

Terrorist killed F.P. Report

GUJRANWALA: A terrorist was killed in an exchange of fire between CTD personnel and terrorists in Aimanabad area of Gujranwala on Saturday. According to a CTD spokesperson, three terrorists managed to escape from the spot after the shootout. Weapons, safety fuses, explosives, cartridges and explosives were recovered from the possession of the slain terrorist, spokesperson said.



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PM for strict vigilance in wake of global mpox outbreak

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed for keeping strict vigilance on the ad of Monkeypox (mpox) after the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared its outbreak in different parts of the world as a public health emergency of international concern.

Chairing an important meeting on the measures being taken against the spread of mpox virus, the prime minister directed for ensuring effective screening measures at all airports, seaports and borders of the country, besides asking the border health services to keep complete surveillance of the situation.

He also directed the National Command and Operations Center (NCOC) to keep alert and hold daily evaluations of the situation and asked for the provision of all required gadgets and kits for the evaluation of mpox virus. The meeting was attended by PM's Coordinator on National Health Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Federal Secretary National Health Nadeem Mehboub, Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik, chief secretaries, chief commissioner ICT and other relevant senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister further directed for strengthening of coordination among the provincial governments, governments of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad and Jammu Kashmir. He asked

One case detected in Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator on National Health Services Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad has said that only one case of Mpox has recently been detected in Pakistan. Addressing a news conference here in Islamabad on Saturday, he said the person who travelled from the gulf region was tested positive in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). He said the detection led to prompt action by the authorities concerned, which isolated the family members of the affected person.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said the relevant authorities have been directed to ensure all the precautionary measures on the airports. He said screening process has been activated at the airports. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said this virus transmits through contact and mostly fever and pain related medicines are used by the patients. He said only in case of deterioration in situation, antiviral drugs are administered. He said there is no need to be panic as the mortality rate is low. The Prime Minister's Coordinator on National Health Services, however, advised those who travel from abroad to isolate themselves in the first phase if they develop any symptom of rash, flu, fever and body ache.

for the launch of an effective and complete awareness campaign, besides hinting at getting weekly briefings over the mpox situation.

The meeting was apprised of the situation about the spread of the monkeypox virus. A person in District Mardan was diagnosed as a carrier of the virus. The resident had just returned to Pakistan from abroad where he was employed. He was quarantined and his condition was out of danger, the meeting was further apprised.

It was told that no local transmission of mpox was detected in Pakistan. The WHO, on August 14, declared the spread of mpox virus a public health emergency after which

the NCOC issued a national advisory. The required instructions in this regard had been issued, the meeting was briefed.

The federal and provincial governments were launching awareness drives in this regard, whereas the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) would supervise the flights arriving from abroad. The provincial governments, governments of Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad Capital Territory administration had allocated isolation wards and beds in the largest hospitals for the possible mpox virus cases. All the precautionary measures were in place, it was further added.

PML-N always served masses: Tarar

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had always done the politics of services to the masses and provided them maximum facilities.

Nawaz Sharif, during his first term as prime minister, initiated mega development projects including South Asia's first Motorways network in the country, he said while addressing a press conference here. He said it was Nawaz Sharif who took steps for ease of business, initiated power generation projects and provided facilities to investors. Tarar said that Punjab government had taken a good step by providing subsidy to electricity consumers.

"Chief Minister Punjab Mariam Nawaz has given a big relief to consumers in Punjab in terms of electricity," Tarar said adding it was historic and unprecedented step which would cost Rs 45 billion. He said a former caretaker minister who was also making hue and cry over power tariff, now should come forward and laud the Punjab government's initiative. He said that in 2018 when the tenure of the PML-N government ended, inflation was only 4 per cent and GDP growth rate was over 6 per cent. He said that yesterday Nawaz Sharif rightly said that the people were hit

by inflation and sky rocketing prices of daily use items during the era when £ 190 million scam emerged, when Tosha Khana and cypher cases emerged and Punjab was at the mercy of Farha Gogi and bad governance was at its worst.



He said during that time inflation reached 23 percent and the present regime with its hard work had brought it down to 11 percent and there were projections of further decrease. The government has reduced the price of petroleum products as a gift to the nation on the occasion of independence day when it was celebrating the victory of Arshad Nadeem in Paris Olympics. Earlier, he said the PM had given Rs 50 billion relief to upto 200 unit power consumers for three months. He said that the package announced by Punjab chief minister would pro-

vide Rs 14 relief per unit to consumers using upto 500 units per month.

He expressed the hope that with the steps taken by the federal and Punjab governments, the masses would get considerable relief and situation would further improve in the near future. Pakistan Army has its own mechanism of self-accountability and recent arrests were done after transparent investigations.

He lamented that a political leader had fostered the politics of chaos, anarchy and division in the country and he in collusion with Faiz Hameed conspired to spread unrest in the country and worked against the integrity of the country. Tarar asked who brought back the terrorists in the country.

The founding chairman of PTI had said that the Taliban should come back. "All these people were involved in the efforts of PTI's founder to spread chaos and anarchy in the country as PTI's founder chairman did politics of manipulation by nexus." He said that those who harmed the peace of the country will meet their fate. He said Imran was mastermind of the plot against the solidarity of the country and recently arrested persons were his companions. He assured that all those linked with this gang would also be brought to book irrespective of their status. He said like Pakistan Army, other institutions should also start self accountability process.

The Frontier Post

Water aggression by India F.P. Report

LAHORE: Just like the case in the past, India has once again resorted to water aggression as it has opened the spillways of River Ravi and River Chenab without prior warning, inundating thousands of villages and millions of acres of land in Punjab. At a time when the country is struggling to cope with the losses caused due to heavy monsoon rains, the release of water has further exacerbated the situation.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on measures against spread of Monkeypox virus.

JI announces protest on 28th

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has called for a nationwide protest on Aug 28. Hafiz Naeem said at a press conference that people's stoves were being shut down. "Electricity is expensive and there are more taxes. Traders and salaried people are worried," he said.

He said few IPPs had looted billions of rupees. "Why should the common man support IPPs," he questioned and demanded that electricity prices should be reduced. Nawaz Sharif and CM Maryam Nawaz announced reduction in electricity prices which, he said, was an eye-wash.

The Jamaat emir criticised that they had reduced Rs14 only for two months. He said the Sindh government had a budget of Rs3,000 billion. "The Sindh government has received 62 percent of the money from the federal government. Karachi pays taxes and the entire system of the federal government works."

He said if Rs 14 could be reduced in Punjab, why not in Sindh? "The government parties are the product of Form 47 and MQM did not get a single vote from Karachi but was given 15 seats in the National Assembly," he lamented. He said the party would force the electricity mafia to retreat and traders also would support the cause.

Ali Wazir remanded

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has sent former member of National Assembly Ali Wazir on judicial remand to jail.

Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain of the ATC Islamabad presided over the case registered under terrorism charges at Kohsar Police Station.

Israeli attack on Gaza shelter kills 15 of family

GAZA (AFP): The Israeli military has bombed a warehouse sheltering displaced Palestinians in the az-Zawayda area of central Gaza, killing 15 members of one family, including nine children. The civil defence spokesman in Gaza, Mahmoud Basal, said on Saturday that 15 people killed in the overnight attack were members of the al-Ejlal family, with three women among the dead. The total death toll from the attack was 16.

Reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum said three Israeli missiles hit the warehouse, located a few kilometres south of the Nuseirat refugee camp. "A massive fire broke out, burning everything in the warehouse as children were torn to pieces. Rescue efforts are still continuing to try to recover more bodies," he said.

"There is a great level of frustration and grief. The bodies are now being lined up at Al-Aqsa Hospital's morgue as the family gets ready to bury them."

The attack killed the family's patriarch, Sami, along with his wife, mother and all of his children, according to Abdalradi al-Ejlal, a cousin of the victims. Al-Ejlal told Al Jazeera from Stockholm, Sweden, that Sami was an "honourable man" who ran a small business in the frozen meat industry and was active in charitable efforts, stressing that the family was not involved in politics. He added that the family had fled Gaza City to the az-Zawayda warehouse, which Sami owned and used for his business.

"We are talking [about] literally a gradual genocide, a slow motion genocide, not only by killing, but also using other tools ... including scarcity of food," al-Ejlal said of the overall situation in Gaza, which he described as "hell on earth". The attack took place after international mediators - the United States, Qatar and Egypt - wrapped up ceasefire negotiations in Doha on Friday that they described as "serious and constructive". The talks are aimed at ending

the war and seeing the release of Israeli captives in Gaza for Palestinians jailed in Israel. "What have they done to deserve this?" Ahmed Abu al-Ghoul, a local who witnessed Israel's latest assault, told the AFP news agency.

Al Jazeera's Abu Azzoum reported that Israel had carried out more air attacks mainly on residential houses in the enclave, with one of them killing at least seven Palestinians from the same family on the western side of the Nuseirat refugee camp. "We are observing that the latest Israeli strikes have been wiping out whole families," he said. Israel issued yet another round of evacuation orders on Saturday, this time for neighbourhoods in central Gaza's Maghazi refugee camp. The Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesman, Avichay Adraee, made the announcement in a social media post, listing blocks in Maghazi, as well as several other neighbourhoods in central Gaza, from which residents should flee.

Hezbollah attacks Israeli settlement

BEIRUT: Hezbollah said on Saturday that it struck the Ayelet Hashahar kibbutz in northern Israel in retaliation for a new massacre in southern Lebanon. The Israeli military said that two soldiers were wounded in a rocket attack from Lebanon, adding that a total of 55 rockets had been fired in the latest strikes.

Hezbollah said that its attack came in response to "the Israeli army's assaults on the Kfour village in Nabatieh, north of the Litani Line, earlier on Saturday, killing 10 people, including Syrian children

and their mother, and injuring others, including Sudanese workers." Hezbollah said that it added Ayelet HaShahar to its firing schedule and struck the settlement with Katyusha rockets for the first time.

According to Hezbollah's military media, the settlement "is located northeast Safad in the upper Galilee and some 10 km from the Lebanese southern border." In another statement, Hezbollah announced "targeting a gathering of Israeli soldiers in the Al-Burj site with two attack drones, hitting it directly."

Israeli media outlets said that "the barrage of rockets fired from Lebanon toward the north landed in areas that weren't evacuated, causing fires to erupt." They added that "violent explosions were heard in Safad and its surroundings, in addition to heavy shelling with dozens of rockets launched from Lebanon toward the upper Galilee, causing casualties."

"Ambulances headed to the perimeter of the Mahanayim intersection, while the Hatzor HaGlilit area experienced a power outage following the bombing," — Arab News



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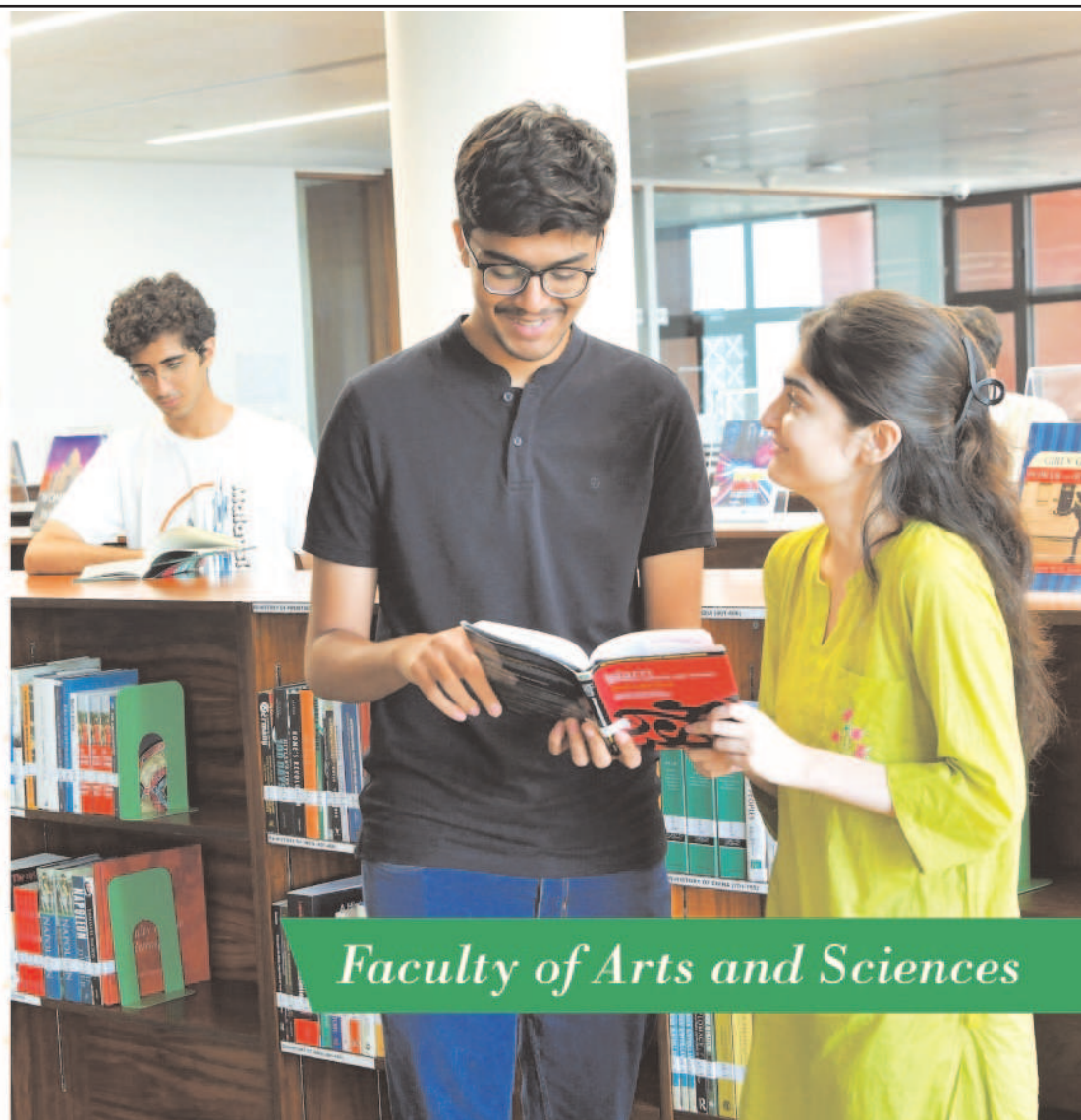
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Governor stresses for natural resources uplift

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday emphasized the need to focus on harnessing the province's mineral resources and natural gifts for generating foreign exchange for the province and the country. He shared these views during a meeting with Nauman Bashir, General Manager of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, who visited the Governor House in Peshawar. The meeting decided to establish offices in Chitral and Dera Ismail Khan, considering the abundance of minerals and other resources as well as their geographical significance. Governor Kundi highlighted that projects such as the Gem and Geological Institute of Pakistan, Honey Testing Laboratory, Peaches Pulp Processing Plant, converting waste marble into useful material, Bio-Equivalence Laboratory, Data Processing Unit, Mountain Fresh Value-Added Fruit Processing Hub, and Women Business Incubation Center would open new avenues for provincial development. He said that these initiatives would help align Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa's fruits, minerals, and other commodities with global standards. The meeting also discussed strategies to accelerate these projects. The Director General of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan invited Governor Kundi to attend an upcoming expo in Chitral next month as a guest of honor, which he accepted. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the southern districts of the province. During a discussion with a delegation led by journalist Muhammad Usman from district Bannu, he criticized the provincial government's criminal silence on the matter. Kundi emphasized the need to address the backwardness of these areas and noted that the federal government has allocated funds in the budget for the critical Chashma Lift Canal project. He said that the swift commencement of this project would transform not just the southern districts but the entire province. Similarly, renowned spiritu-

al leader and Sajada Nasheen of Darbar Taunsa Sharif, Khwaja Nasir Mahmoodnr, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. He congratulated the Governor on his appointment, praising it as a commendable decision by the party leadership. During their discussion, Governor Kundi expressed his dedication to fulfilling the trust placed in him by the leadership. He emphasized the need to make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a haven of peace, economic prosperity, and to enable women and youth to play significant roles in societal development. He reflected on the sacrifices made by the province in the fight against terrorism, including the tragic loss of lives in the Army Public School attack. Kundi also pledged to overcome obstacles faced by marginalized and disadvantaged communities in the development process. Khwaja Nasir Mahmood lauded the Governor's commitment and prayed for the country's development, peace, and stability.

