpindi to provide relief and assistance to the citizens, Hasan Waqar Cheema said adding, Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) was monitoring the water level situation in Nullah Lai.

Naqvi chairs meeting on upgradation of Police Stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chaired a review meeting on the upgradation of Islamabad police stations at the Ministry of Interior, here Saturday.

He ordered the upgradation of police stations in the federal capital on the pattern of smart police stations. "Traditional police stations have become a symbol of fear, and citizens think multiple times before visiting these stations," he highlighted. He said, "He has personally visited the police stations and witnessed the deplorable conditions."

Interior Minister emphasized, "Islamabad is the face of Pakistan, and we need to make it a world-class city by immediately adopting smart policing."

"All possible resources will be provided for smart police stations. He said that well-mannered and educated police officers will be deployed at smart police stations, and police stations will be upgraded and trans-

formed into smart police stations in a phased manner," he assured. He directed the swift implementation of the plan. "A high-quality design at a low cost should be prepared for the upgradation," he added.

Interior Minister also directed that land should be identified for police stations established in make shift and rented buildings.

He underscored that there would be no compromise on merit in police recruitment, and only young people who were fit, educated, and meet the merit criteria would be selected. He stressed the need for a positive change in the behavior towards complainants. The meeting was attended by Federal Secretary Interior Khurram Ali Agha, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, DIG Operations, and other high officials.

Mohsin Naqvi Pays homage to soldiers martyred in Tirah Valley: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has paid

homage to the three soldiers who were martyred in a fire exchange with the terrorists in the Tirah Valley.

The minister expressed heartfelt condolences to the families of Havaldar Inam Gul, Sepoy Muhammad Imran, and Sepoy Altaf Khan, who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the soldiers showed remarkable courage and bravery during the encounter, resulting in the elimination of four terrorists. He saluted the sacrifices of the martyrs who foiled the nefarious designs of the terrorists. He added that the great sacrifices of the martyred personnel will always be remembered.

The minister said that the entire nation stands with the families of the brave sons of the soil who have sacrificed their today for the nation's tomorrow. He emphasized that the nation stands united with the Armed Forces in the war against terrorism.

Arshad's historic Olympic gold: Envoy of Saudi Arabia congratulates Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Press Attaché, Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi has extended his warmest congratulations to the people of Pakistan on Arshad Nadeem's historic achievement of winning Gold Medal at the Paris Olympics.

In his congratulatory message on Saturday, he said Arshad Nadeem, the Pakistani javelin thrower, achieved a monumental feat by breaking the Olympic record with a throw of 92.97 meters,

bringing immense pride to his nation.

Dr. Al-Otaibi praised Arshad Nadeem for his outstanding performance, describing it as a significant milestone not only for Pakistan but for the entire Muslim world. "This historic win is a testament to the resilience and dedication of the people of Pakistan," he remarked.

Dr. Al-Otaibi also highlighted the close brotherly relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan,

adding that the success of Pakistani athletes was celebrated with great joy in the Kingdom. He expressed his hope that this victory would inspire further achievements and strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two nations.

The Saudi press Attaché wished continued success to Pakistan in the field of sports, emphasizing the shared pride in Arshad Nadeem's remarkable accomplishment on the global stage.

YPP team highlights Pakistan's efforts at UN

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Youth Parliament of Pakistan (YPP) Delegates represented Pakistan in the United Nations – President Ubaid Qureshi along with Executive Member Bakhtawar Mahmood attended UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF 2024) and Sideline engagements with international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and highlighted the country's efforts at the UN forum.

In a remarkable representation of Pakistan's commitment to Global challenges, President of the Youth Parliament, Ubaid ur Rehman Qureshi and Executive Member, Bakhtawar Mahmood visited the United Nations New York Headquarters to attend the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF2024), a news release said.

Their participation highlights the active involvement of Pakistan's youth in international dialogues to tackle global challenges. This significant event culminated in the adoption of the Political Declaration, ministerial engagement, and setting the stage for future sustainable development initiatives.

The high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from July 8-12. The high-level segment of the Council, including the three-day ministerial segment of the HLPF, took place from July 15 to July 18, 2024.

Apart from participating in the HLPF2024, Youth Parliament of Pakistan (YPP) delegates engaged in significant interactions with key representatives from the UN-based organizations WHO and FAO, focusing on linking ties with the Youth Parliament and the youth of Pakistan for better liaison and collaborative initiatives in different field of Profession.

They also engaged in discussions with the UN Environment related to COP and the Climate General Assembly, emphasizing various initiatives to address climate change challenges in Pakistan. Furthermore, they explored opportunities for the youth of Pakistan under the United Nations framework and highlighted Pakistan's achievements within the UN during their interactions with the Pakistan Mission

to the United Nations.

President of the Youth Parliament, Ubaid ur Rehman Qureshi expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "Participating in the High-Level Political Forum is a significant milestone for the Youth Parliament of Pakistan. Being a true representative of Youngsters, my aim is to depict true and positive image of Pakistan. It underscores our commitment to contributing to global sustainable development goals and ensuring that the voices of Pakistani youth are heard on international platforms."

Executive Member of the Youth Parliament, Bakhtawar Mahmood added, "Our different engagements with the United Nations highlight the importance of youth involvement in shaping policies that impact our future. We are dedicated to driving positive change and fostering sustainable development, both locally and globally." Their involvement not only represents Pakistan on an international stage but also inspires other young leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue and action to promote a positive narrative of Pakistan globally.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting on upgradation of Islamabad police stations. —APP Photo

Rivers Indus, Kabul run in medium, low flood: FFC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that at present River Indus is flowing in "Medium Flood" in Taunsa-Guddu reach and in "Low Flood" in Kalabagh-Chashma reach and at Sukkur Barrage while River Kabul is flowing in "Low Flood" at Nowshera. According to the daily FFC report released on Saturday, all other major rivers in the Indus River System including Rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej are discharging normal flows.