PSWF delegation calls on Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Sports Writers Federation (PSWA) on Saturday called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, here at the Governor's House. The delegation, led by President Amjad Aziz Malik, included members from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, and Karachi. During the meeting, the delegation presented various proposals for the promotion of sports across Pakistan, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Governor Kundi emphasized that combating terrorism can be achieved by keeping sports fields active and vibrant. He highlighted the significant talent present in the province, noting that many talented athletes are participating in national and international competitions through their own efforts. Governor Kundi pointed out the lack of support and facilities for sports in the province, saying that sports fields are deserted and promising players receive no guidance. He stressed that sports serve as a positive message for Pakistan worldwide. He also mentioned that he had invited promising athletes from Peshawar, Swat, Chitral, Dir, DI Khan, Waziristan, and other districts to the Governor House to encourage the youth who are making a name for themselves in sports through their own initiative. Governor Kundi emphasized the importance of merit-based decisions to bring out true sports talent and ensuring transparent and fair use of sports funds. The delegation praised the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi's efforts and initiatives to support and promote sports talent in the province.



PESHAWAR: Pakistan Sports Writers Federation delegation meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor's House.

Rescue 1122 Hangu forces public to rely on private ambulances

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: The ongoing negligence of the Rescue 1122 administration has led to a critical shortage of essential emergency services in Hangu. Four ambulances, including one brand new vehicle, have been out of service for an extended period, leaving them to deteriorate into scrap. This situation has left Rescue 1122 Hangu without adequate oxygen supply and

referral ambulances, compelling citizens to bear heavy costs by hiring private ambulances during emergencies. According to reports, for the past three months, Rescue 1122 Hangu has been grappling with a shortage of oxygen supplies and a lack of functional referral ambulances. This has severely impacted their ability to transfer critically injured patients from emergency cases or accidents to larger hospitals in Peshawar or Kohat. The unavailability of these crucial services has forced many residents to resort to private ambulances, placing an additional financial burden on them during already stressful situations. Currently, Rescue 1122 Hangu has three old ambulances and one new vehicle, all of which have been out of commission for several months. These vehicles have deteriorated due to the lack of maintenance, and no steps have been taken to restore them to operational status. As a result, not only are the citizens facing difficulties, but the Rescue 1122 staff are also struggling to perform their duties effectively. The shortage of medical

services in Hangu is exacerbated by the lack of facilities at the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital. Due to insufficient medical resources, many patients are forced to seek treatment at private hospitals, further straining their finances. The deteriorating situation at Rescue 1122 Hangu highlights the failure of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's promises to provide adequate healthcare services to the public. District Emergency Officer Farman Ullah Told to the media, stating that two of the three non-functional ambulances have been repaired and are back on the road, while the third is expected to be operational soon. He also mentioned that three other ambulances have been marked for auction by the Health Department and Rescue 1122.

Furthermore, he acknowledged the ongoing issue with oxygen supplies, which they currently source from Kohat. However, due to low pressure, the oxygen supply remains insufficient. He assured the public that the oxygen shortage issue would be resolved soon.

Rising inflation makes common man life miserable

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman and founder of the Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faiq Shah concerned over frequent increase in electricity tariff and price-hike. In a statement here on Saturday, Shah said the life of the common man has been made miserable owing to the consistently surge in electricity rates. He added prices of daily use items have become dearer. The ATP chief said people were compelled to sell household items to pay high-tariff electricity bills. He said political films and dramas of accountability are being run to divert attention from public real issues. Shah said people have fed up from such drama and film and they were unable to earn livelihoods for the poor families. He said white-collar and middle class people have been forced into begging whereas life of salaried

class also made it difficult. The party leader said owing to high prices, daily use items were out of common man purchasing power. He maintained the whole Pakistan has been made explosive of anger and sentiments, which would explode anytime. Would people hit by hunger and starvation be put behind the bars? Faiq demanded concrete steps to resolve issues. He witnessed that anti-people attitude in assemblies, court, police stations and administrative institutions. The ATP chief said everyone is plundering and wrapping up. No one is aware about public miseries, he added. Shah said basic amenities like Roti, water were unavailable to people while the future of education and health was also bleak. Such people cannot give advice but justice is a prime requirement, Muhammad Faiq Shah added.

From unity to division: East Pakistan's legacy in the creation and fragmentation of Pakistan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

The Indian Sub-Continent's history is closely linked with the independence struggle, nation-building, and ensuing complex relations. The contributions of East Pakistanis to the Pakistan Movement, the establishment of the All-India Muslim League, and ultimately, the founding of Pakistan are sources of immense pride. The journey from the concept of a separate Muslim state to its actualization was marked by the significant efforts of East Pakistani leaders and citizens. Their sacrifices, intellectual and political guidance, and steadfast resolve were crucial to the movement's success. A long and illustrious roster of East Pakistani personalities and leaders made pivotal contributions to this cause, working in concert with their West Pakistani counterparts to fulfill the vision of Pakistan. Prominent leaders from East Pakistan, including Khawaja Nazimuddin, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, A. K. Fazlul Huq, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Khawaja Salimullah, Jogendra Nath Mandal, Abul Hashim and others were central to the founding of Tehreek-e-Pakistan, the All-India Muslim League, and the realization of Pakistan. Khawaja Nazimuddin, a key figure in the Muslim League, held the positions of both Governor-General and Prime Minister of Pakistan, representing the political ambitions of Bengal's Muslims. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy played a vital role in garnering support for the Pakistan Movement and subsequently served as Prime Minister. A. K. Fazlul Huq, known as "Sher-e-Bangla," contributed to the Lahore Resolution, which was pivotal for Pakistan's foundation. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, initially a supporter of the Muslim League. Khawaja Salimullah was instrumental in establishing the

All-India Muslim League, uniting the Muslims of Bengal around the concept of a separate nation. Jogendra Nath Mandal, advocating for marginalized communities, ensured the Pakistan Movement was inclusive. Abul Hashim's organizational prowess strengthened the Muslim League's presence in Bengal. These leaders, among others, played crucial roles in Pakistan's creation, molding its initial political scene and ensuring East Bengal's voice was heard in the independence struggle. However, the tragic division of Pakistan into East and West, culminating in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, was not merely an unfortunate series of events but the result of a deliberate conspiracy. India's role in this conspiracy cannot be understated. From the very beginning, India saw the nascent state of Pakistan as a threat and worked tirelessly to weaken it from within. The presence of India, like a hanging sword, constantly threatened Pakistan's integrity, exploiting any opportunity to divide and destabilize the country. India, from the very beginning, proved to be a formidable adversary. The seeds of discord were sown early on, as India took advantage of the geographical and cultural differences between East and West Pakistan. It skillfully exploited these differences, poisoning the hearts and minds of the people of East Pakistan against their brethren in the West. The Indian intelligence agencies were active in East Pakistan, fomenting unrest and fueling separatist sentiments. India's strategy was multifaceted. Through propaganda, political maneuvering, and direct intervention, India succeeded in creating a rift that, over time, became irreparable. The Indo-Pak war of 1971 was the culmination of years of subversive activities and overt hostility. Both sides exhibited remarkable military prowess, but the outcome was tragic for Pakistan. The country was cleaved

in two, with East Pakistan becoming the independent state of Bangladesh. A poignant symbol of this division is the image circulated by India and Bangladesh after the war, depicting General A.K. Niazi of Pakistan surrendering to Indian General Jagjit Singh Aurora. This photograph, which became iconic, was not merely a record of the event but was used as a tool of psychological warfare, intended to demoralize Pakistan and cement the narrative of Indian superiority and the inevitability of Bangladesh's independence. In Dhaka, a significant statue was erected to commemorate a pivotal moment in its history: the surrender of Lieutenant General A. A. K. Niazi, the commander of the Pakistani forces, to Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, the commander of the Indian and Bangladeshi forces, on December 16, 1971. It was a constant reminder of the defeat and the division that had been imposed on Pakistan, a symbol of India's triumph and Pakistan's loss. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, made remarks acknowledging India's involvement in the independence of Bangladesh during a visit to Dhaka, Bangladesh, on June 7, 2015. While speaking at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center, Modi recalled India's support for the Mukti Bahini, the Bengali nationalist forces, during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. He specifically mentioned that many Indian soldiers fought alongside the Mukti Bahini and acknowledged the role India played in supporting the struggle for Bangladesh's independence. This statement was widely interpreted as an admission of India's involvement in the events leading up to Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan. Modi's remarks were part of his broader speech where he emphasized the historical ties and cooperation

between India and Bangladesh. Now the destruction of the statue based on the image of General Niazi's surrender is a symbolic act that reflects the changing attitudes towards this chapter of history. The monument, which once stood as a testament to the division of Pakistan, has now been vandalized, and the walls of hatred that it represented have crumbled like sand. This act of destruction is not just a physical dismantling of a structure, but also a metaphorical breaking down of the barriers of mistrust and animosity that have long separated the people of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The story of East Pakistan's role in the creation of Pakistan and its eventual separation is a complex one, marked by both pride and pain. The people of East Pakistan played a crucial role in the establishment of Pakistan, and their contributions should never be forgotten. However, the division of Pakistan was a tragic outcome, one that was fueled by external interference and internal divisions. As we reflect on this history, it is important to recognize the lessons it offers. The unity and strength of a nation depend on its ability to overcome internal differences and resist external pressures. The story of Pakistan's creation and division is a reminder of the importance of national unity and the dangers of external interference. Today, as we look back on this chapter of history, we must remember the sacrifices of those who fought for the creation of Pakistan and strive to build a future where the mistakes of the past are not repeated. The walls of hatred that once divided the people of East and West Pakistan have crumbled, and it is up to us to ensure that they are not rebuilt. Instead, we must work towards fostering understanding, cooperation, and unity among all the people of the region, so that the tragic events of 1971 are never repeated.

Governor leads Independence Day celebrations with diplomats

Humera Ambareen

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi made a significant and strategic move during Pakistan's 77th Independence Day celebrations in Peshawar by bringing together diplomats from the United States, Iran, and Afghanistan. This wasn't just a ceremonial gesture but a calculated decision highlighting Kundi's understanding of global politics and his commitment to positioning Pakistan, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as a critical player in regional diplomacy. By facilitating this gathering, Kundi demonstrated that even amid challenging global relations, Pakistan can be a platform for dialogue, cooperation, and peace. Why this gathering matters The United States and Iran have long had a tense relationship, marked by disagreements over nuclear policy, regional influence, and a history of mutual suspicion. Afghanistan, caught in the middle, has been a battleground for these and other powers, struggling to find stability and peace. Given these dynamics, bringing representatives from these three nations

together in Peshawar was no small feat. Governor Kundi's decision to host these diplomats during Independence Day sent a clear message: Pakistan is ready to engage with all sides, even those often at odds. This event showed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a region frequently associated with conflict and security issues, is also a place where critical international discussions can begin. The gathering wasn't just about celebrating Pakistan's past; it was about showcasing the country's potential role in shaping a more peaceful and cooperative future for the region. What this means for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has long been at the crossroads of regional conflict, particularly because of its proximity to Afghanistan. For years, the province has been seen primarily through the lens of security-dealing with the spillover effects of war, the challenges of refugee influxes, and the impacts of terrorism. However, Governor Kundi's initiative shows that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can be much more than a frontline in these struggles-it can be a hub for diplomacy and international cooperation.

By bringing together diplomats from the US, Iran, and Afghanistan, Kundi highlighted Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's strategic importance not just within Pakistan, but on the global stage. This event has the potential to shift how the province is perceived internationally. Rather than being seen solely as a region affected by conflict, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can now be viewed as a place where meaningful discussions and peace-building efforts can take place. For the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this shift in perception is crucial. Increased international attention could lead to more investment in the province, boosting its economy and creating new opportunities for its residents. The province's enhanced status could also lead to greater political influence within Pakistan, giving its leaders more leverage in national and international decision-making processes. Kundi's actions have opened the door for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to play a key role in shaping the future of the region, particularly about Afghanistan. The bigger picture for Pakistan From a national perspective,

this gathering reflects Pakistan's strategic interests in maintaining and enhancing its role in international relations. In a world where global alliances are constantly shifting, and regional tensions remain high, Pakistan's ability to engage with major global powers is crucial. The presence of US, Iranian, and Afghan diplomats at the same event underscores Pakistan's potential to serve as a mediator, a neutral ground where important discussions can take place. This is especially relevant in the context of Afghanistan. As Afghanistan continues to seek stability, Pakistan's role as a facilitator of dialogue among the key players will be vital. Governor Kundi's initiative sends a clear message that Pakistan is ready to support peace efforts and to help bring stability to the region. This aligns with Pakistan's broader foreign policy goals of maintaining balanced relationships with global powers while advocating for peace and stability in its neighborhood. Furthermore, the involvement of the United States and Iran-two countries with a long history of enmity-adds another layer of significance to this

event. By hosting representatives from both nations, Kundi demonstrated Pakistan's commitment to engaging with all relevant parties, regardless of their bilateral conflicts. This approach aligns with Pakistan's broader diplomatic strategy of being a neutral player capable of facilitating dialogue between nations with divergent interests. The power of symbolic gestures While some might view this event as merely symbolic, it's important to recognize that in diplomacy, symbolism often precedes substantive action. The fact that US, Iranian, and Afghan diplomats were willing to come together in Peshawar indicates a willingness to engage, however tentative that engagement might be. Such gatherings can pave the way for more serious talks in the future, and that's where real progress can be made. Governor Kundi's ability to bring these diplomats together shows his understanding of how diplomacy works. Relationships between countries often start with small, symbolic steps that lead to bigger, more meaningful discussions. By facilitating this meeting, Kundi has created an

opportunity for dialogue that could have significant impacts down the road. This event was not just about the optics; it was about setting the stage for potential diplomatic breakthroughs that could benefit the entire region. Long-term implications for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa The long-term implications of Governor Kundi's diplomatic efforts extend far beyond the immediate context of Independence Day celebrations. By positioning Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a venue for international diplomacy, Kundi is laying the groundwork for the province's future role in regional and global affairs. This move could attract further international attention to the province, potentially leading to increased investment, development, and cooperation. For the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this redefinition of their province's role on the global stage could lead to tangible benefits. Increased international attention and investment can translate into economic growth, job creation, and improved infrastructure. Moreover, the province's enhanced status could lead to greater political influence within Pakistan, giving

ing its leaders more leverage in national decision-making processes. In the context of Pakistan's overall diplomatic strategy, this event highlights the importance of engaging with all relevant stakeholders in the region. As Pakistan continues to navigate its relationships with global powers, the ability to bring together diverse and often conflicting parties will be crucial. Kundi's actions demonstrate that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can be more than just a security buffer-it can be a proactive participant in shaping the region's future. Building bridges for a better future Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's decision to host US, Iranian, and Afghan diplomats during Pakistan's 2024 Independence Day celebrations in Peshawar was a significant diplomatic achievement. It wasn't just about celebrating Pakistan's past-it was about shaping its future. By hosting this gathering, Kundi has shown that even in a region often associated with conflict, there is space for dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. This move benefits not only Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also strengthens Paki-

stan's position as a key player in international relations. Through his leadership, Kundi has demonstrated that Pakistan, and particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, can be a place where important international conversations begin. This is a win for the province, for Pakistan, and for the hope of a more peaceful and cooperative future in the region. Governor Kundi's actions have elevated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's status on the global stage, positioning it as a region where important international conversations can and should happen. As Pakistan continues to navigate the complexities of global diplomacy, the significance of this event will likely be remembered as a pivotal moment in the country's efforts to build bridges in an increasingly divided world. Through his leadership, Kundi has shown that even in a region often defined by conflict, there is room for dialogue, understanding, and progress. This move not only benefits Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also strengthens Pakistan's position as a key player in international relations, capable of facilitating meaningful conversations between global powers.



In brief

Action against sale of illegal, fake medicines F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Farmer-friendly measures of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif continue. According to the details, on the Orders of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh, Mohammad Naeem Sindhu, Assistant Director Agriculture Pest Warning Mohammad Asghar Shahid has taken action against those who sell illegal, fake Medicines in District Toba Tek Singh. Tayyab Traders in Adda Chak No. 190 GB were selling illegal and agricultural medicines without license, dealership, receipts and stock registers. From which 81.55 liters and 7.250 kg of illegal agricultural medicines, worth more than 5,92,640 rupees, were seized and handed over to the police and a case was registered against two accused in Rajana police station, accused Inayat Mahi. He was arrested on the spot and all agricultural medicines were handed over to the police.

Three notorious dacoits killed

KHAIRPUR (INP): Three notorious dacoits were killed and another was injured and arrested in two different police encounters in Khairpur, police said on Saturday. According to police, SHO police station Shah Hussain and SHO Gumbat received information that robbers were looting people by blocking the roads on Mangahan Wari Link Road and Paki Nako. When the police party reached the spot, there was a fight between the police and the robbers and in the ensuing fight, 3 notorious robbers were killed while one robber was injured. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Khairpur said the dead robbers have been identified as Liaqat Shar, Nisar Ahmed Shar and Abid Mitlu while the injured robber has been identified as Mohabbate Shah. The dead and injured were wanted in many serious cases including robbery, robbery, kidnapping for ransom, terrorism, murder, police encounters and theft, police said. The slain dacoits used to take weapons from Dera Ismail Khan, Dara Adam Khel and different areas of Balochistan and supply them to Kacha area dacoits and tribal conflict groups, SSP said. A double-barreled pistol and a repeater have been recovered from the dead robbers, police spokesman said.

Food items quality checked F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KP FS&HFA) on Saturday conducted operations and checked the quality of food items at various shops in DI Khan aiming to ensure the provision of quality food items across the city. According to the information, on the direction of Deputy Director Halal Food Authority Dera Muhammad Asif, different teams of KP FS&HFA conducted raids on dairy shops, grocery stores, bakeries, milk shops, food and drink points in Topanwala Bazar, Circular Road, Kamishnari bazar and new Bannu Chungi. The Authority's team inspected various food items and checked these items at mobile laboratory on the spot besides sending some samples to the laboratory for further examination. Additionally, counterfeit and sub-standard food items including biscuits, cakes, drinks and milk were seized from grocery stores during the operation.

APC condemn govt decision for sale of land of universities

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Against the government's decision to sell the lands of the universities and the Ring Road, the All Parties Conference under the banner of ANP condemned the decision and gave a deadline to withdraw it immediately and pay the dues to the land owners within one month and declared to fight a court battle.

APC also formed a Loya Jirga for the future action plan, an all-party conference was held at the Mardan Executive Club organized by ANP under the chairmanship of former Chief Minister Ameer Haider Khan Hoti, in which Mayor Mardan Himayat Ullah Mayar, Imran Mandori of ANP, Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Zahir Shah, Maulana Amanat Shah Haqqani of JUI (F), Inayat Shah Bacha of Muslim League (N), Saeed Akhtar Advocate of Jamaat-e-Islami, Provincial President of JUP Fayaz Khan, Peoples Party's Aslam Khattak, Ashraf Khan Advocate of PNPAP,

Javed Khan of Qaumi Watan Party, Noor Badshah Advocate of District Bar Association, M Bashir Adil of Mardan Press Club, Akbar Ali Kashmiri of Contractors Association, Hafiz Inam of Education Council and representatives of civil society participated.

However, Tehreek-e-Insaaf did not participate despite the invitation, on which APC participants expressed their disappointment addressing the All Parties Conference; Ameer Haider Khan Hoti said that five thousand kanals of land was purchased for the Greater Bacha Khan Campus during our regime. All the dues of which were paid during this period, however, if the owners went to court, the amount would increase and the then PTI government stopped the payment to the owners. He said that Gomul University has 8,000 kanals of land, while 2,000 kanals have been allocated for Abdul Wali Khan University. There is a separate scale for the university there and the university was not just a road but it

was a plan for the next fifty years.

He said that money was not allocated for their projects on purpose. Addressing the APC, the speakers said that PTI started by selling buffaloes, now it is laying against the lands of universities, the child of Mardan is the child of the future will be out in the field for projects. The APC participants urged the elected representatives of PTI to join with other parties for the rights of Mardan and said that the members of the assembly will be contacted again.

The participants said that the government's decision is a conspiracy against the future of the children of Mardan, which will never be allowed a writ petition will be filed in the court against its decision and a protest movement will also be started. It was decided in the meeting that they will fight against the government's decision on all fronts. Thirteen-member Loya Jirga was formed for the future plan of action in APC, whose meeting will be held on Monday, August 19 at 4 pm.

PTI govt done nothing for people: Muqam

F.P. Report

BUNER: Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit Baltista Engineer Ameer Muqam visited Buner and wore caps and mufflers to Wali Khan, a prominent businessman in Swari, along with his family and hundreds of colleagues for joining the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

Spiking at the joining ceremony, the provincial president of Muslim League Nawaz, Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam said that the party has become much stronger in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by joining Muslim League Nawaz along with family and friends of mown business man Wali Khan.

The federal minister has criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf for the poor performance of the provincial government and has taken a stand that PTI's external agenda is causing instability in the country and harming the province. He explained that PTI leaders and ministers themselves



say that the government of Pakhtunkhwa province is corrupt.

Engineer Amir Muqam has hoped that the country will move towards development and prosperity during the rule of Muslim League Nawaz. The federal minister has proudly said that the people have come to know that the leaders of the Muslim League-Nawaz have the ability to bring the nation out of crises.

Engineer Amir Muqam has attacked PTI and said that he is in the provincial government for the third

time but has not done anything for the prosperity of the people. He has called the politics of PTI based on conspiracies against the prosperity of the country. Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam said that people will never forget the tragic incident of May 9. He put the founder of PTI in hot water and raised the question that the children of the founder of PTI are in London while he is inciting the children of others to protest against the country which will harm both the young generation and the country as well.

Two children drowned

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Two children identified as Sudais 10 and Hassan 15 were drowned in a deep water pond at Osakai in the jurisdiction of Ouch police station here on Saturday, residents and police said.

They said that Sudais fell into the pond while Hassan jumped into it to save him. The residents said that both the children drowned. The locals recovered the bodies and shifted them to the tehsil headquarters hospital Chakdara wherein the doctors declared them dead.

Deworming preparations: The first meeting of the district management committee regarding the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

deworming programme 2024 was held with additional deputy commissioner Bashir Khan in the chair at Timergara here on Saturday.

The officials from the elementary and secondary education male and female, representatives of the Private Education Network (PEN), Rescue 1122 and Elementary Education Foundation, Deputy District Health Officer and technical assistance partners' district coordinator Abdul Rashad Khan attended the meeting. The assistant regional manager Subhan Ali briefed the participants about the program. He said the government had planned to launch the deworming drive from October 14 to 18 to elimi-

nate abdominal worms in 22 districts of the province. The meeting was informed that about 7.8 million children aged 4 to 14 years, would be provided with deworming medicines free of cost. He said the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) had approved the medicine.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Bashir Khan issued instructions to the heads of all departments to ensure full cooperation with the deworming teams to make the program a success. He issued special instructions to the district Khateeb and the Private Schools Network representatives to take appropriate measures for preparing children for the programme.

Suspects detained in search operation F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: More than one hundred and fifty suspected persons were apprehended in a search operation carried out by the security forces with assistance of police in Torkham and Bacha Mena village on Saturday, police said.

It is to be stated here that last day an explosive device was planted by an unknown miscreant near to the forces post, however it was defused by Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS). A police official said that on Saturday a sudden raid was conducted at warehouses and residing places in Torkham bazaar.

The forces accompanied by the police also searched houses of dwellers of Bacha Mena village and checked the identity of the residents. According to the police more than a hundred and fifty persons including Afghan nationals, residing illegally in Torkham were apprehended and put behind the bars for further investigation.

Earlier, Torkham border in addition with all entry and exit points were suspended due to forces operation restricting public movement during forces search operation. The Afghanistan bound passengers were stopped at Michni checkpoint while residents in Bacha Mena were asked to remain in their houses during the search operation, locals said.

Rally held in Wana F.P. Report

WANA: A massive protest rally was held in the Raghzai border area of South Waziristan against the closure of the Angoor Adda Gate, organized by various political parties. The rally drew thousands of tribesmen. Addressing the gathering, leaders including People's Party's Imran Mukhlis, JI General Secretary Asadullah, Maulana Sabirullah, and PTI leader Haroon Khan, condemned the establishment's treatment of tribal people like a stepmother, fostering hatred and threatening to erase their patriotism.

They demanded an end to the 40-year-old policy in tribal areas, allowing development initiatives to begin in war-torn regions. If this policy persists, the tribal people will be forced to take drastic measures, including uprooting the border fence, due to the unemployment and poverty caused by the gate's closure.

Man electrocuted

HYDERABAD (INP): A young man was electrocuted to death while fixing electric wire on a pole in Noorani Basti area in the limits of Pinyari police station.

According to the police, 26 years old Ali Raza Malik was fixing the cable during the hours of load shedding, suddenly power supply was restored and he received electric shock and fell down. Malik was shifted to Liaquat University Hospital in critical condition where he succumbed to his wounds, police added.

Commissioner suspends 41 officers, officials

F.P. Report



KOHAT: Under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda", the Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali, during a surprise visit to various offices, schools and hospitals, suspended 35 Officers and Officials of Education Department, Principal and Vice Principal of Government Secondary School Togh Bala, 2 Lady Doctors of Type C Hospital Lachi, Technician of Rural Health Center Gumbat and Supervisor of WSSC for absenteeism and negligence.

According to details, Commissioner Kohat Division under the Program "Awami Agenda", on Saturday paid a surprise visit to various offices and institutions of Health and Education, Excise and Taxation department, WSSC areas and Kohat Grade Station. On this occasion, Commissioner Kohat found 35 officers/officials absent out of 77 male and female offices of the Education Department including 2 Officers of Grade 18 and 3 Officers of Grade 17 who

were suspended on the spot. He expressed anguish over delapidated condition of the Building despite having 14 Class-IV in the education department.

Commissioner Kohat also suspended the Principal (B-19) and Vice Principal of the Government Higher Secondary School Togh Bala due to the extremely poor condition of the school.

Meanwhile, Motasim Billah Shah also suspended 2 Lady Doctors of Tehsil Hospital Lachi and the Technician of Rural Health Center Gumbat for absence, while the supervisor of WSSC was suspended for negligence in work. Commissioner Kohat issued directions for deduction from the suspended officers and officials to the Accounts Officer Kohat.

Likewise, on the directives of the Commissioner Kohat, 6 Days Massive Cleanliness Drive, under the Awami Agenda Program is being started throughout the Kohat Division from Sunday to Friday. The Drive will be conducted in the buildings of all government departments in the entire Kohat division from Sunday to Tuesday while from Wednesday to Friday, a special cleaning campaign will be conducted in all markets, parks, bus stands and river channels within the urban population in which thousands of people will participate. This 6-day continuous cleaning campaign will be supervised by all the deputy commissioners including the commissioner and the heads of the relevant departments themselves.

‘Govt lacks solid majority, collapse at any moment’

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Javed Latif, a senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has cast serious doubts on the stability of the current central government, suggesting that it could collapse at any moment. While talking to media, Latif emphasized that the government lacks a solid majority and is vulnerable to potential destabilizing forces, such as a sudden gust of wind.

Latif's comments reflect a growing frustration within his party regarding the perceived facilitation of political opponents and the broader political landscape. Two years ago, Latif and other PML-N members voiced concerns about the facilitation provided to rival parties, although some members of his party remained skeptical at the

time.

Latif accused senior figures of being complicit in this facilitation, suggesting that some of these individuals now need to explain their past actions. He also criticized the ongoing consequences of the 2017 decisions, questioning whether future rulings will continue to be influenced by political motivations rather than merit. Latif argued that the current government was installed as part of a broader arrangement, and claimed that his party is now suffering as a result. He warned that if the party's interests are not safeguarded, both the state and the political system are at risk.

Additionally, Latif pointed out the silence of Nawaz Sharif amid the political turmoil and the need for a transparent explanation of the facilitation.

time provided to rival parties. He criticized the selective nature of justice and the perception that the media portrays Pakistani politicians negatively. He called for a fair and unbiased approach to resolving cases, emphasizing that all political disputes should be handled based on merit rather than favoritism.

Latif also highlighted issues with the electoral process, alleging that discrepancies in Forms 45 and 47 demonstrate how the electoral system was manipulated to favor certain parties. He urged for a reevaluation of the electoral practices to restore faith in the democratic process. As the political situation remains tense, Latif's remarks underline the ongoing challenges faced by the PML-N and the broader implications for Pakistan's political stability.

Swat hosts seminar

Shafi Ullah



MINGORA: The Swat Progressive Climate Foundation (PCF) organized a thought-provoking seminar, "Clean and Green Swat: Mindset for Climate Change," at Janzeb College, Swat, drawing a large audience of students, teachers, and local residents yesterday.

Dr. John Muhammad, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Swat, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the devastating impact of climate change on the agricultural sector, particularly in the Malakand Division. He stressed the need for innovative strategies to combat

climate-related challenges. Tauseef Khan, Founder and President of PCF, emphasized the crucial role of youth in addressing climate change, urging them to take leadership and practical steps to protect the environment. Mian Shahid Hamid, Project Director, PCF, welcomed participants and encouraged youth to drive change, saying, "If not you, then who will lead this change?"

Roshni Hadi, PCF HR Secretary, provided

insightful discussions on climate change, its impacts in Swat, and promoting climate resilience. Asif Javed and Syed Salman Nasir, District Coordinator of PCF, also addressed the participants, emphasizing the importance of youth involvement and collective efforts to mitigate climate change. The seminar concluded with a lively discussion, as participants pledged to raise awareness and protect the environment.

Overcoming low self esteem

Ghazala Anbreen

RECOGNIZING self-esteem is pivotal in the fast-paced world of today where confidence is considered to be one of the most important keys to success. However, certain traumas of childhood or painful memories sometimes make people feel undone and unable to face the challenges in life. Sadly, the most important pain and suffering we face are more often caused by our fellow human beings. In such conditions the affliction at times lead to facing an acute lack of self-esteem.

Battling a low self-esteem is a tough battle in life. The ones who have been through this struggle can testify the validity of this fact well. As a first step it is necessary that you treat yourself with kindness. There are some more ways which can be helpful in this connection like for instance:

1. Try to be assertive and expressive. Do not remain quiet. It will be taken as ineptness on your part. It does not mean that

you behave instinctively or impulsively rather learn to have more control in your life.

2. Remember overcoming low self-esteem is a gradual process and with consistent efforts you can get successful. For improving self-esteem, you have to be tolerant, and it may not be achieved overnight. Be patient. Give yourself time.

3. Take out some time to do self-reflection and introspection on daily basis.

4. Try developing self-compassion and build a positive image of yourself in your own eyes.

5. Replace negativity with more hope and strength.

6. Surround yourself with people who are supportive, positive minded and encouraging. Positive reinforcement from others can be very helpful to make you feel confident and empowered.

7. Try learn new things. An informed man is a strong man. Visit new places if possible.

8. Identify and challenge negative beliefs.

9. Everyone has unique strengths and qualities so recognize your strengths. Give yourself and others space. Develop healthy relationships with people around you. Relations are like human beings. They take birth and grow up. Rear them with the food of politeness and kindness. Otherwise, they will die. We ourselves kill them with our impudence, nonchalance and bigotry.