Medium level flows are expected in River Chenab along with Nullahs in catchments of Rivers Chenab and Ravi during the period from August 11 to 13. Besides, low to medium level flows are also expected in the Hill Torrents of D.G. Khan Division and nullahs of Zhob, Sibi, Nasirabad and Kalat Divisions during the said period. The combined live storage in the country's major reservoirs (Tarbela, Mangla, and Chashma) stands at 10,147 MAF (i.e. 75.98% of the maximum live storage capacity of 13,354 MAF).

Meanwhile, according to the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), yesterday's trough of Westerly Wave over Northeastern Iran lies over Northern parts of Afghanistan and adjoining areas. Yesterday's upper air cyclonic circulation over central Jharkhand (India) remained stationary. The active monsoon trough extends from upper air circulation at Jharkhand (India) to Northeastern Punjab. Moderate to strong moist currents are penetrating the upper parts of the country from Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal up to 5,000 feet. Seasonal Low lies over northeast Balochistan. FFD has predicted scattered to widespread thunderstorm rain of Moderate to Heavy Intensity with Isolated Very Heavy Falls over the upper catchments of all the major rivers along Islamabad for the next 24 hours.

Scattered thunderstorm rain of Moderate Intensity with Isolated Heavy Falls is expected over Punjab (Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Lahore, Bahawalpur and D.G. Khan Divisions) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and D.I. Khan Divisions) along with isolated thunderstorm rain of moderate intensity over Balochistan (Zhob, Sibi, Nasirabad & Kalat Divisions) during the same period.

Salik hosts dinner reception in honour of Dr. Salah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain hosted a dinner reception in honour of Imam of Masjid Al-Nabawi, Dr. Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair at his residence on Friday.

The event was attended by a delegation from Saudi Arabia, including Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Secretary Religious Affairs Zulfiqar Haider, Additional Secretary Dr. Syed Atta-ur-Rehman, Secretary Overseas Pakistanis Asad Saleem, and other distin-

guished guests.

On the request of the minister, the esteemed Imam led the Isha prayer and offered special prayers for the participants and for Pakistan.

Salik refutes media reports of missing pilgrims in Iraq: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Saturday firmly rejected recent reports circulating in a section of media regarding the disappearance of 50,000 Pakistani pilgrims (Zaireen) in Iraq. He clarified that he did not make any such statement during a Senate com-

mittee meeting and termed these claims entirely false and misleading.

Minister Salik informed that Pakistani pilgrims travel to Iraq for religious pilgrimage, or Ziarat, through private operators. However, the Ministry is actively working to enhance the facilitation process for the pilgrims, ensuring their safety and well-being during their spiritual journey, he maintained.

The minister has urged media outlets to verify facts before publishing such reports and reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the interests of Pakistani pilgrims abroad.

Citizens and experts appreciates CJP

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Citizens, sustainable development experts and environmentalists have come together to express their heartfelt appreciation for the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, for his decisive intervention in reversing the government's controversial decision to transfer the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) from the Ministry of Climate Change to the Ministry of Interior. This crucial action was lauded during a recent high-profile webinar focused on the conservation challenges facing the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP).

The webinar on the subject "Threats to Margalla Hills National Park – the way forward" was organized by the Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) here on Saturday. An overwhelming participation included well-known environmentalists Asif Shuja Khan, Azhar Qureshi, T.A. Bhutta, Amara Javed, Mushtaq Gill, Asif Khawaja, MuhMmad Sarmad Khan, Amar Abbas, Ambreen Hussain, Fatima Noor, Fatima Anwar and Saleh Hyat.

The participants of the webinar termed the decision to retain the IWMB under the Ministry of Climate Change a significant victory for environmental protection efforts in Pakistan. The IWMB plays a pivotal role in the conservation and management of the MHNP, a protected area that serves as a critical habitat for diverse flora and fauna, including endangered species like the Common Leopard, Barking Deer, and various bird species.

"The Chief Justice's intervention has reaffirmed the judiciary's commitment to environmental conservation in Pakistan," said Munir Ahmed, a well-known environmentalist and the Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director who hosted the webinar. "The IWMB's transfer to the Ministry of Interior could have diluted its focus on conservation and opened the door to policies that prioritize security over environmental protection. We are grateful for this timely reversal."

During the webinar, participants raised alarms about a disturbing request letter currently circulating, issued by the military estate

department. The letter has sought the government approval to acquire 3,481 kanals of land within the Margalla Hills National Park under the "pretext" of defense and security needs. Environmentalists have categorically opposed this move, arguing that it threatens to disrupt the ecological balance of the park and could lead to further encroachments.

"We strongly urge the Chief Justice to take Suo Moto notice of this issue," said Azhar Qureshi, an environmentalist. His suggestion was supported by other activists in a unanimous call. "This is not just a matter of acquiring land; it is about the potential irreversible damage to one of the country's most treasured natural reserves. The Margalla Hills are already under significant pressure from unchecked urbanization, and this latest attempt at land acquisition could be the final nail in the coffin."

Another participant, T.A. Bhutta pointed out that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) side of the Margalla Hills National Park has already been compromised by illegal land grabs, driven by powerful land mafias and influential figures. This has led to deforestation, loss of wildlife habitats, and the proliferation of unregulated construction activities, including luxury resorts and private housing schemes.