10. Learn to express your needs and desires more confidently. Diffidence is inimical to success.

11. Try to get rid of the burden of the negative past memories. It is true that they are hard to forget as early years have a deep impact and become a reason for crippling confidence. These memories may hold you back. But you must try and never give it up. A steadfast resolve is tantamount to yield positive results and improve the quality of your life.

12. A bolstered self-esteem enables us to sail through difficult challenges. Remember bolstering self-esteem is essential as if you have got low self-esteem, life challenges can throw you out.

13. Building self-esteem often demands that you speak often about the positive experiences. Rest assured after some time positive vibes will be palpable by these reechoed words. These words will murmur in your ears afterwards and you will feel light and happy. Negative experiences must be ignored in order to avoid getting vulnerable to future challenges. It has a chain of negative impacts which one must resolve to break because they lead to anxiety and depression.

14. Do not try to become perfect. Perfectionists are idealists and it is said that idealists are sometimes miserable people. Live your life well trying to strike a balance.

15. Try to derive strength from weakness. Have consola-

tion from the fact that a childhood

fraught with traumas builds a

strong sense of resilience.

16. Never let the child in you

die. Help others to the best of

your capacity without any

reward in return.

17. Low self-esteem mars

relationships making you con-

victed of your worthlessness

which can hold you back both

academically and professionally.

18. One of the most danger-

ous risks caused by it is seeking

refuge in drugs. Life is precious

and it is only once. So, take care

of it and live it well.

19. Sometimes it serves as a

coping mechanism as this facili-

tates develop an attitude to shift

the blame and ascribe external

factors for one's failures.

Steps towards building self-

esteem.

Here are two practical steps.

1. Check the authenticity of

your conviction. Ask yourself is

this really true? Question the accu-

racy for feeling worthless and sep-

arate fact from fiction. When you

feel low, try to sift out whether it has some solid grounds or simply you feel it that way? Determine the accuracy taking due time. Separate fact from fiction.

2. Get rid of the ghosts of the past. Such a person often feels helpless to change the circumstances but remember you have to convert stress into strength because the fact remains that your sources of pain and pleasure are the same.

Boosting self-esteem requires efforts. Harsh critiques should be taken positively and calmly. Always keep this fresh in mind that you have to traverse a path to gradually building a stronger spirited self. Treat yourself with kindness rather than with harsh judgement about your own self. Learn to defeat your inner critic if it tells you are not good. Tell him I am doing my best. Turn the inner voice from harshest critic to a bigger cheer leader, supporting you on lifelong basis.

Finally seeking support from friends, family or even professionals can also help. Life is precious and we have to be accountable in the world hereafter how we spent it.



Ukrainian officials urge civilians to evacuate Pokrovsk

KYIV (AP): Military authorities in the eastern Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk urged civilians to speed up their evacuation because the Russian army was quickly closing in on what has been one of Moscow’s key targets for months.

Pokrovsk officials said in a Telegram post that Russian troops are “advancing at a fast pace. With every passing day there is less and less time to collect personal belongings and leave for safer regions.” Ukrainian troops have been trying to divert the Kremlin’s military focus away from the front line in Ukraine by launching a bold cross-border incursion into Russia’s Kursk region. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Pokrovsk and other nearby towns in the Donetsk region were “facing the most intense Russian assaults.”

An aerial reconnaissance soldier with Ukraine’s 68th Separate Airborne Brigade who is helping defend the city told The Associated Press by phone that he faces the same deadly monotony every day: From his position, he flies a drone to identify moving Russian infantrymen. The boom of a mortar follows after he relays the coordinates. Then, more and more infantrymen come in a seemingly endless wave. “Since the Kursk operation, I haven’t noticed any changes. The Russians have the same tactics of infantry assaults: They are moving, advancing,” said the soldier, who gave only his call sign, Goose, in keeping with Ukrainian military rules.

He noted that with their powerful aerial bombs, Russia was destroying any hope Ukrainians have of holding the territory. “Russians are destroying and moving, destroying and moving,” Goose said. The urgency of the evacuation of civilians from Pokrovsk has underscored the high-stakes

gamble Ukraine is making by taking the war into Russia with its ongoing Kursk assault, which started Aug. 6.

The attack is a daring attempt to change the dynamics of the 2½-year conflict, but it could backfire and leave Ukraine’s short-handed defense on the front line at the mercy of Russia’s push. The Kremlin’s forces have had battlefield momentum and superior forces in eastern Ukraine’s Donetsk region since the spring. Ukraine is wagering it can cope with the strain on its resources involved in the attack in Kursk without sacrificing Donetsk. Russia apparently reckons it can contain the incursion without needing to ease up in Donetsk.

“Both cannot be right,” Nigel Gould-Davies, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said. “The outcome hangs in the balance.” The United States does not believe Ukraine can control the territory seized in Kursk over the long term, said a US official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly on the matter.

The official said that the Russians have yet to deploy a significant number of troops away from Ukraine and into the Kursk to try to repel the Ukrainian operation. But American officials believe such a redeployment or a surge of Russian forces from elsewhere will inevitably happen and likely be able to fend off the Ukraine forces, the official said. Russia’s slow slog across Donetsk this year has been costly in terms of troops and armor, but its gains have mounted.

Pokrovsk, which had a prewar population of about 60,000, is one of Ukraine’s main defensive strongholds and a key logistics hub in the Donetsk region. Its capture would compromise Ukraine’s defensive abilities

and supply routes, and would bring Russia closer to its stated aim of capturing the entire Donetsk region. Pokrovsk officials were meeting with the residents to provide them with logistical details on the evacuation. People were offered shelter in western Ukraine, where they will be hosted in dormitories and separate houses prepared for them.

“As the front line approaches Pokrovsk, the need to move to a safer place is becoming increasingly urgent,” the local administration said. In Kursk, meanwhile, Ukraine’s top military officer, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyy, said that Ukrainian troops had advanced 1-3 kilometers (up to 2 miles) deeper into Russian territory. He claimed earlier this week that Ukraine controlled more than 1,000 square kilometers (390 square miles) inside Russia, but Moscow disputes the claim and it couldn’t be independently verified.

Syrskyy also said Ukraine continues to capture Russian soldiers during the incursion as an “exchange fund” of captives to be swapped for Ukrainian prisoners of war, though it remains unclear how many have been captured. Ukraine’s human rights chief, Dmytro Lubinets, said he spoke with his Russian counterpart, Tatyana Moskalkova, about a possible POW swap. The AP visited a detention center in Ukraine, the location of which cannot be disclosed due to security restrictions. Dozens of POWs were seen, some of them walking with their hands tied behind their backs while a guard led them down a corridor. Some had rations of a thin soup with cabbage and onions.

According to the facility’s officials, more than 300 captives have passed through it since the start of the incursion, with 80% of them being conscripts. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly stated that



conscripts would not participate in the “special military operation,” Russia’s term for its war against Ukraine. However, because of the speed of Ukraine’s incursion, the war came to them.

Ukrainian troops have taken full control of Sudzha, Zelenskyy said. It’s the largest Russian town to fall to Ukraine’s forces since the start of their incursion 10 days ago, and the success raised Ukrainian spirits while embarrassing the Kremlin. A family who fled from Sudzha showed on Russian state TV the shattered windows of their car, the result of an attack while on the road.

“At the turn they were shooting, there were mines, we drove around the mines. Then we were driving further, the drone hit us in Bondarevka,” said Nikolai Netbayev. The Russian Defense Ministry said the army repelled attempted Ukrainian advances in the areas of Gordeev, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) west of Sudzha, and Russkoye

Porechnoye, 13 kilometers (8 miles) north of Sudzha.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Ukraine destroyed a bridge across the Seim River in the Glushkovsky district with US-made HIMARS rockets, marking their first use in the Kursk region. Zakharova’s statement couldn’t be independently confirmed. The state news agency Tass reported that the bridge’s destruction would hamper the evacuation of residents of the Glushkovsky district.

The Russian organization People’s Front said two of its volunteer workers were killed by Ukrainian shelling in the Kursk region while on a mission to evacuate residents. And in the Russian-occupied city of Donetsk, a hypermarket was destroyed in a blaze after being hit by Ukrainian fire, according to local officials. Eleven people were reported injured.

Poland showcases its growing army on a holiday

WARSAW (AP): NATO member Poland paid tribute to its historic 1920 victory over the Red Army by honoring fallen Poles and showing off modern tanks and other equipment that it hopes will deter the threat it sees in modern-day Russia.

More than 2,500 Polish troops, joined by dozens of US and other allied soldiers, rode in military vehicles or tanks, or flew in fighter jets and helicopters in Warsaw, the Polish capital, on the Armed Forces Day holiday. “We must arm ourselves and build such potential that no one will ever dare to attack us,” President Andrzej Duda said before the parade, the culmination of state commemorations.

Some of Poland’s new weapons have replaced Soviet- and Russian-made equipment sent to neighboring Ukraine after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of its democratic neighbor on Feb. 24, 2022. Since Poland broke free of Moscow’s control starting in 1989 and then joined NATO, it has worked to modernize its army. Those efforts moved into higher gear after Russia, under President Vladimir Putin, first invaded parts of Ukraine in 2014, and then began its full-fledged assault in 2022, with fears heightened all along the strategic stretch of NATO’s eastern flank — from the Baltic nations to Poland to Romania.

“Muscovites always threatened the peace here,” said Radoslaw Prokop, a 49-year-old who watched the parade. “For hundreds of years.” US, British and Romanian soldiers riding in tanks with their national flags waving joined their Polish allies. They are here “at our invitation,” Duda said in his speech, recalling how “in the past there were those here whom we did not invite, who came here by force.”

Jacek Szelenbaum, a 60-year-old truck driver, was among the thousands of spectators. His grandfather was forced to serve in a mounted infantry division of the Russian czar in the early 20th century, the waning years of a long Russian occupation over Warsaw and the surrounding region of Poland. He said that he realizes the parade is mostly for show, but is still encouraged when he sees the military having more modern weaponry as the years go by. “We

feel a bit better because we see this good equipment, and we feel the presence of our allies, Americans, British, Romanian and others,” Szelenbaum said. “It’s necessary in this situation, because Poland could never defend itself alone. Only in an alliance can we manage against Putin.”

The holiday falls on the anniversary of the 1920 Battle of Warsaw, in which Polish troops defeated Russian Bolshevik forces advancing on Europe, halting their western march. The war in Ukraine has reminded Poland of the enduring threat the country has long faced on the flat plains of Central Europe, wedged between larger, more powerful — and often aggressive — neighbors.

Even membership in NATO hasn’t eased the sense of threat after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and a migration crisis that erupted in 2021 along Poland’s border with Belarus. Warsaw saw a sudden surge that year in large-scale migration from the Middle East and Africa as a form of hybrid warfare organized by Moscow and Minsk. Polish Defense Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz wrote a letter to soldiers, saying that the holiday is a reminder of “the most glorious episodes of the Polish army, of the price of independence and freedom.”

“On this day, we pay tribute to all the heroes who fought for the homeland from the dawn of our country,” he added. Russia’s war against neighboring Ukraine, and the Poland-Belarus border crisis, have led many Poles to fear what the Kremlin might do next, should it succeed in Ukraine. Poland signed a \$10 billion deal earlier this week with the US government for 96 Apache attack helicopters.

Kosiniak-Kamysz said the Apaches, with their modern technology, mark a milestone for Poland’s efforts to modernize its military, and would allow Abrams tanks and F-35 aircraft to be used to their full capacities. The US Embassy said before the parade that “the sky will be filled with American F-35s and Apaches flying alongside our Polish allies!” “America’s commitment to defending every inch of NATO is unwavering,” the embassy said in a post on X.

African soldiers honoured

SAINT-RAPHAEL, France (AP): France commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Allied invasion of the French Riviera in World War II to push back the Nazis, with events that especially honored the many soldiers from Africa, sent from then-French colonies, who took part.

Sometimes called “the forgotten D-Day,” the occasion was marked by ceremonies presided over by French President Emmanuel Macron. Storm warnings around the Mediterranean coast forced the cancellation of a seaborne segment of the events. Macron and Cameroonian President Paul Biya were to give speeches at the Boulouris National Cemetery in the town of Saint-Raphael, which holds the bodies of 464 French soldiers killed in the fighting of August 1944. Other African leaders also took part in the commemorations.

Six World War II veterans — five French and one foreign — were slated to receive the Legion of Honor, the nation’s highest award. An aeronautics demonstration and fireworks were also scheduled. Starting Aug. 15, 1944, hundreds of thousands of primarily American and French troops landed on the Mediterranean coast for Operation Dragoon. It was intended to coincide with the D-Day invasion of Normandy in June 1944 but was delayed due to a lack of resources. Africans made up as much as half the French contingent, soldiers from what are now some two dozen independent countries.

UN experts urge Bahrain to ensure prisoners have adequate food

DUBAI (AP): Independent experts with the United Nations urged Bahrain to ensure those held at its Jaw prison have access to adequate food, water and medical care after they received allegations guards have cut air conditioning in the island kingdom’s sweltering summer.

Bahrain called the accusations “false” in a statement sent to The Associated Press and insisted prisoners receive “the same health-care provision as members of the public.” However, the UN experts’ request comes a year after a mass hunger strike by prisoners at the Jaw Rehabilitation and Reform Center, a facility holding many of the prisoners identified by human rights activists as dissidents who oppose the rule of the island’s Al Khalifa family. The country’s Sunni rulers have long faced complaints of discrimination from the island’s Shiite majority. The experts said they had been getting “worrying accusations” about prisoners’ conditions since March.

“Detainees held in some buildings of the prison are often being denied required medical care and do not have regular access to adequate food and safe drinking water,” the UN

experts said. “Particularly worrying are allegations that authorities have cut air conditioning, exposing prisoners to extreme heat, with temperatures arising to 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit).” The experts also said communications between prisoners and their families also had been cut, while prisoners’ movements also had been curtailed. “Lowering standards as a form of punishment when prisoners exercise their legitimate rights to complain is not appropriate,” said the experts, who work with the UN voluntarily and independently from any government or organization. Responding to questions from the AP, Bahrain said it obtained international accreditation for Jaw prison and detainees’ “rights and services ... are upheld.”

“The commitment to maintaining a safe and secure environment within all reform and rehabilitation facilities, alongside delivering high standards, continue to be in place and any suggestion otherwise is false,” it said. Jaw prison is located toward the southern end of Bahrain, an island off the coast of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf that’s about the size of New York City with a population of

around 1.5 million people. Concerns over medical care at the prison have been raised before by activists.

The 2023 US State Department human rights report on Bahrain noted that activists warned conditions at Jaw could be “harsh and, at times, life threatening due to physical abuse, unjust application of solitary confinement as a disciplinary measure, and inadequate sanitary conditions and medical care.” A tuberculosis outbreak reportedly struck the prison in June 2022, something later also denied by the government. Bahrain, home to the US Navy’s MidEast-based 5th Fleet, is in the midst of a decadelong crackdown on all dissent following the Arab Spring protests, which saw the island’s Shiite majority and others demanding more political freedom.

Since Bahrain put down the protests with the help of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, it has imprisoned Shiite activists, deported others, stripped hundreds of their citizenship and closed its leading independent newspaper. Meanwhile, Bahrain has recognized Israel diplomatically and hosted Pope Francis in November 2022.

France seizes three Nigerian jets

PARIS (BBC): A French court has seized three jets owned by the Nigerian government amid a long-standing dispute with a Chinese company. The row stems from a 2007 contract between Zhongshan Fucheng Industrial Investment and Nigeria’s south-western Ogun State to develop a free-trade zone where a massive industrial park was to be developed to attract investors.

The agreement was terminated between 2015 and 2016. According to the Financial Times, Zhongshan said it was forced out of the deal through a “campaign of illegal acts”. The authorities in Nigeria have fiercely condemned the seizure of its planes, suggesting Zhongshan had a sole objective of “undercutting and scamming” an African government.