"The situation on the KP side of the Margalla Hills serves as a stark warning of what could happen if the Islamabad side is not protected," said Asif Shuja Khan, a conservationist and former Director General Pak-EPA. "We have witnessed the degradation of natural landscapes, the disappearance of wildlife, and the encroachment of private interests into public land. The authorities must act now to prevent similar destruction on the Islamabad side."

Asif S Khan also urged the Prime Minister to convene the National Environment Council's meeting as soon as possible to discuss the national environmental degradation and climate change challenges. Amra Javed highlighted the growing threats to the Margalla Hills National Park from various commercial activities, including the construction of housing units, hotels, playlands and resorts. These developments, often carried out

without proper Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), have not only led to the fragmentation of wildlife habitats but also increased the risk of soil erosion, water pollution, and other environmental hazards.

"The Margalla Hills National Park is a vital ecological and recreational asset for the residents of Islamabad and beyond," said Amar Abbas. "However, the increasing commercialization of the park is jeopardizing its ecological integrity. If immediate action is not taken, we risk losing this precious natural resource forever."

The webinar concluded with a collective call to action, urging the judiciary, government authorities, civil society, and environmental organizations to work together in safeguarding the Margalla Hills National Park. Participants stressed the need for stronger enforcement of existing environmental laws, stricter controls on land use within the park, and the development of sustainable tourism practices that do not compromise the park's ecological health.

"We call upon the Chief Justice to continue his proactive role in environmental conservation and to ensure that the Margalla Hills National Park is protected from any form of encroachment or commercialization," the participants emphasized. "Our natural heritage is at stake, and it is our collective responsibility to preserve it for future generations."

Jawad Zaki, an environmental engineer, while highlighting several significant threats to the Margalla Hills National Park said: "The IWMB lacks the authority to enforce protection measures, such as imposing fines, which limits its effectiveness in safeguarding the park. There is insufficient support from the Capital Development Authority (CDA), further hampering conservation efforts. A general lack of awareness about the importance of the park persists among both government officials and the public. Although Friends of Margalla Hills is actively working to raise public awareness, in government circles, the issue seems to be more than just a lack of awareness, with potential involvement from property mafias and vested interests."



ISLAMABAD: An elderly vendor naps beside his weighing machine at G9 in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Military vehicles restored

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of National Defense has reported the successful restoration and readiness of thousands of military vehicles at the Khalid Bin Walid Corps. According to the ministry's press office, a technical team from the Support and Logistics Battalion of the 201 Khalid Bin Walid army Corps has repaired and prepared 5,738 previously out-of-service vehicles, including armored tanks, Internationals, Rangers, and various others, over the past three years.

Challenges acknowledged

KABUL (TOLOnews): Noorullah Noori, acting Minister of Borders, Ethnicities and Tribes, stated that residents of border areas face serious health and transportation challenges. He said, "we are undertaking this task based on the needs, assessing how critical their basic requirements are. For example, water is currently a vital issue, health is a crucial concern, and connecting these areas to the center is another goal. Our aim is to protect people from harm of neighboring states."

ISIS claims in Afghanistan baseless and misleading

KABUL (BNA): The spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has dismissed concerns raised by Western countries and institutions regarding the presence and potential threat of ISIS in Afghanistan as unfounded and propaganda-driven.

Spokesmen, Mawlawi Zabihullah Mujahid, stated on his social media account that Islamic Emirate security forces have conducted serious operations against ISIS in Afghanistan, inflicting significant damage on the group.

He emphasized that the entire territory of Afghanistan is under the full control of the Islamic Emirate, and no unauthorized foreign or domestic groups are permitted to operate within the country.

Mawlawi Mujahid further clarified that, despite the existing security, stability, and strong security forces in Afghanistan, any continued expressions of concern about the presence or activities of ISIS or other



groups only serve as a campaign to promote them and should be halted. He urged against efforts to mislead and confuse public opinion. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil to threaten the security of any country or to let Afghanistan become a source of threat to any nation," he reiterated.

US senator calls for accountability

KABUL (Ariana News): US Republican senator Joni Ernst in a letter to President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken has called for accountability over erroneously sending \$293 million to the Islamic Emirate-controlled Afghanistan.

State Department bureaus failed to properly vet the recipients of \$293 million provided for aid to Afghanistan in 2022, raising concerns that the Islamic Emirate may have been a beneficiary, according to a Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report from July.

Ernst told Biden and Blinken in the Friday letter that the mistake was "unacceptable" and demanded they "take immediate action to rectify these issues."

"After leaving billions in cutting-edge military equipment behind during the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have given the Taliban \$293 million in cold hard cash," Ernst told Daily Caller News Foundation "The American people deserve better than the complete amateur hour occurring at the



White House and State Department. I'm demanding accountability."

Ernst said in the letter that the Biden administration should be sanctioning rather than "subsidizing" the Islamic Emirate.

Earlier, US senator Mike Braun, had called on Blinken to suspend American aid to Afghanistan.

The Islamic Emirate, however, has said that cash aid from countries, including the United States, is spent through international organizations and their partners and the Emirate is not involved in it.

Ministry of Commerce inks 12 MoUs



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has signed cooperation agreements with 12 domestic and international organizations aimed at empowering entrepreneurs in Afghanistan.

According to a statement from the ministry's press office, Nooruddin Azizi, the Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, signed the agreements during a meeting with repre-

sentatives and officials from these 12 organizations that are actively involved in supporting entrepreneurial development.

During the meeting, Azizi emphasized the importance of adhering to the laws of the Islamic Emirate and urged the organizations to ensure that their activities are in full compliance with the country's legal framework.

The projects, to be

implemented by these domestic and international organizations, are valued at a total of \$6.9 million USD.

They will be carried out in the provinces of Kabul, Parwan, Herat, Balkh, Nangarhar, Bamyan, Kandahar, Zabul, Logar, Paktia, Kunar, Kapisa, Baghlan, and Kunduz, and are aimed at supporting investors and entrepreneurs across the country.

Residents urge govt for reopening school

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of southeastern Khost province say a primary school for girls has long been shut in Prem Nagar village.

The school, where hundreds of boys and girls are enrolled, has been closed since last seven months.

The residents said their children were deprived of education due to the closure of the school.

A local resident, Sabir Jan Saberi, told Pajhwok the government should reopen the gate of the school for students. Saberi said: "I also studied in this school. I hope the school will be reopened as the children now roam the streets."

Mohammad, a third grade student of the school, said he got enrolled in a private school situated in a remote area after their school was closed. The 10-year-old said

going the private school was not easy for being remote.

"I was accustomed to study in this school, now I go to a different school, I wish our school to be opened again,"

Naqib Rasol Kaliwal, headmaster of the school since 15 years, said most residents of this area were poor and now they had no access to education.

"Our school was like a gift for them".

Mohammad added: "The residents of this Hindu-minority village are very poor. Most students of this school sold goods on handcarts in the city. It was hard for us to convince them to study in the school and work for themselves in the city."

However, the residents asked the government to reopen the school.

But local authorities said the school was closed

because other schools existed in the area.

Deputy director of education Khairu Gul told Pajhwok that the primary school was merged into another school due to the shortage of teachers and its students were sent to other nearby schools.

Khairu Gul said: "The Prem Nagar primary school is located in the village of Hindus and Gharghasht and Shaheed Matiullah high schools are at the two sides of Prem Nagar primary school. So it was merged into those two schools."

The Prem Nagar primary school situated west of Khost city in the village of Hindus was built two decades ago for the Hindu minority, but they migrated to other countries.

Other local children would also study in the school until it was shut down.

UN's uplift plan helped 60,000 families

KABUL (TOLOnews): Indrika Ratwatte, the UNAMA deputy special representative for Afghanistan said that the UN's development program has supported 60,000 families in Afghanistan engaged in small businesses and agriculture since 2016.

Ratwatte, who traveled to Balkh to assess the performance of UN partners for farmers, also pledged it would distribute improved seeds to farmers who previously engaged in poppy cultivation.

The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations in Afghanistan said: "Most recently in the Doha meeting that has taken place with the authorities, the international community, one part of the decision is also about the importance of the private sector, how to support the private sector, small and medium enterprisers, women led enterprisers, small and medium enterprises, forming and other trades, how we can support it, because that is the heart of also the Afghanistan economy so I am happy to be here today."

Some farmers who have been supported by the UN development program are asking for support for other farmers from this organization.

Gul Mohammad, a farmer, said: "Since opium and these things disappeared, we have cultivated cotton, almonds, and wheat, and we also plant mung beans and sesame."

Another farmer, Mohammad, said: "We are happy with this office for helping us sell our cotton seeds."

The UNDP has managed to establish a cotton processing factory in Balkh, providing job opportunities for some young people and a market for farmers supported by this organization to sell their agricultural products.

Abdul Khalil Balkhi, the head of the cotton processing factory, said: "For about two to two and a half years, we have been working with UNAMA and UNDP. They provided us with machinery and increased our production capacity."

Lal Mohammad, a worker, said: "Thanks to God, with this machine they made for us, we are employed, and we are making a living from this."

Deputy Special Representative of UN in Afghanistan also said that since 2016, they have helped about 10 families in Balkh province in the areas of small business and agriculture.

IE urges Iran to address mistreatment of migrants

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan has called on the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold accountable those responsible for recent incidents of mistreatment against Afghan migrants in Iran.

The ministry stressed that such violations of Afghan citizens' rights should not be allowed to create resentment or strain relations between the people of Afghanistan and Iran.

In a statement posted on his X account, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, condemned the recent incidents in Iran, highlighting the unacceptable behavior of Iranian security officials towards Afghan migrants.

Balkhi expressed deep concern on behalf of the Afghanistan government, noting that such incidents could be exploited by malicious groups aiming to undermine the positive and friendly relations between the two countries.

While expressing gratitude for Iran's long-standing hospitality toward Afghan migrants, the spokesman urged the Iranian authorities to investigate the recent misconduct and ensure that the rights of Afghans are protected, thereby preventing any harm to the goodwill between the Afghan and Iranian people.

Paktia and Paktika tribes end decades-long enmity



PAKTIA (Ariana News): Officials announced on Saturday that various tribes in Paktia and Paktika ended their decades-long enmity in the presence of Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani and Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Khalil-ur-Rehman Haqqani.

The reason for the enmity between the Sarokhel, Karikhel, Sheng, Drur, Iokhel and Matkhel tribes is said to be land issues.

The enmity between them had begun 80 to 100 years ago, resulting in about 100 deaths.

"With God's help, we have ended long-standing

enmities, some lasting more than 80 years," Sirajuddin Haqqani said at the reconciliation ceremony.

He added that this reconciliation is a big step for the pleasure of God and the unity of the Afghan people.

Haqqani, while referring to the amnesty decree of the leader of the Islamic

Emirate, also stressed the importance of reconciliation and tolerance among Afghans.

Meanwhile, Khalil-ur-Rehman Haqqani, Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, said that anyone who returns to killing after forgiving will be guilty before God.