A total of three presidential planes have been grounded in France after Zhongshan obtained orders from the Judicial Court of Paris. The planes were receiving “routine maintenance” at the time, Nigeria’s government said. In a statement by spokesperson Bayo Onanuga, Nigeria’s presidential office accused Zhongshan of mounting a wider campaign to seize its assets overseas.

“This arm-twisting tactic by the Chinese company is the latest in a long list of failed moves to attach Nigerian government-owned assets in foreign jurisdictions,” he said. In March 2021 an arbitration tribunal - chaired by the president of the UK Supreme Court - awarded \$74.5m (£57.8m) in compensation to the

Chinese firm. Ogun State reportedly refused to pay this amount. Nigerian-owned buildings in the British city of Liverpool were recently seized by a UK court in relation to the same dispute, Nigerian newspaper Premium Times reported.

The United States Court of Appeals ruled that Zhongshan could proceed with its efforts to confiscate Nigeria’s assets abroad. The court also rejected Nigeria’s defence of “sovereign immunity”. Nigeria accused Zhongshan of misrepresenting facts to courts in the UK, the US and France. Mr Onanuga said that when the Ogun State contract was revoked, Zhongshan had done no more than erect a perimeter fence on the land earmarked for the free-trade zone.

China’s rhetoric turns dangerously real for Taiwanese

BEIJING (BBC): Calls to denounce “die hard” Taiwanese secessionists, a tipline to report them and punishments that include the death penalty for “ring-leaders” – Beijing’s familiar rhetoric against Taiwan is turning dangerously real.

The democratically-governed island has grown used to China’s claims. Even the planes and ships that test its defences have become a routine provocation. But the recent moves to criminalise support for it are unnerving Taiwanese who live and work in China, and those back home. “I am currently planning to speed up my departure,” a Taiwanese businesswoman based in China said – this was soon after the Supreme Court ushered in changes allowing life imprisonment and even the death penalty for those guilty of advocating for Taiwanese independence.

“I don’t think that is making a mountain out of a molehill. The line is now very unclear,” says Prof Chen Yu-Jie, a legal scholar at Taiwan’s Academia Sinica. China’s Taiwan Affairs Office was quick to assure the 23 million Taiwanese that this is not targeted at them, but at an “extremely small number of hard-line independence activists”. The “vast majority of Taiwanese compatriots have nothing to fear,” the office said. But wary Taiwanese say they don’t want to test that claim. The BBC has spoken to several Taiwanese who live and work in China who said they were either planning to leave soon or had already left. Few were willing to be interviewed on record; none wanted to be named.

“Any statement you make now could be misinterpreted and you could be



reported. Even before this new law China was already encouraging people to report on others,” the businesswoman said. That was made official last week when Chinese authorities launched a website identifying Taiwanese public figures deemed “die hard” separatists. The site included an email address where people could send “clues and crimes” about those who had been named, or anyone else they suspected.

Scholars believe Beijing hopes to emulate the success of Hong Kong’s national security laws, which it said were necessary for stability – but they have crushed the city’s pro-democracy movement as former lawmakers, activists and ordinary citizens critical of

the government have been jailed under them. By making pro-Taiwanese sentiments a matter of national security, Beijing hopes to “cut off the movement’s ties with the outside world and to divide society in Taiwan between those who support Taiwan independence and those who do not”, Prof Chen says.

She believes the guidance from the Supreme Court will almost certainly result in prosecutions of some Taiwanese living in China. “This opinion has been sent to all levels of law enforcement nationwide. So this is a way of saying to them – we want to see more cases like this being prosecuted, so go and find one.” “We must be even more cautious,” said a Taiwanese man

based in Macau. He said he had always been prepared for threats, but the new legal guidance had made his friends “express concern” about his future in the Chinese city.

“In recent years, patriotic education has become prevalent in Macau, with more assertive statements on Taiwan creating a more tense atmosphere compared to pre-pandemic times,” he added. Taiwan, which has powerful allies in the US, the EU and Japan, rejects Beijing’s plans for “reunification” – but fears have been growing that China’s Xi Jinping has sped up the timeline to take the island, an avowed goal of the Chinese Communist Party. For more than 30 years Taiwanese companies - iPhone-maker Foxconn, advanced chips giant TSMC and electronics behemoth Acer – have played a key role in China’s growth. The prosperity also brought Taiwanese from across the strait who were in search of jobs and brighter prospects.

“I absolutely loved Shanghai when I first moved there. It felt so much bigger, more exciting, more cosmopolitan than Taipei,” says Zoe Chu*. She spent more than a decade in Shanghai managing foreign musicians who were in high demand from clubs and venues in cities across China. This was the mid-2000s when China was booming, drawing money and people from across the globe. Shanghai was at the heart of it - bigger, shinier and trendier than any other Chinese city.

“My Shanghainese friends were dismissive of Beijing. They called it the big northern village,” Ms Chu recalls. “Shanghai was the place to be. It had the best restaurants, the best nightclubs, the

coolest people. I felt like such a country bumpkin, but I learned fast.” By the end of that decade – in 2009 - more than 400,000 Taiwanese lived in China. By 2022, that number had plummeted to 177,000, according to official figures from Taiwan.

“China had changed,” says Ms Chu, who left Shanghai in 2019. She now works for a medical company in Taipei and has no plans to return. “I am Taiwanese,” she explains. “It’s no longer safe for us there.” The Taiwanese exodus has been driven by the same things that have pushed huge numbers of foreigners to leave China – a sluggish economy, growing hostility between Beijing and Washington and, most of all, the sudden and sweeping lockdowns during the Covid pandemic.

But Taiwanese in China have also been worried because the government doesn’t see them as “foreigners”, which makes them especially vulnerable to state repression. Senior Taiwanese officials have told the BBC that 15 Taiwanese nationals are currently being held in China for various alleged crimes, “including violations of the anti-secession law”. In 2019, China jailed a Taiwanese businessman for espionage after he was caught taking photos of police officers in Shenzhen – a charge he denied. He was only released last year. In April 2023, China confirmed that it had arrested a Taiwan-based publisher for “endangering national security”. He still remains in custody.

Amy Hsu*, who once lived and worked in China, says she is now scared to even visit because of her job. After returning to Taiwan, she began volun-

teering at an NGO which helped people who had fled Hong Kong to settle in Taiwan. “It is definitely more dangerous for me now,” she says. “In 2018, they began using surveillance cameras to fine people for jaywalking and the system could identify your face and send the fine directly to your address.”

She says the extent of surveillance disturbed her – and she worries it can be used to go after even visitors, especially those on a list of potential offenders. “Oh I am definitely on the list. I am a headline pro-independence [guy] with lots of ideas,” chuckles Robert Tsao, a 77-year-old tech billionaire, who founded one of Taiwan’s largest chip-makers, United Micro-electronics Corporation (UMC).

Mr Tsao was born in Beijing, but today he supports Taiwan independence and avoids not just China, but also Hong Kong, Macau, Thailand and even Singapore. Mr Tsao was not always hostile to China. He was one of the first Taiwanese investors to set up advanced chip-making factories in China. But he says the crackdown in Hong Kong changed his mind: “It was so free and vibrant and now it’s gone. And they want to do the same to us here.” “This new ruling is actually helping people like me,” he says. He believes it will backfire, increasing the resolve of Taiwanese people to resist China. “They say the new law will only affect a few hard-line independence supporters like me, but so many Taiwanese people either support independence or the status quo [keep things as they are], which is the same thing, so we have all become criminals.”

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Countries should listen when people vote with their feet

At crunch time, people vote with their feet. Mass migration can tell us as much about our world as the most sophisticated geopolitical analysis. Continuous movements of populations, over centuries and millennia, have shaped history and will influence the future. This is as good an indication as any of where things are going, involving millions of individual and collective decisions. There is a buildup of excitement as we approach the 16th BRICS Summit in the Russian city of Kazan during the last week of August. In times like these, when change is in the air, we are told that a new world order will emerge. Countries in BRICS — an association of states initiated by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — are on the rise, while the old-world order dominated by the US and the West is on the decline.

This is not hard to believe, and we are given overwhelming evidence by economists, political scientists and masses of analysts. We are warned that we will witness “gigantic geopolitical shifts” as imminently as the coming year. But if that is the case, why are people and money moving in the opposite direction to the change? Do we trust what people think, what they say or what they do? The three are not necessarily the same. It is a bit like choosing a restaurant in Chinatown — I pick the busiest one that has the most people. I can never match the amount of information that has been processed by the dozens of people who end up filling the restaurant. Waiting a few minutes for a table beats having to browse through endless reviews and guides. If enough people voted with their feet and chose that very restaurant, this is good enough reason for me to pick it.

Even if you cannot compare countries to a restaurant or the choice of a meal, the decision to emigrate is more significant and involves more skin in the game. The choice to uproot oneself and family, and move to a strange land, may be far more indicative, and carries a strong message. Before the 20th century travel was harder, more time consuming and expensive. But there were fewer borders and regulations. We now live in nation states that have far more barriers even if travel is easier, faster and cheaper. Migration has also become one of the most burning issues in the Western world.

The decision to emigrate is a complex one taken by millions. The process involves economic, political, psychological and emotional elements. It can be based on something as irrational as a spirit of adventure or a difficult choice involving both push and pull factors, but there are also many intangible elements. In the jargon of international organizations like the World Bank, we are at a phase of “disorderly migration.” What this translates to is a massive movement of populations, tragedies of epic proportions, across seas and through jungles, with migrants exploited by people smugglers, starved, robbed, raped, drowned and arrested. In plain language it is people voting with their feet in search of a better life.

The world will be a different place for the next generation due to demographic change. If it were true that the West was in decline and the East and South were rising, the direction of emigration would be from the US and Europe to India, China, Iran and Brazil. When was the last time anyone you know emigrated to Russia, the land of opportunity?

Modern-day migration can be risky; barriers set up by nation states try to slow it down but in the end push people toward illegal journeys, through a surging industry of people smuggling. According to the International Organization for Migration data portal, 2023 was the deadliest year in migration routes worldwide, with 8,000 recorded fatalities, double the annual average of the previous 10 years. There are plenty of videos posted by migrants walking through jungles with horror stories of exploitation, abuse, illness and families being separated. Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery; the numbers are significant and they are also a measure of desperation by people who want to move to the West at any cost.

One interesting example close to home is the migration of Hezbollah supporters from south Lebanon. They listen to speeches by Hassan Nasrallah about the greatness of Iran and its allies, and how they are going to defeat the West and its Arab allies in the Gulf States at the same time as they emigrate en masse to these countries. Instead of emigrating to Russia and Iran, we see them moving to the US, Western Europe and the Gulf states. Again, what they do is probably different from what they think and what they say. Even more significant is the movement of capital — millionaires and their money, commonly referred to as high-net-worth individuals. Observing the movement of HNWIs across the globe is important. According to the Henley Private Wealth Migration report, a significant proportion of HNWIs are entrepreneurs, especially the multi-millionaires or billionaires among them, and countries that attract HNWIs from other parts of the world may see powerful benefits like job creation and investment. Mapping of such HNWI movement forecasts that the UAE will attract the most millionaires in 2024, while China and the UK are expected to lose the largest number.

What is more significant for our purpose is that the BRICS countries that are supposed to be on the rise are among the biggest losers of millionaires. HNWIs are escaping Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa mainly for Canada and the US, but also to countries in Europe such as Switzerland, Greece, Italy and Portugal, while in the Far East the attraction is Singapore. The BRICS Summit is being held in Russia this year for a good reason. At the 2023 meeting in Johannesburg, Russian President Vladimir Putin had to dial in and appear via video conference in order to avoid embarrassing the South African hosts. The International Criminal Court had issued a warrant for his arrest and the South Africans would have been obliged to arrest him. At the end of August, while reading and listening to news from the BRICS Summit and the claims of coming geopolitical shifts, we have to bear in mind that populations, both rich and poor, are moving in the opposite direction.

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Ukraine’s Russia advance changes war narrative

Luke Coffey

FOR the first time in more than 80 years, Russian territory has been invaded. Ukrainian forces crossed the state border in a surprise move, entering the Kursk Oblast with thousands of troops and hundreds of armored vehicles.

There has been heavy fighting, with Russia scrambling to reinforce the area. The Ukrainians have captured more than 70 villages. More than 130,000 Russian civilians have been displaced since Ukraine launched its operation on Aug. 6. According to open-source intelligence, Ukraine now controls approximately 1,000 square kilometers of Russian territory — an area slightly larger than Bahrain. While Ukraine’s audacious military operation may have caught some off guard, the location and timing of this offensive were far from coincidental.

Kursk Oblast has deep historical ties to Ukrainian culture. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Ukrainian peasants, Cossacks, and other settlers were granted “slobodas” in what is now modern-day Kursk, Belgorod and Voronezh oblasts in Russia, and Sumy and Kharkiv oblasts in Ukraine. This region was known as Sloboda Ukraine. These slobodas enjoyed significant governing autonomy and tax-free status, fostering a unique cultural identity that is still evident to this day. Although accurate census data is scarce, it is believed that tens of thousands of ethnic Ukrainians currently reside in Russia’s Kursk Oblast. Consequently, a military operation in Kursk resonates positively, emotionally and sentimentally with the Ukrainian public.

Kursk Oblast is also home to crucial transport links, including major highways for the movement of military supplies and troops. The Sudzha gas terminal, critical for the remaining Russian natural gas exports to Europe, is in Kursk Oblast. Ukrainians control the terminal, but there has been no noticeable reduction in gas flow thus far. The Kursk railway hub connects central Russia with southwestern regions, including the border areas near Ukraine, making it vital for logistical support. Ukrainian military planners

were undoubtedly aware of the logistical importance of Kursk.

Another important consideration was the terrain. The topography of Kursk Oblast near the Ukrainian border is suitable for the type of warfare involving armored vehicles and tanks that Ukraine is conducting. This facilitated Ukraine’s rapid advance. After all, Kursk was the site of a

months since the US Congress passed its most recent aid package for Ukraine. It probably took this amount of time for the Ukrainians to feel the positive impact of the aid in terms of equipment, weapons and munitions arriving from the US.

Weather conditions also played a crucial role in the timing. If traditional weather patterns hold, an August

Ukraine hoping to achieve by invading Russia? The first goal is to change the narrative of the war. In recent months, the conflict has been characterized as a stalemate. Russia has made minor territorial gains in Donetsk and Ukraine looks like it is on the back foot. By entering Russia and seizing territory, Ukraine now appears to have the upper hand in the conflict, shifting the war narrative in international media in a way that is more favorable to Kyiv.

The Kursk railway hub connects central Russia with southwestern regions, including the border areas near Ukraine, making it vital for logistical support. Ukrainian military planners were undoubtedly aware of the logistical importance of Kursk. Another important consideration was the terrain. The topography of Kursk Oblast near the Ukrainian border is suitable for the type of warfare involving armored vehicles and tanks that Ukraine is conducting. This facilitated Ukraine’s rapid advance. After all, Kursk was the site of a major Second World War battle, the largest tank battle in history. The timing of Ukraine’s military operation is also no coincidence. Most of the world was distracted, at least initially. It is well known that many Europeans treat August as a vacation month. August is a big political month in the US during an election year and focus in the States has been on the race for the presidency.

major Second World War battle, the largest tank battle in history.

The timing of Ukraine’s military operation is also no coincidence. Most of the world was distracted, at least initially. It is well known that many Europeans treat August as a vacation month. August is a big political month in the US during an election year and focus in the States has been on the race for the presidency. Meanwhile, much of the world was engrossed in the Olympic Games.

From a logistical standpoint, the timing also made sense. It has been four

campaign gives Ukraine enough time to make advances but may not allow Russia sufficient time to counterattack before the muddy season arrives in the fall. In 2022, Ukraine launched its highly successful Kherson counteroffensive in August too.