25% of Afghanistan's imports come from Iran, says Roustaei

KABUL (TOLOnews): Hossein Roustaei, Iran's economic advisor in Afghanistan, has stated that 25% of Afghanistan's imports come from Iran.

According to Iranian media reports, Hossein Roustaei added in the "Opportunities and Challenges of the Afghan Market" meeting that Afghanistan meets over 80% of its needs through imports.

Although Afghanistan is an agricultural country, it currently imports many goods from other countries.

"We will be one of the second or first countries in terms of trade with Iran. Our trade exchanges,

including most of the raw materials, petroleum products, foodstuffs, dairy products, and others, are imported from Iran," said Sakhi Ahmad Peyman, head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Industries and Mines.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, approximately 10 billion dollars in trade is conducted annually with regional countries, of which 8 billion dollars are imports.

Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an expert on economic issues, said: "We must trade in accordance with global laws and also maintain good relations with our neighbors.

Technical discussions and works should be conducted with Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and others so that trade is conducted in line with global conditions."

At the same time, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that more facilities should be provided so that the volume of exports to Iran can also increase.

According to this chamber, the increase in tariffs and the similarity of goods between Kabul and Tehran have caused exports to be lower compared to imports.

"The main reason is that a series of problems are

created by Iran for our trade, but all our exports are agricultural, which Iran also has, so our fruits have no place in the Iranian market because they have their own. We should take these to warm regions," said Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the board of directors of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

Previously, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce had said that in the first three months of the current solar year, over 750 million dollars of trade was conducted with Iran, with Afghanistan's exports accounting for 16 million dollars of it.

Helmand bost factory resumes operations after reconstruction

HELMAND (TOLOnews): The Helmand Bost Oil and Cotton Manufacturing Factory has resumed operations after being rebuilt.

Din Mohammad Hanif, acting Minister of Economy, said at the opening ceremony of this factory that the Helmand Bost state-owned factory is the fourth largest company and will play a constructive role in strengthening the country's economy.

"Every investor and trader should invest within the country to create jobs for the underprivileged people. There is no doubt that they will also gain profit through this," said the acting Minister of Economy.

Noor-Ul-Haq Anwar, the head of the general directorate of the Islamic Emirate in Administrative Affairs, said: "Just as we saw divine assistance in their (previous government's) downfall, we now see and continue to see God's help in building the system and in every aspect of progress."

The Helmand Bost factory, which has a capacity to process 100 tons of cotton in 24 hours, also produces ginned cotton, oil, cottonseed meal, soap, and leather.

According to officials, the factory was rebuilt in six and a half months. "A special committee was formed for the reconstruction of this factory. The factory was fully rebuilt within six and a half months," said Mohammad Qasim Riaz, the

spokesperson for the Helmand governor.

Investors in Helmand are asking the Islamic Emirate to provide necessary facilities to the investors of this province and to approve a special area for the construction of an industrial park.

Investor Rahmatullah Nazari said, "We have approximately sixty large factories and have invested significantly. We request you pay attention to our factories and approve an industrial park in the Bolan area for us."

The residents of Helmand also consider the reactivation of this factory important for the country's development and emphasize the reactivation of more factories.

Mohammad Wali, a resident of Helmand, said, "This is beneficial for the country; people will be employed, the country's development and people's happiness lie in this. We hope that the officials will activate more factories for us."

Sardar Wali, a resident of Helmand, said, "If more factories are activated, Helmand and Kandahar have many young people and workers who can work in these factories and create jobs for them."

The Helmand Bost Manufacturing Factory was built about half a century ago during the reign of Mohammad Zahir Shah. It had ceased operations due to past wars and the neglect of officials.

Balkh Police report significant crime reduction, enhanced security measures

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Nafi, the police commander of Dehdadi District in Balkh, has announced significant improvements in security and a notable reduction in crime within the district.

Speaking to BNA, Mawlawi Abdul Nafi emphasized that Dehdadi is one of the most populous and key districts in Balkh province. He credited the relentless efforts of security forces, who are working around the clock to ensure safety.

He continued that the establishment of three security bases across different areas of the district has facilitated thorough vehicle inspections and continuous patrols, leading to a marked decrease in criminal activities.

He also reported that in the past four months, 50 various cases have been registered and duly addressed by the authorities.

The police commander urged residents to maintain their cooperation



with security forces to sustain and further enhance the district's safety and stability.

Meanwhile, residents of Dehdadi expressed their satisfaction with the

improved security, noting that it is significantly better compared to previous years.

They affirmed their continued support for the security forces.

Bilawal calls for empowerment of minorities in country

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights and fostering the development and empowerment of minorities in Pakistan. He emphasized that the PPP will never compromise on these core principles.

In a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, on the occasion of National Minorities Day, underscored his party's long-standing dedication to championing minority rights. He highlighted that the consensus Constitution of 1973, a testament to the political vision of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, guarantees equal rights, religious freedoms, and protections for all citizens of Pakistan. "My mother, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, envisioned a Pakistan where people of all faiths could coexist in harmony and with dignity," he added.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also noted that the observance of National Minorities Day was instituted by President Asif Ali Zardari during his first tenure, with the aim of recognizing the vital role of minorities in the nation's fabric and promoting tolerance and harmony in society. "Our nation's diversity is our greatest strength, and it is our collective duty to ensure that every citizen, irrespective of their faith or background, enjoys equal rights and opportunities," he added.

He urged all Pakistanis to unite in the fight against discrimination and intolerance. "As we observe National Minorities Day, let us renew our pledge to build a Pakistan that truly embodies the principles of justice, equality, and tolerance. Together, we can create a nation where every individual, regardless of religion or ethnicity, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to our country's prosperity," Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari concluded.