Although probably more of a coincidence than anything else, it is worth noting that Ukraine’s Kursk operation also began during the same week as the anniversary of Russia’s 2008 invasion of Georgia. Evidence on social media shows Georgian volunteers fighting alongside Ukraine inside Russia. So, what is

Four big challenges from Türkiye’s aging population

Sinem Cengiz

As the global population ages, once proud of its people’s youth, is also facing a significant aging population issue that is gradually undermining its economy. Population aging is a critical issue for developed countries around the world, many of which are experiencing severe declines in their populations. Developed countries such as China, Japan, Germany and other European nations are addressing this challenge through socio-economic programs, as an aging population profoundly affects both social life and the economy.

Developing countries like Türkiye are also beginning to face this issue. While Türkiye is still categorized as having a young population, its demographic advantage is diminishing day by day, as the country rapidly heads toward the aging crisis experienced by all developed countries. Türkiye was previously reliant on its youthful demographic during its bid for EU membership, with this segment of the population being a key factor in its stability. However, this advantage has started to fade.

According to population projections, the proportion of young people in Türkiye’s population could fall below 10 percent between 2050 and 2100. Currently, with a young population rate of 15.1 percent, Türkiye is slightly below the global average of 15.5 percent. According to 2023 statistics, the fertility rate (number of children per woman) was 1.51, down from 1.63 the previous year. To maintain a stable population, this ratio must be above 2.1. Since 2001, when the fertility rate was 2.38, there has been a sharp decline. The current rate of 1.51 is even lower than the US rate of 1.61. So, why and how did Türkiye, which had a youth advantage, reach this point?

Several factors contribute to this trend. First, economic conditions play a major role in declining fertility rate as young people avoid having children due to financial uncertainty and the high cost of living, including education and child-rearing. Almost one-third of Türkiye’s population is at risk of poverty or social exclusion, according to a recent report published by the Turkish Statistical Institute.

Second, brain drain, which also is related to economic issues, exacerbates the situation. Türkiye, unfortunately, has failed to fully capitalize on its youthful demographic. Economic instability, limited job opportunities and political uncertainties have driven many young, qualified individuals to seek better opportunities abroad, which negatively affects the local labor market, contributing to a decrease in the youth population.

Third, changing societal attitudes toward family life are also a factor. Modern society’s shift toward individualism, higher costs and lifestyle changes have led to smaller family sizes. There are also problems such as living costs, but the main issue concerns personal preferences of individuals delaying having children for career or personal reasons, leading to a shrinking youth population.

Fourth, some families are reluctant to have children in a society experiencing high levels of immigration, which is believed to create an insecure environment for raising children. The sensitivity of Turkish society toward immigration issues has become increasingly apparent in recent years.

Since the 2000s, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly urged Turkish families to have at least three children, highlighting that a nation’s strength lies in its families and their size. While many leaders view this as a serious issue, such calls must be supported by effective programs to have a real impact, or else will fall on deaf ears. Promoting family-friendly policies, such as extended parental leave, childcare support and housing benefits, is crucial. In 2015, the Turkish government initiated the Program on Protection of Family and Dynamic Population Structure to provide further incentives for working women to have children. The program was launched as part of labor law reforms. This year, the Ministry of Family and Social Services, in collaboration with the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, has begun work on proposals to extend maternity leave, provide financial aid for childcare and offer housing support, among other benefits.

Supporting youth employment is also essential to encourage young people to stay in Türkiye and start families. Brain drain will continue to affect fertility rates and human capital formation in Türkiye. Furthermore, the approach to working women should be reassessed. There is a stigma in Türkiye that childless women are “deficient” or “incomplete.” Instead, policies that help women that want to be mothers balance work and family life could yield positive results.

On existing trends, Türkiye may face challenges similar to those experienced by Europe in the coming decades. According to the main scenario, Türkiye’s young population is expected to number about 9.1 million by 2050. The proportion of young people among the total population is anticipated to decrease to 9.66 percent during this period.

There are several challenges for Türkiye in the future that are likely to impact various aspects of society and the economy. The first is the decline in economic growth and productivity due to the shrinking working-age population. The second is demographic imbalance; the decreasing fertility rate could potentially lead to Turks becoming a minority in their own country within the next generation. The demographic imbalance is also related to the balance between the old and young population. Third, a smaller population will impact military power, as military service relies on a young population. Last, the decline in population will contribute to an increase in loneliness and produce adverse psychological effects within society. The aging population presents challenges and potential consequences. Addressing this issue should be a top priority, with effective strategies.

Arab News

A just and sustainable peace in Sudan is possible

Hussein Awad Ali

A tragedy is unfolding in Sudan as a result of the brutal proxy war the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia has been waging on the Sudanese people and state since April 2023. This war seeks to reshape Sudan, its state, demography, and potentially its borders to further the agenda of an avaricious regional power, with the tacit approval or indifference of certain global actors.

The international community is fully aware of the unspeakable atrocities the RSF has committed against our people over the course of this war. Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) is fully capable of defeating the RSF and putting an end to these grave violations of international law. Our forces are fighting with an unwavering determination to restore peace and stability, repair national unity, and enable our people to rebuild their lives. But we need more from the international com-

munity to end this war.

This war would not have lasted this long without the logistical, political, and media support the RSF receives from certain regional countries. We in Sudan, therefore, call upon all peace-loving nations, as well as international and regional organisations, to unequivocally condemn external interference in Sudan’s internal affairs and demand these countries cease supporting the rebel militia with money, weapons, and mercenaries. We believe this is the shortest path to ending the war.

We also appeal to all nations, particularly our valued allies, to condemn the crimes and atrocities committed by the RSF, along with its serious violations of international humanitarian law. The militia’s breach of the Jeddah Declaration on the protection of civilians and the delivery of relief warrants a decisive and deterrent international response. Sudan welcomes all serious initiatives aimed at

restoring peace and stability. However, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the Jeddah platform as the forum for negotiating a ceasefire. We insist on implementing the resolutions of the Jeddah platform, which include protecting civilians and allowing them to return to their homes as a prerequisite for reaching a final agreement on a ceasefire. The Jeddah Declaration remains the only binding and practical framework for addressing humanitarian issues and protecting civilians. It provides the most feasible basis for a ceasefire and lasting peace. Had it been implemented in good faith at the time of its signing, just four weeks after the war began, it could have led to an early peaceful settlement. Any attempt to undermine or overlook it will further derail the peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Unfortunately, the lenient or empathetic attitude of several influential members of

the international community towards the RSF’s disregard for the Jeddah Declaration and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 2736 (2024), serves to allow the militia to buy time and avoid making a commitment to peace.

While we continue our efforts to bring peace, security and stability to the Sudanese people, we remain committed to protecting and delivering aid to those in need. Despite the militia’s concerted campaign to starve the population in certain regions of the country, Sudan is not currently facing an imminent famine.

The militia is trying to stop farming in key food-producing regions by stealing agricultural machinery, targeting harvests, blocking irrigation canals, terrorising farmers, obstructing relief deliveries, and looting warehouses. Nevertheless, according to the latest joint survey conducted

by the Ministry of Agriculture and UN specialised agencies, there is only a minor deficit in staple grains in the country, which occasionally happens even in times of peace, due to different reasons, such as rain shortage.

As a contingency plan, we will cultivate sufficient quantities of sorghum, the main staple grain, in safe states, even those where it is not traditionally grown. For wheat, which is primarily consumed in urban centres, the country will continue to rely on imports. Some are trying to portray the humanitarian challenges our country is facing as dependent on a particular border corridor, but this is highly misleading. Currently, five border corridors are open for aid passage, in addition to seven international airports ready to receive aid flights. The recent statement by Doctors Without Borders (known by its French initials, MSF) on the seizure of its trucks loaded with medicines and therapeutic food supplies

by the RSF near el-Fasher, after crossing from Chad, highlighted yet again that the real problem lies not in the closure of any specific entry point, but the militias widespread efforts to obstruct aid delivery. As such, Sudan calls on the international community and relief organisations to fulfil their pledges of humanitarian assistance to our country. So far, only about 17 percent of these pledges have been realised.

Despite all the challenges we face, we remain determined to achieve the goals of the glorious December 2019 Revolution, put our country on the path to democracy, and form a transitional government once the war is over. The primary tasks of this government are disbanding all militias in favour of a unified national army, and holding free and fair general elections, allowing the Sudanese people to choose their leaders and express their hopes and aspirations for a better future.

Aljazeera

Effects of uncontrolled urbanization and our misplaced priorities

Ghazala Anbreen

URBAN migration is movement of people from rural areas to cities. Urban development is carried out through elected governments and through mayors. A flawed urban planning leads to many complexities. The goal of urban planners is to assess public spaces such as areas, parks etc. They create blueprints for public buildings and city parks through the use of GIS or AutoCAD.

It may be the job of one designer to change the original blueprint proposed by someone else. Urban Development is an act to improved living conditions of the people. It means inclusive involving of people and creating opportunities for all the people not focusing on any particular age group or income group.

Urban development includes all the ways through which cities grow and change. It includes infrastructure creations, development of social and cultural amenities. Urban development can be organic. It is an act for improving living conditions of the people. It means inclusive involvement of the people and creating opportunities for all the people not focusing on any particular age group or income group. When people move to cities they create new communities.

One important aspect related to urban development is the safety. Public spaces should be safe. Jane Jacobs in 1961 in her book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” has highlighted many facts about why safety of cities is necessary. Even in Islamabad there are some commercial markets where by development of social and cultural amenities, creating infrastructure options and building apartments these may be made safer at odd times also.

Uncontrolled urbanization leads to urban inequality which poses many challenges as for instance, poverty and environmental degradation. Insufficient water availability is another consequence. Increasing population density creates urban areas to expand out of proportion and thus poverty increases as local government cannot provide services to all the people. Automotive exhausts increase carbon level. Rapid urbanization and high population growth have led to mobility constraints. Traffic congestion also occurs because of this. However, mobility outcome could have been better had the cities been planned better.

Job responsibilities of an urban designer include research in design plans for existing spaces and utilize data on spatial dimensions, going to work sides, checking on the progress and ensuring everything matches the blueprint. It should be planned in such a way to promote sustainability and provision of health and education facilities.

Rapid population growth demands services and analyzing data based on maps and population densities. In Pakistan the lack

of affordable housing by the state for people has led to emergence of informal settlements and slums. The young man barely in his twenties, who comes daily to pick waste bag told me they are eight siblings and so far, he himself has seven kids of his own. All of these people living together, and I can only imagine the condition of their living space.

Among some reasons denoting to this immense sky rocketing housing prices is land speculation. One plot is sold multiple times, and the price goes on rising. State authorities should curb this practice strictly. Construction activity should be incentivized. The need to introduce low-cost housing schemes for those who cannot afford expensive homes is something the government should pay serious attention to.

When value creation is better on the lands, the quality of life is refined. I myself live in the poshest area of the country. But due to absence of proper landscaping and poor maintenance I do not feel like going for walks. We must modernize our residential areas and make it conducive for people to go out for walks with convenience and enjoy their surroundings. Hence living conditions for urban dwellers must be improved. Adoption of modern technology is essential, and we should get rid of notion of adopting foreign skills as bête noir. We have to become a part of the global economy which has now reached a value of approximately 100 trillion dollars.

City planners have also emphasized the importance of urban trees as a measure to heighten resilience to pollution and natural disasters. Since 1967 Singapore government has planted millions of trees and vegetation which now cover over 50 percent land mass. Thus, the need of using air condition has also decreased Here a quote of Khalil Jibran is worth quoting, “Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky” Plantation is essential for fighting the adverse effects of climate change. Research says that “Trees act like natural sponge absorbing storm water. Their roots help prevent foods. Their porous leaves purify air by trapping carbon. It has also been proven that presence of green foliage increases attention span and releases stress.

Affordable housing does not mean they should be out of the city. We have to create opportunities. Planning for all should be there. Local governments should be strengthened, and resources should be given to them. All the societies which are being developed fulfil needs of only 5 percent of the people. The marginalized groups harbor a feeling of being socially excluded. For creating affordability, we should go vertical. Instead of horizontal expansion we have to go towards vertical expansion. There must be an economic development office to have a core focus on increasing commercial space in the cities.

From 10 to 15 percent commercial space should be there. Government should try to encourage the technology startups and try to create coworking spaces and digital spaces on the land.

Along with making flyovers and bridges, focus should also be on creating prospects for entrepreneurship. We have to see our research centers and universities work on research in science and technology so that jobs are created. Urbanization is both a challenge and an opportunity for our management. Safe cities will include the increased provision of public transport and creation of safe public spaces for women. Cities get safe with inclusive planning.

If a one canal plot is in possession of someone and he pays tax, it will be by one person only but if there are apartments and there are more houses then the taxes will increase. Water, transportation, health and education are the responsibilities of the state and should be provided to citizens. Rapid population growth demands services but increasing population density creates urban areas to swell, and this can lead to greater poverty as local government cannot provide services to all the people. Already we witness insufficient water supply for the masses. Automotive exhausts increase carbon level. Due to pollution and physical barriers animal production also suffers from a decline. Urban inequality is a challenge so is the poverty and environmental degradation. Traffic congestion, rapid urbanization and high population growth have led to mobility constraints. Mobility outcomes could have been better had the cities been planned better. Urban transportation planning requires data and analytics. This transportation must be affordable, efficient and safe. Parking spaces are lacking and should have been included when hospitals or other public sector buildings were constructed.

WHO has issued guidelines to ensure urban planning in the way to improve public health. Daily 30 minutes’ walk has a huge benefit. We need to change our lifestyles. We do not walk even 15 minutes. Our footpaths are most often encroached on by the vendors. Cycling culture is also almost nonexistent. People should be encouraged to walk, Separate lanes should be there for the cyclists. When planning a town there must be a provision for schools, cinemas and public libraries. As our priorities were misplaced so most often, we did not think on these aspects that there must be spaces allocated for schools and parks. There must be provisions relating to the need of common rooms and playgrounds in the schools.

Urbanization requires opening avenues for opening economic development office in every city and its core focus should be on providing jobs. This is necessary for a sustainable living condition.

The promise of jobs and prosperity are the factors that push people to migrate to urban areas. Public transport should be increased and safe public spaces for women should be created.

For effective urban development state has to take responsibility for ensuring provision of public transportation, garbage disposal, Sewerage disposal water supply for the citizens, if you do not have public transport, you force women not to be inclusive and deprive them from contributing in economic and social development. Because of massive shortage of housing the intelligentsia asks what is the point of making farmhouses when the reports of even three families living in one room home are there because of sheer space constraints in larger cities. “If proper measures are not adopted cities will continue to be dumping grounds for surplus rural labor”.

Local and sustainable production is required. Affordable, efficient, and safe solutions for mobility are essential. Urbanization is important to create a harmonious and egalitarian society based on merit which has the capacity to break the apartheid structure. It is point to ponder that in Pakistan town planning legislation does not exist. In the book “cities of tomorrow” by Peter Hall, the writer has discussed in detail about urban planning in the context of economic and social challenges. Unfortunately, enforcements of plans are rare in our country. Urban representations in the parliament should be increased.

We have an agrarian economy. Agricultural land is being converted for urban use. Fertile lands should be banned for use as housing societies. Housing is a very basic need but unfortunately land has become a market trade good. So is water which should be free for all but most of the people have to buy their own water and have to pay for getting their kids educated and spend thousands of rupees when somebody gets ill in the form of payment to doctors and buying medicines. Education, health and clean water should be free owing to payment of taxes.

Smaller cities should be developed, and municipal precincts should be established. We have to develop a system of cities. Incentives and amenities in remote cities must be provided in order to discourage the massive migration of people from rural to urban areas. We can achieve this by providing means of easy, comfortable and reliable means of commutation to the daily commuters from far flung areas to bigger cities by modernizing the transport network. Urban Transportaion planning requires data and analytics. A regional system has to be created for this. Otherwise, urban development in larger cities will become completely unmanageable. Avoiding condensation at one place thus must be avoided by creating a regional and urban plan.