Meanwhile, Pakistan celebrates Minorities' Day on 11 August every year to acknowledge the contributions of our

minorities towards Pakistan's socio-economic development. On this day, we reaffirm our commitment to the promise made by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on 11 August 1947, to the country's minorities to protect their rights and religious freedoms.

Minorities in Pakistan enjoy all political, economic and social rights which have been guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan. Our religion Islam also fully recognizes and advocates the protection of the rights of minorities. I am glad to say that Pakistan has taken a number of steps for the political, social and economic empowerment of minorities. In this regard, we have allocated a 5% quota for minorities in government jobs and separate seats in both houses of the parliament to encourage them to play an effective role in the political and national development of the country. Additionally, steps are being taken to provide financial assistance to poor and deserving individuals, marriage grants, scholarships to students from minority communities for their education, besides the provision of funds for the repair/maintenance of their worship places.

Pakistan is committed to ensuring the protection of religious, social, political and economic rights of its minorities. Every Pakistani has the right to live according to their faith, irrespective of their religion, caste, colour or creed. I urge all segments of society, including the religious scholars, representatives of minorities and the media to educate the people about their rights and work for promoting interfaith harmony, the spirit of love, tolerance, brotherhood and unity to make Pakistan a strong country.

I assure all minorities that Pakistan will make every effort to safeguard their rights and provide them equal opportunities to excel in life. I am confident that the minorities of Pakistan will continue to play their positive role towards the country's development. I congratulate them on the special day and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

KP Ombudsman Act amends challenged

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The amendments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Ombudsman Act Amendment 2024 has been challenged in the Peshawar High Court. The petition seeks to declare the amendment as illegal and unconstitutional, and to strike it down.

The petition was filed by Ali Azim Afridi advocate in the Peshawar High Court, making the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary of Law and Justice, Provincial Ombudsman Jamaluddin, and others as respondents in the case. The petition argues that Provincial Ombudsman Jamaluddin Shah retired in 2023 but continues to hold the office illegally.

The petitioner had previously approached the High Court regarding Jamaluddin's illegal continuation in office. The provincial government has amended the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Ombudsman Act 2010 by making changes to sections 3 and 4, and adding sections 1 and 5 to clause 2, with the intention of benefiting one person.

The government has made the amendment effective from June 12, 2022. The petition requests the court to declare the amendment illegal, as the tenure of the Provincial Ombudsman has already ended in 2023, and he is holding the office unconstitutionally.

Khan a political reality: Qureshi

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi stated that whether people like it or not, PTI founder Imran Khan is a political reality, and the country cannot achieve political stability without him.

Speaking informally with journalists at Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore, Qureshi reflected on his 40-year political career, noting that he had not faced any charges for 39 years, but now finds himself entangled in dozens of cases within just one year.

Addressing historical grievances, Qureshi remarked that what happened to Nawab Akbar Bugti was unjust, emphasizing that Bugti was not anti-Pakistan. He called for an end to labeling others as traitors, a practice that has persisted for 75 years.

Qureshi also defended Mahmood Khan Achakzai, describing him as a person with democratic ideals, and stressed that those who believe in democracy and constitutionalism cannot be considered traitors. He added that peace in Balochistan can only be achieved through dialogue. The former foreign minister also congratulated Arshad Nadeem on winning the gold medal at the Paris Olympics, acknowledging his outstanding achievement.

Rohingya fleeing Myanmar

BANGKOK(Reuters): A drone attack on Rohingya fleeing Myanmar killed many dozens of people, including families with children, several witnesses said, describing survivors wandering between piles of bodies to identify dead and injured relatives.

Four witnesses, activists and a diplomat described drone attacks on Monday that struck down families waiting to cross the border into neighbouring Bangladesh. A heavily pregnant woman and her 2-year-old daughter were among the victims in the attack, the single deadliest known assault on civilians in Rakhine state during recent weeks of fighting between junta troops and rebels.

Three of the witnesses told Reuters on Friday that the Arakan Army was responsible, allegations the group denied. The militia and Myanmar's military blamed each another. Reuters could not verify how many people had died in the attack or independently determine responsibility. Videos posted to social media showed piles of bodies strewn across muddy ground, their suitcases and backpacks scattered around them.



WASHINGTON: People listening US presidential candidate Donald Trump during his campaign rally.

KP govt decides to launch 'Taleem Card'

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided the launch of the 'Taleem Card' project, with the pilot phase set to commence in Upper Chitral. This decision was made during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai, Advisor to the Chief Minister for Finance Muzammil Aslam, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Masood Ahmad, and other officials.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur described the 'Taleem Card' as a flagship project of his government

aimed at enabling students from backward areas to access quality education from reputable institutions. He emphasized the importance of swiftly mobilizing resources and preparing the necessary arrangements to ensure the project's quick start. The education and finance departments were specifically directed to expedite these efforts in the shortest possible time.

The decision to pilot the project in Upper Chitral was made following a briefing by Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, who provided insights from his recent visit to the area. The visit was conducted at the Chief Minister's directive to assess the situation in Upper Chitral following the glacier outburst event. In response to the briefing, the Chief Minister inquired about the short- and long-term planning needs for supporting the displaced population. He further

directed the relevant authorities to explore all possible options for providing housing solutions to those affected by the disaster. A sustainable plan for long-term rehabilitation was also mandated.

The meeting also addressed other initiatives aimed at improving education in remote and underdeveloped areas. In line with a promise made to the top-scoring female student in the recent board examinations, the Chief Minister instructed the education department to expedite the establishment of a school in Shangla, the student's home district.