Kursk attack has humiliated Putin

Orysia Lutsevych

WHEN video footage of the Ukrainian incursion into Russia's Kursk region began appearing on social media, a joke started doing the rounds with Vladimir Putin asking Stalin what he should do about the German tanks rolling towards Kursk. Stalin's ghost responds that the recipe for victory is simple: send the best Ukrainian divisions into battle, like he did in 1943, and then ask the Americans for tanks and money. But neither of these options is available to Putin. He is now facing the Ukrainian army on his own soil, and regards the US as his primary enemy.

Every year since the Russian invasion, Ukraine has surprised the world. First, at the very start of the war in 2022, its forces repelled a Russian assault on the capital, Kyiv. Then, in 2023, they liberated Kherson. Now, their tanks are rolling in to Russian territory. Ukrainian armed forces have been advancing for the past 10 days. They already control about 1,000 sq km of land and more than 80 settlements. Russian flags have been taken down; in the city of Sudzha, a military administration has been set up to govern the territory, and hundreds of prisoners of war have been captured.

Kyiv's territorial gains, in contrast to the size of Russia's territory, are, of course, small. The Ukrainian army has taken the equivalent of about 10% of Greater London. The Kursk incursion may not be a decisive battle in this war, but it radically changes the prevailing narrative about how it is being fought and how it might end. It strikes at the root of the Kremlin's strategy, which has been to have the west “freely reason to a conclusion that Russia's prevailing in Ukraine is inevitable and that we must stay on the sidelines”, according to the Institute for the Study of War.

The Kremlin has been successful with this narrative since the start of the

war. As a result, the west only cautiously armed Ukrainian troops, and imposed restrictions on the use of its weapons systems, forcing Ukraine to fight with one hand tied behind its back. Meanwhile, Putin amassed troops and equipment and rained hell on the eastern frontline by launching glide bombs from Russian airbases, knowing Ukraine couldn't strike back before the planes began their attacks.

The Kursk offensive is flipping this narrative in Kyiv's favour. It demonstrates that this war is not a stalemate. In recent months, the Ukrainian forces have carried out a number of dynamic operations. One of their most significant victories is clearing the Black Sea for commercial navigation by destroying 30% of the Russian fleet and pushing the remaining ships back to bases in the Sea of Azov. Meticulous drone strikes that destroyed sophisticated Russian air defences and targeted airfields on the Crimean peninsula have also been an integral part of this campaign.

Deep inside Russia, more than 30 of the largest oil refineries have been under consistent attack since March. This has led to a drop in oil production and a 30% decrease in sales of diesel. Now, with Kursk, there are enemy forces occupying Russian territory for the first time since the second world war. Ukraine has apparently captured more Russian land than Russia has captured inside Ukraine since the start of 2024.

Kursk also dispels the narrative that this war should only be fought on Ukrainian soil, and that, somehow, Ukraine could prevail by attacking Russian positions only inside its own borders. The US and Germany have been especially reluctant to allow the use of longer-range missiles to strike into Russia out of fear of escalation, so Ukraine has had to rely on its drones. This has played into Russia's hands, allowing it to launch new incursions into Ukraine

from its border regions. By stretching Ukrainian defences, Russia was hoping to make faster gains in Donbas.

The Ukrainian army is now deploying similar tactics. The events of the past 10 days have demonstrated that Ukraine can walk across Russian red lines with impunity. Official US sources report that Russia has had to move some of its troops out of Donbas to stage a counterattack in Kursk. The offensive has also broken a taboo about the use of western kit inside Russia, which seems to be having an effect: the White House is reportedly considering providing long-range missiles to accompany the F-16 jets it has already sent. These could significantly complicate Russia's attempts to reclaim its territory.

Ultimately, Kursk provides the best possible response to the perhaps well-meaning but ultimately dangerous argument that Ukraine must end this war by exchanging its territory for peace, which was always premised on the belief that Ukraine couldn't compete on the battlefield. Pushing Ukraine to compromise, to accept the annexation of its lands, and to stop seeking justice for this war, fundamentally misjudges the determination of the Ukrainian people and the strength of their army. This incursion shows that they are capable of military triumphs, and that western assistance pays off. It is the military theatre, not the negotiating table, that will define the outcome of this war.

Will Ukraine be able to fully exploit its Kursk success? Its soldiers are consolidating the territory they've seized, digging defences and still advancing where they can. The Russians are preparing to launch a counterattack and build new defence lines to halt Kyiv's advance. The episode has become a humiliation for Putin, and Kyiv will hope to capitalise on this, and to compel western governments to commit further resources. The new game begins.

The Guardian

The best climate policy puts carrots before sticks

Monika Schnitzer & Cernot Wagner

IT is widely recognized that the transition to a zero-carbon economy requires both carrots and sticks — incentives and penalties. Less appreciated is the importance of this sequence: carrots before sticks. True, economists have long insisted that the only way to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases rapidly and at scale is to put a price on them. In a world where burning fossil fuels causes more damage than it adds in value to gross domestic product, each ton of coal or barrel of oil consumed ultimately destroys collective prosperity.

Calculations of these emissions' social costs provide a guide to pricing them. Accounting for the full damages caused by each ton of carbon dioxide emitted, an appropriate price is well over \$200. But that comes out to almost \$2 per gallon (or 50 cents per liter) of gasoline at the pump, which helps to explain why, for example, neither Europe's well-functioning carbon market (with prices of around \$75 per ton) nor Germany's own carbon tax covers gasoline to the extent needed. In Germany, where 80 million people own 40 million gasoline and diesel-powered cars, an adequately high tax would appear too punitive to pass political muster.

These calculations also explain why electric vehicles are such an important solution. The technology's advantage lies in basic physics: EVs convert 90 percent of their power into distance, compared with just 20 percent for internal combustion engines. That last example is particularly instructive, since the transition to LEDs is already mostly complete. Given that incandescent bulbs were notoriously inefficient — converting 90 percent of power to heat instead of light — switching to LEDs has paid for itself many times over. But even this common-sense change required coordination to achieve scale, and to overcome barriers such as high upfront costs and landlords' unwillingness to provide more efficient bulbs to tenants.

In the US, it started with the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, signed into law by President George W. Bush, which set new efficiency standards for household lightbulbs. That triggered a typical culture-war response, with the Republican congresswoman Michele Bachmann introducing the Light Bulb Freedom of Choice Act in 2008. Fortunately, her bill went nowhere, and nor did President Donald Trump's attempts to abolish efficiency standards a decade later. LEDs had already taken over as the better, more efficient, and ultimately cheaper technology. Physics and economics trumped culture wars, and both consumers and the planet benefited as a result.

The transitions to EVs, heat pumps, induction stoves, and many other newer, better technologies are now following similar, and similarly rapid, trajectories. While the cost of coal power in inflation-adjusted terms has stayed roughly the same for more than 200 years, the costs of solar power and batteries have declined by more than 99 percent in the past 30 years alone. In fact, solar is now the cheapest source of electricity ever — yes, even accounting for the fact that the sun does not shine at night — and it is bound to become even cheaper. Sun, sand, and human innovation are all plentiful, leading to further economies of scale.

But, like LED adoption, rapid solar deployment requires coordination among households, utilities, regulators, industry, and those developing new technologies. After all, the goal is to have plug-in EVs charging when the sun shines, and powering the dishwasher or helping to stabilize the local grid when it does not.

Coordination is also needed to encourage purchases of solar panels and other technologies in the first place. When Germany launched its ambitious Energiewende (energy transition) in 2011, feed-in tariffs and other subsidies helped solar-panel manufacturers climb the learning curve and drive down costs. Solar manufacturers then decamped to China, however,

which drove costs down further, but hurt German employment. And now, massive new US subsidies under the Inflation Reduction Act may lead more European clean-tech businesses to look to greener shores, this time across the Atlantic. The proper response to these developments is not to give up on newer, more efficient technologies. It is to find other ways to manufacture and deploy them at home. The EU ban on sales of cars powered by internal combustion engines beginning in 2035 will help, as would a coordinated push to support adoption of heat pumps.

New York State, for example, has banned gas connections to most new buildings — a measure that Germany has yet to pass — thus gradually reducing its reliance on a fossil-fuel source while stopping short of taxing it. Minnesota, under the leadership of Gov. Tim Walz, now the Democratic candidate for the vice presidency, has similarly passed a law requiring utilities to achieve 60-80 percent carbon-free electricity by 2030, and 100 percent by 2040, up from around 50 percent today. The law is implemented with a flexible renewable portfolio standard, but it is still largely a stick. The carrot: \$2 billion in clean-energy subsidies, as part of the state's comprehensive action plan.

Not all goes so smoothly. Though Gov. Kathy Hochul's long-awaited plan to introduce congestion pricing in New York City would have funded much-needed public-transit investments, it was seen as putting the stick before the carrot. In the event, she bowed to political pressure and abandoned the plan at the last minute.

The US is facing broader sequencing questions. Now that many of the Inflation Reduction Act subsidies have proven to be wildly popular, when is the right time to follow up the carrot with a stick? The expiration of the Trump tax cuts for the rich next year could be seen as an opportunity finally to start pricing carbon. Of course, all will depend on the outcome of November's presidential election.

Kamala Harris has made a dream start

Jonathan Freedland

EVERYTHING is going right for her and wrong for him. Kamala Harris has the encouraging poll numbers and, more precious still, the momentum. Donald Trump has the serial errors, the maudlin introspection and wobbling campaign team. In less than three weeks, the Democrats have pulled off one of the most extraordinary turn-arounds in US political history, replacing a candidate who was shuffling towards near-certain defeat with one apparently soaring towards possible victory. And yet, even as Harris speaks of bringing the joy, contained within is a lurking danger – a peril that should be all too familiar.

The sources of joy are not mysterious. Democrats are heading to Chicago for a convention that will feel like a party but was set to be a wake. Before 21 July, they were tied to Joe Biden, a man whose presidency has proved far more consequential than most predicted but who was on course to lose and lose badly in November. His passing of the baton to his number two has gone better than anyone had any right to expect.

All but seamlessly, the campaign has switched over – equivalent to rebuilding a plane in mid-air, say seasoned election hands – and the candidate herself has taken to the task with unexpected ease. Twenty years younger and a whole lot more vigorous than her opponent, she has turned what had been Trump's most potent weapon against Biden – age – against Trump himself. He is now the candidate of the past, she the face of the future. Never mind that Harris is a senior member of the present administration, she has shaken off the burden of incumbency – currently a negative in most democracies across the world – and cast herself as the turn-the-page option, aided by a powerful slogan: “We’re not going back.”

The evidence that it's working is in the headline poll numbers, which show her edging ahead in the very battleground states where Biden had been trailing.

Almost overnight, she is winning back the voters who propelled Biden to victory in 2020 but were drifting away from him in 2024: young, Black and Hispanic Americans. Drawing big crowds, inspiring a thousand social-media memes, she is generating something Democrats have not seen since the first Barack Obama campaign of 2008: excitement.

All this is having an equal and opposite effect on Trump. The better her numbers or crowds get, the more gloomy and rattled he becomes, consoling himself with the delusion that photos of Harris's massive audiences are AI fakes. The New Yorker's Susan Glasser depicts Trump as bereft, missing Biden as he pines for the return of the man he knew how to run against. That contest was simple; it was strong v weak, with Biden's age doing the work.

But now Trump faces Harris, and he can't quite work out how to take her on. He can't fix on a nickname, he can't settle on a target. His team wants him to run on immigration and inflation – both Democratic vulnerabilities – but he keeps returning to the terrain he knows best: culture wars and race baiting. Just as he once falsely claimed that Obama was not born in the US, Trump initially offered his theory that only late in life did Harris happen “to turn Black”. He also regularly describes the vice-president as a “low IQ individual”, a phrase he has long applied to Black female politicians. His base may like this talk, but it repels everyone else.

An illustration of the unsettling effect Harris is having on Trump came in the mutual back-scratch he conducted with X magnate Elon Musk this week. “She looks like the most beautiful actress ever to live,” Trump said about a drawing of Harris on the cover of Time magazine. “She looked very much like our great first lady, Melania,” he added, referring to his wife. Along with any listener to that exchange, Trump doesn't know where to put himself.

Because he is knocked off bal-

ance, he keeps stumbling. The Musk encounter was a case in point. After the embarrassment of a tech breakdown that led to a start delayed by 40-plus minutes, Trump rambled for two hours, straying into baffling tangents and frankly weird claims. One example: “global warming” is no threat, because rising sea levels mean “more oceanfront property”. (The real danger, he said, is the warmth of nuclear weapons.) What's more, Trump seemed to speak with a heavy lisp throughout. None of this might matter much in itself, but it shows that Trump is beginning to get some of the same scrutiny of his cognitive and physical capacities that drove Biden to step aside. Put simply, age is now his problem.

So this race is going exactly the way Harris would want it to go. Trump is lashing out at allies and, always a sign of a troubled campaign, shaking up his team. He is saddled with a running mate whose back catalogue would make a Gilead commander blush, while he paints an ever-darkening picture of a US in decline, a nation riddled with crime and overrun by scary invaders. All the while, she is beaming about a brighter tomorrow. As the Republican sage Mike Murphy puts it, “He's doing Volodemort and she's doing Ted Lasso.”

Where, then, is the danger? First, the polling is not quite as rosy as Democrats want it to be. Dig further into the numbers and you see that, despite everything, Donald Trump is more popular now than he was at this same, mid-August point in either 2020 or 2016. His approval rating currently stands at 44%. In August 2016, a paltry 33% of Americans had a positive view of him – but he went on to win.

What's more, in each of the three crucial battleground states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, Harris is ahead by only four points, according to the latest survey. That's welcome progress, to be sure, but it's not enough when you recall that Trump put on nine points



PFMA KP announce to support Business Forum

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Flour Mills Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PFMA-KP) renewed its pledge to support the Businessman Forum in upcoming Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections.

The announcement was made by PFMA-KP Group leader Muhammad Naeem Butt, chairman Haji Muhammad Iqbal, senior leader and office bearers during dinner hosted by the association in honour of BF leader former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, leaders and members of business community here at local hotel, according to a statement here on Saturday.

The BF leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour was chief guest of the event.

SCCI president Fuad Ishaq, senior vice president Sanaullah Khan, vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, former FPCCI president Ghanfar Bilour, Anjuman E Tajran President for Lifetime Haji Muhammad Afzal, former president SCCI Faiz Muhammad

Faizi, former SVP Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Imran Khan Mohmand, former vice presidents Abdul Jalil Jan, Malik Niaz Awan, Muhammad Anees Ashraf, Shuja Muhammad, Fresh Fruit Market President Haji Alaf Jan, executive committee members Pervez Khattak, Ghulam Hussain, Naeem Qasmi, Fazal Mueqem, Muhammad Ismail Safi, Monawar Khurshid, Affaf Ali Khan, Industrialists Association Peshawar Ayub Zakori, Tajir Itehad President Mujeebur Rehman, Tajir Insaif President Shahid Khan, Haji Naseer, Khalid Ayub, Rehman Gul, Habibullah Zahid, traders, industrialists and flour millers were present in a large number on the occasion.

Naeem Butt and Muhammad Iqbal addressed the participants and assured leadership of the Businessman Forum that the association always supported the forum and will continue its support in future as well.

Senior office bearers of the FPMA said Businessman Forum leader Ilyas

Ahmad Bilour has always served the business community without any discrimination, which was visible before all.

Naeem Butt said BF has always taken effective steps regarding resolution of the flour mill industry issues and provided relief to the business community attached with this industry. He claimed that BF will win a clean sweep in SCCI elections.

Fuad Ishaq in his speech on the occasion said under guidance and leadership of Businessman Forum leader former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, all presidents had played a vital role in resolution of business community issues and gained full support of the community.

Furthermore, he said BF had also played an important role in resolution of issues related to GIDC, gas and provision of tax-exemption, five year fiscal relief package, along with other special incentives and facilities to the business community, which enlisted among remarkable achievements of the BF.