During a prize distribution ceremony, it was revealed that the student, supported by her father, had to travel long distances to receive a private education due to the lack of a local school, ultimately securing the top position in her exams.

Bangladesh chief justice agrees to resign

DHAKA (AFP): The chief justice of Bangladesh's top court has said he agreed "in principle" to resign after an ultimatum from protesters, days after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled to neighbouring India. Obaidul Hassan, who was appointed to helm the Supreme Court last year and is seen as a loyalist to Hasina, was told to step down on Saturday by protesters who gathered outside the court in the capital, Dhaka.

Media said students decided to take to the streets when they heard reports that Hassan was holding a meeting with justices of the Appellate Division. "They viewed this as a judicial coup in the making, so they quickly gathered at the Supreme Court and demanded that he immediately resign," Chowdhury said.

A formal letter confirming Hassan's decision to step down was expected after consultations with President Mohammed Shahabuddin. The students believe the Supreme Court to be highly politicised and want the other seven members to also resign, according to Chowdhury.

ing to Chowdhury. Awami League party leader Hasina, 76, fled by helicopter to India on Monday. Her government was accused of widespread human rights abuses including the extrajudicial killing of thousands of her political opponents.

Hassan oversaw a much-criticised war crimes tribunal that ordered the execution of Hasina's opponents, and his brother was her longtime secretary. Cabinet ministers left blindsided by her sudden fall have gone to ground, while several top appointees have been forced out of office, including the national police chief and the central bank governor. The bank's governor, Abdur Rouf Talukder, resigned from the post, citing personal reasons. Protesters had stormed the central bank's headquarters amid the political upheaval that led to the end of Hasina's 15-year rule.

Muhammad Yunus, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his pioneering work in microfinance credited with helping millions of Bangladeshis out of poverty, is leading a transitional government, another demand by

the student leaders. The economist took office on Thursday as "chief adviser" to a caretaker administration comprised of civilians bar one retired brigadier-general. He said he wants to hold elections "within a few months".

Yunus appealed for religious unity on Saturday as he embraced the weeping mother of the first student shot dead by police during antigovernment protests last month. "Don't differentiate by religion," he told reporters. "Our responsibility is to build a new Bangladesh." Speaking of Abu Sayeed, Yunus said the slain 25-year-old was now "in every home".

"The way he stood, we have to do the same," he said as he paid his respects alongside members of the advisory cabinet. "There are no differences in Abu Sayeed's Bangladesh," he added. Earlier, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning economist Muhammad Yunus had returned to Bangladesh to head an interim government after weeks of student-led protests forced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign and flee to India.

Anti-racism protesters rally across UK

LONDON (AFP): Thousands of anti-racism demonstrators rallied across the UK on Saturday to protest recent rioting blamed on the far-right in the wake of the Southport knife attack that killed three children. Crowds massed in London, Glasgow, Belfast, Manchester and numerous other English towns and cities, as fears of violent confrontations with anti-immigration agitators failed to materialize.

It followed a similar situation unfolding on Wednesday night, when anticipated far-right rallies up and down the country were instead replaced by gatherings organized by the Stand Up To Racism advocacy group. More than a dozen places across England as well as Belfast had been hit by unrest prior to that, following the July 29 stabbing spree, which was wrongly linked on social media to a Muslim immigrant.

Rioters targeted mosques and hotels linked to immigration, as well as police, vehicles and other sites. However, recent nights have

been largely peaceful in English towns and cities, prompting hope among authorities that the more than 700 arrests and numerous people already being jailed has deterred further violence. However, in Northern Ireland, which has seen sustained disorder since last weekend, police said they were investigating a suspected racially motivated hate crime overnight.

A petrol bomb was thrown at a mosque in Newtownards, east of Belfast, in the early hours of Saturday, with graffiti sprayed on the front door and walls of the building, according to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). It said the petrol bomb thrown at the property did not ignite. "This is being treated as a racially motivated hate crime, and I want to send a strong message to those who carried this out, that this type of activity will not be tolerated and any reports of hate crime are taken very seriously," PSNI Chief Inspector Keith Hutchinson said.

There was also overnight

reports of damage to property and vehicles in Belfast, as nightly unrest there rumbled on. The disturbances in Northern Ireland were sparked by events in England but have also been fueled by pro-UK loyalist paramilitaries with their own agenda, according to the PSNI.

Around 5,000 anti-racism demonstrators rallied in Belfast on Saturday without incident. In London, hundreds massed outside the office of Brexit architect Nigel Farage's Reform UK party before marching to parliament, as a large police presence looked on. Farage and other far-right figures have been blamed for helping to fuel the riots through anti-immigrant rhetoric and conspiracy theories. "It's really important for people of color in this country, for immigrants in this country, to see us out here as white British people saying 'no, we don't stand for this'," attendee Phoebe Sewell, 32, from London, told AFP.

São Paulo plane crash: All 61 on board killed

SAO PAULO (Reuters): A regional turboprop plane fell into what aviation experts called a flat spin before crashing in a residential neighborhood near Sao Paulo in Brazil, killing all 61 people on board. Regional carrier Voepass said the plane, bound for Sao Paulo's international airport, took off from Cascavel, in the state of Parana, and crashed at around 1:30 p.m. (1630 GMT) in the town of Vinhedo, some 80 km (50 miles) northwest of Sao Paulo.

Video shared on social media showed the ATR-72 aircraft spinning out of control as it plunged down behind a cluster of trees near houses, followed by a large plume of black smoke. Nearby resident Daniel de Lima said he heard a loud noise before looking outside his condominium in Vinhedo and seeing the plane in a horizontal spiral.

"It was rotating, but it wasn't moving forward," he told Reuters. "Soon after it fell out of the sky and exploded." City officials at Valinhos, near Vinhedo, said a home in the local condominium complex had been damaged after the plane crashed into its backyard. None of the residents were hurt.

"I almost believe the pilot tried to avoid a nearby neighborhood, which is densely populated," de Lima said. The plane's unusual final circling motion before hitting the ground triggered widespread curiosity among aviation experts, leading some to speculate that ice had built up on the plane or it had experienced engine failure, but investigators said it was too early to determine the cause of the crash. "Today ice was predicted (at the altitudes the plane was flying at), but within the acceptable range," Voepass Chief Operations Officer Marcel Moura told a press conference.

US to lift ban on arms sales to S Arabia

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The Biden administration has decided to lift a ban on US sales of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia, the State Department said, reversing a three-year-old policy to pressure the kingdom to wind down the Yemen war.

The State Department was lifting its suspension on certain transfers of air-to-ground munitions to Saudi Arabia, a senior department official confirmed. "We will consider new transfers on a typical case-by-case basis consistent with the Conventional Arms Transfer Policy," the official said. Reuters was first to report the decision earlier, citing five sources.

The administration briefed Congress this week on its decision to lift the ban, a congressional aide said. One source said sales could resume as early as next week. The US government was moving ahead on Friday afternoon with notifications about a sale, a person briefed on the matter said. "The Saudis have met their end of the deal, and we are prepared to meet ours," a senior Biden administration official said. Under US law, major international weapons deals must be reviewed by members of Congress before they are made final.

Heavy rains claim 11 lives in Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Monsoon rainfall in Baluchistan has claimed 11 lives including three children, PDMA said on Saturday. Provincial government has declared emergency in four rain-hit districts of the province.

According to a report by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), during rainfall across the province 11 people including three children died in various rain-related incidents. The PDMA report further revealed that eight people were injured, seven of them children, in various mishaps during rains.

The PDMA report further informed that 15 houses were completely damaged, while 34 others partly damaged in heavy rainfall. Additionally, 62 acres of agriculture land and 12 kilometers of roads were also affected in heavy rainfall.

Flash floods damaged five bridges in Baluchistan. Thunderbolts and other rain-related incidents also killed 82 cattle, according to the disaster management

authority report. The government has declared emergency in four rain-hit districts of the province, PDMA shared.

Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast rain-windstorm/thundershower with isolated heavy falls for Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northeast Punjab, Potohar region and Islamabad during the next 24 hours.

Rain-windstorm/thundershower is likely at isolated places in Gilgit-Baltistan, south and central Punjab, northeast and south Baluchistan and southeast and upper Sindh.

According to the synoptic situation, monsoon currents from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal are penetrating upper parts of the country at lower tropospheric levels and likely to penetrate in central parts from Saturday.

A westerly wave was affecting upper parts of the country. The PMD has warned that heavy rains may generate flash flooding in local nullahs/streams of Murree, Galliat, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Narowal, Jhelum,

Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Lahore, Hafizabad, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Kohistan, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi, Kohat, Karak and Kashmir till August 11.

Heavy downpour may cause urban flooding in low-lying areas of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Sialkot, Sargodha, Mardan, Nowshera and Peshawar. Landslides may cause road closure at the vulnerable hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galliat, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the forecast period.

During the last 24 hours, rain-wind/thundershower occurred at isolated places in North Balochistan, Punjab, Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and southeast Sindh. Hot and humid weather prevailed over other parts of the country. Nakkundi remained the hottest place in the country on Friday with temperature surging up to 46 degrees Celsius.

PNS HUNAIN commences maiden voyage for Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Recently commissioned Pakistan Navy Ship HUNAIN departed from Constanta, Romania for maiden voyage to Pakistan.

According to a statement issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Saturday, the Fleet Commander of Romanian Navy also visited the ship and called on the Commanding Officer.

Upon departure, Pakistan Navy Ship HUNAIN conducted joint naval exercise



with Romanian Navy ship LASTUNUL. The PNS HUNAIN is the 3rd of the four Offshore Patrol Vessels being constructed at DAMEN Naval Shipyard Romania. The Ship is

equipped with state of the art weapons and sensors. The addition of PNS HUNAIN will further strengthen the regional maritime security patrol deployment in the Indian Ocean.

Harris campaigns in Arizona, Trump in Montana

GLENDALE, Arizona (Reuters): US Vice President Kamala Harris campaigned in a packed arena in Arizona on Friday, hoping to put Republican candidate Donald Trump on the back foot in the West, while Trump held his own rally in Montana to support a Republican candidate for Senate.

The Democratic presidential candidate, less than a month into her bid for the White House, has been on a week-long tour after naming her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim

Walz, with a focus on building excitement for her campaign in seven states that could tip the Nov. 5 election. That tour on Friday brought her to the Phoenix area, where she was visiting with volunteers at a campaign office and speaking to voters.

While traveling, Harris won the endorsement of LULACAdelante, the political action committee for the nation's oldest Latino civil rights organization. It was the group's first-ever presidential endorsement. In Glendale, a crowd esti-

mated at more than 15,000 greeted Harris, including some pro-Palestinian demonstrators who interrupted the remarks. Harris has faced anger from liberal voters who disagree with her support for Israel in its war in Gaza in response to the Oct. 7 Hamas attack.

"The president and I are working around the clock every day to get that ceasefire deal done and bring the hostages home," Harris said, adding: "So, I respect your voices, but we are here to now talk about the race in 2024."