The SCCI chief commented on the IPPs agreement, stating that owing to wrong deals, the national economy has been put in a difficult situation.

He called upon the government and relevant institutions to revisit policies and make them business and trade friendly.

Fuad Ishaq said the business community has played an important role in economic development, prosperity and progress, therefore, they should be provided relief and facilitated at every level.

Earlier, speaking as chief guest on the occasion, former senator Ilyas Bilour said BF has believed in selfless services to the business community.

Today, the trust reposed by PFMA KP in the BF was a staunch evidence that this the only platform which can resolve the community issues, he added.

Bilour asked to vote for the Businessman Forum in SCCI election and make it victorious in order to continue selfless services to the business community under the forum platform.



PESHAWAR: President SCCI Fuad Ishaq, Businessman Forum leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and PFMA-KP Group leader Muhammad Naeem Butt addressing traders.

FRIA warn diminishing export capabilities

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has warned that the continued escalation of energy prices could result in the closure of industries, amplifying unemployment rates and diminishing Pakistan's export capabilities.

In a statement issued here today, the FRIA senior vice chairman Shahbaz Aslam emphasising the need for the government to explore and provide affordable energy alternatives for the industry, stressed that such measures are crucial for ensuring the competitiveness of Pakistani products in the global market. As the industrial sector grapples with the ramifications of the gas price hike, the FRIA leader's stance advocates for the preservation of industrial stability and the prevention of potential economic setbacks for Pakistan.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the repeated increase in the gas and electricity prices to an unbearable level by the government has left the trade and industry uncompetitive; blaming it for trapping the country in the IMF plans.

Hana Qadir, a self-taught artist from Rawalpindi

F. P Report

RAWALPINDI: Hana Qadir, a self-taught artist from Rawalpindi, has been passionate about art since childhood and at the age of 8, she created many handmade items, including drawings, paintings, calligraphy, and crafts, which still exist today.

After completing courses in fashion designing and industrial engineering from the National University of Technology Islamabad in 2019, she has won over 25 physical and online art competitions and exhibitions in various organizations across more than 25 countries.

Later, she started her business under the name "La Maison D'art" (an international art platform), where she helps talented artists and promotes their work worldwide. She organized the first successful international online exhibition "The Reflection of Arts - Free Palestine 2024" for free Palestine, in which over 100 artists from 21 countries participated.

After that, she organized the second national online art competition "Who Will Be the Artist of Pakistan" in 2024, in which a large number of participants from different cities and countries participated, and they were provided with certificates, golden bronze, and diplomas.

On the occasion of Independence Day, Hana Qadir had congratulated all citizens and said that her services are available to everyone, and she wants as many people as possible to benefit from them.

'Economic vulnerability looms with political uncertainty at its core'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) president Syed Maaz Mahmood has said that the economic vulnerability now looms with political uncertainty at its core, as the Moody's Investors Service has recently given a 'credit negative' signal to Pakistan in the face of prolonged political ambiguity and social tensions over election results, which had made it tough for IMF a new program, weaken external economy and make liquidity management more challenging.

The APBF President said that economic and fiscal discipline of the country will be driven under the direction of IMF now, leaving little room for the government to make its way, which has not come up with any plan to fix the economy and provide relief to the trade and industry. Higher inflation, rising utility tariffs, growing unemployment and, above all, the malaise and despondency among the masses are likely to continue unattended.

APBF Chairman

Ibrahim Qureshi said that the privatization commission of Pakistan is struggling since months to effectively put in place the privatization of loss-making public sector enterprises; notably, the Pakistan Steel Mills and Pakistan International Airlines despite the urgency and concern expressed, time and again, by the IMF. The election held on Feb 8 in Pakistan threw up a number of surprises with a significant shift in the country's political landscape.

Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the decision-making processes and any constitutional amendment has now been driven and influenced more by conflicting self-interests of the coalition partners, watering down the key objectives. This is not what the country needs in these unprecedented times of political and economic challenges confronting the nation.

Pakistan's government liquidity and external vulnerability risks will remain very high until there is clarity on a credible longer-term financing plan.

Experts said that

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves remained very low at \$10 billion, sufficient to cover only about nine weeks of imports and well below what was required to meet external financing needs for the next three to four years.

Based on the IMF's report, Moody's said Pakistan's external financing needs were about \$22 billion in the next fiscal year and about \$25 billion annually in fiscal 2026 and 2027. The country will need a longer-term financing plan to meet its very large financing needs for the next few years, after its current IMF program ends in 2024.

At present, Pakistan has been assigned a stable rating of "Caa3" by Moody's. It said prolonged delays in the formation of a government would in-crase policy and political uncertainty at a time when it faced very challenging macro-economic conditions. Hopefully, the coalition government will be sensitive to the social, economic and fiscal issues of the state, which in the meantime have exacerbated further.

USAID hold dialogue in collaboration with HEC



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Higher Education System Strengthening Activity, organized a high-level dialogue in collaboration with HEC and 16 Pakistani universities. Hosted by the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, academic leaders from public sector universities gathered at this event to discuss innovative strategies and introduce reforms to guide universities towards sustainability.

The Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA), implemented by the University of Utah, brings together an extensive network of American professors to support its partner universities in strengthening their institutional performance.

The opening session of this 2-day dialogue was chaired by Ms. Kate Somvongsiri, Mission Director USAID/Pakistan, alongside Professor, Dr. Tariq Rafi, Chairman Sindh Higher Education Commission.

The event provided a forum to the Vice Chancellors to stimulate discussions on emerging issues in higher education, foster peer-to-peer learning, and facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices among partner universities. Participants stressed the importance of extended leadership training sessions, to equip Vice Chancellors with the skills needed to effectively manage emerging challenges.

Dr. Rafi appreciated USAID's partnership on higher education. He said, "This initiative will advance the organizational performance of public sector universities, and we stand committed to make our programs more demand-driven for better graduate employability." He encouraged the audience to actively contribute to this process for the improvement of educational institutions.

The first day continued with sessions on HESSA work planning within the context of the mid-term evaluation report and the key accomplishments so far at each partner university. For instance, NUST has

established 'Connected Learning', NUTECH has initiated STEM Bootcamps, and most of the partner universities have restructured their student services including the addition of wellness centers.

The subsequent session featured a presentation on the monitoring framework and consultations on enhancing the effectiveness of HESSA's approach and the impact of project interventions.

The second day began with a session dedicated to reviewing the strategic plan preparation initiatives by partner universities. This was followed by a panel discussion on 'Transforming Universities towards Sustainability', moderated by Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA Karachi. Panelists included Dr. Sarosh Lodhi, Vice Chancellor, NED University of Engineering & Technology; Dr. Shakeel Khoja, Dean, School of Mathematics and Computer Science (SMCS), IBA Karachi; and Ms. Malahat Awan, Director, Alumni Affairs & Resource Mobilization, IBA Karachi.

Romina Khurshid attends 'Azadi Plantation Drive'



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move towards environmental sustainability, IMARAT Group kicked off the Azadi Plantation Drive, a powerful initiative aimed at enhancing urban green spaces and combating climate change. The drive, which was attended by Romina Khurshid Alam, the Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, reflects the ongoing commitment of the IMARAT Group to creating a greener, more sustainable urban environment.

During the visit, Chairman IMARAT Shafiq Akbar, Group Director Sharjeel Ehmer and Group

Director Farhan Javed took the opportunity to brief Romina Khurshid Alam on the broader vision behind the development of IMARAT Downtown. They articulated a vision that extends beyond merely redefining city living; it is about crafting a sustainable urban environment that actively contributes to the health of the planet.

IMARAT Downtown, a prime urban development, is now home to 200,000 trees and is dubbed the "Greenest Downtown" of the region. The project seamlessly blends technology and nature to create a forward-thinking ecosystem. With the Greenest Urban Forest, with its

meticulously curate Urban Forest Flora, showcases a diverse collection of native and exotic species, contributing significantly to the city's environmental health. The Urban Forest features a wide array of flora, including towering pine trees and the majestic Chinnar, among others.

The on-going Azadi Plantation Drive is a central component of this vision, exemplifying how urban spaces can be both luxurious and environmentally conscious. Spanning 2.06 million square feet, this innovative green space provides a crucial green lung for the city. Moreover, the forest produces 23.4 million kilograms of oxygen per year, acting as a vital resource for the city's residents. As the climate crisis intensifies globally, Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change is taking proactive steps to mitigate the impact through initiatives like the Azadi Plantation Drive. The IMARAT Downtown not only enhances biodiversity but also provides a serene environment for physical activities with its 8km long jogging track.

The Ministry of Climate Change continues to emphasize the significance of urban forestry as a key strategy in addressing the environmental challenges faced by Pakistan. Through the Azadi Plantation Drive and similar initiatives, the ministry is committed to fostering a greener, healthier, and more resilient Pakistan.

SBA to facilitate traders by resolving their issues

F.P Report

PESHAWAR: After each passing day, individuals and organizations are extending their full patronage to Sarhad Business Alliance (SBA) ahead of the upcoming elections.

As the Hajj Umrah Organization and the Export Processing Zone have announced their full support for the Sarhad Business Alliance (SBA).

Former Governor and Patron-in-Chief Haji Ghulam Ali Syed Zahir Ali stated that the Sarhad Chamber will be made the premier chamber of Peshawar and the entire province in the true sense.

Events were held last day where Ata-ul-Haq Darvesh, Abdul Haseeb Khan, and other colleagues from the Hajj Umrah Group, along with Syed Mahmood from the Export Processing Zone, declared

their strong support for the SBA group. At Syed Mahmood's residence, a grand gathering was organized by the President of the Export Processing Zone, Haji Aul Khan Akbar, Haji Abdullah Abdul Majeed, Jehanzaib Khalil, and other members.

They announced it is imperative to support the Sarhad Business Alliance for the welfare of the business community and the resolution of their problems. They emphasized their complete readiness to support the SBA and consider no one more capable than the SBA in restoring the dignity of the Sarhad Chamber and Peshawar's business community.

The speakers criticized the Sarhad Chamber for becoming a "paper chamber" over the years due to a few individuals who have clung to it like termites and have always used power for

their personal gains. They remarked that the popularity of the SBA has forced these five individuals, who never respected the members, to now seek votes and support from them for the first time in their lives.

In the events, the SBA's Patron-in-Chief and former Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Chairman Syed Zahir Ali Shah, and former President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce, Muhammad Ishaq, expressed their gratitude to the officials and members of the Hajj Umrah Association and the Export Processing Zone for their trust in the SBA. They stressed that this is the time to restore the credibility of the Peshawar business community and the Sarhad Chamber, focusing the attention of responsible institutions on their issues and moving towards practical solutions, for which they are fully prepared.

They asserted that this time the SBA would prove that the Sarhad Chamber elections would feature the most qualified candidates, with impeccable past records and honorable reputations. They criticized the group in control of the Sarhad Chamber, claiming it has not only turned the chamber into a "paper entity" but also left traders and industrialists stranded. They accused a handful of individuals of ignoring the hard work and sincerity of every member, merely collecting fees from traders.

As a result, corruption scandals involving crores of rupees have surfaced during their tenure.

They vowed that if the Sarhad Business Alliance (SBA) succeeds, it will immediately announce a 50% reduction in membership, visa, and renewal fees, ending the tradition of misappropriation.

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Office of Student Affairs (OSA), Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi organized the 'IBA Orientation Gala 2024 (O-Gala '24)' to welcome the new incoming batch of 2024. The three-day orientation event was attended by around 2,500 people, including new students, their parents, faculty, and staff.

Welcoming the new students, Dean Student Affairs IBA, Ms. Maheen Ghauri, said, "Your hard work and dedication have brought you here, and I am thrilled to see you become a part of our vibrant IBA community. We are committed to fostering a cul-

ture of inclusion, respect, and acceptance at the IBA."

She briefly introduced the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and its various domains, including the IBA Student Government, clubs and societies; International Resource Centre (IRC); Office of Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (DAI); Health & Wellness Centre; student employment and volunteering; as well as leadership coaching and peer programs. She expressed that the IBA is a happening place, both academically and in co-curricular activities, encouraging students to participate in these opportunities while maintaining focus on their studies.

Registrar IBA, Dr. Mohammad Asad Ilyas, introduced the three IBA schools, student support services units, and resources. He highlighted the expanding hostel facilities, especially for female students. He further emphasized the importance of key services such as the program office, hostels, and transport services for the students. Dr. Ilyas also underscored the importance of discipline and upholding the Institute's values. Furthermore, he shared essential emergency details, including the helpline and medical touch points for student safety.

Orientation sessions were conducted by the School of

Business Studies (SBS) on Day 1, and the School of Mathematics and Computer Science (SMCS), and School of Economics and Social Sciences (SESS) on Day 2. The deans of all three schools: Dr. Abdullah Z. Sheikh (SBS), Dr. Shakeel Khoja (SMCS), and Dr. Asma Hyder (SESS), along with their respective chairpersons, briefed the students about their academic programs and courses.

A meet and greet session was organized by OSA on Day 3, where deans, chairpersons, program directors and faculty interacted with new students and parents. The IBA Center for Entrepreneurial Development (CED) collaborated with the

OSA to organize the IBAAzaar at O-Gala '24, where around 60 exhibits including eco-friendly initiatives, tech, fashion, health, beauty, and food start-ups were showcased. Students participated in various games and activities over the three days, providing them with opportunities to learn more about themselves and form lasting friendships for the years ahead.

The vibrant success of this event was achieved through the relentless efforts of the Student Affairs team, student volunteers (Orientation Captains), the Center for Entrepreneurial Development (CED) team, and the student support and administration offices.

IBA Karachi welcomes new students at Orientation Gala 2024





In brief

Rawalpindi prepares to host test match

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi is gearing up for the highly anticipated Test cricket match between Pakistan and Bangladesh, scheduled to take place at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on August 21. To ensure a secure environment, City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani announced the deployment of over 1,700 police officers. A comprehensive security plan has been put in place, with CCTV cameras along the cricket teams' route, Snipers positioned on rooftops surrounding the stadium and Elite and dolphin forces, along with special district police teams, in and around the stadium. Additionally, over 350 traffic police officers and wardens will be on duty to manage traffic flow and minimize disruptions. Moreover, a detailed traffic plan is being formulated to ensure public convenience.

Sri Lanka's Dickwella suspended

COLOMBO (Reuters): Sri Lanka wicketkeeper-batsman Niroshan Dickwella has been suspended indefinitely due to an alleged doping violation, the national governing body Sri Lanka Cricket said. Dickwella failed a doping test conducted by the Sri Lanka Anti-Doping Agency under World Anti-Doping Agency guidelines during the Lanka Premier League. "The suspension is effective immediately and will remain in place until further notice," the SLC said in a statement on Friday. Dickwella captains the Galle Marvels in the Lanka Premier League. The 31-year-old has served as Sri Lanka's wicketkeeper in all formats, last playing for the national team in a test series against New Zealand at Christchurch in March last year. In June 2021, Dickwella was suspended for a year, alongside Kusal Mendis and Danushka Gunathilaka, for breaching the team's COVID-19 bio-secure bubble during Sri Lanka's tour of England.

Chopra eyes bigger returns after Olympic

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India's javelin star Neeraj Chopra said Saturday that missing out on Olympic gold hurt, but the injury-hit athlete eyes bigger returns in upcoming competitions. The 26-year-old won silver in Paris after Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem won gold with an Olympic record of 92.97 metres in the javelin final. Chopra, who made history in 2020 Tokyo Olympics with India's first ever Olympic track and field gold, threw further in Paris with 89.45 metres – not too far off his personal best of 89.94m. "There is no comparison with a gold medal," Chopra told reporters by phone from Switzerland, where he is training for upcoming tournaments. "Winning back-to-back medals for your nation is good and taking a lap of the ground with your country's flag is always a wonderful feeling," he added. "But the national anthem playing when your flag goes up with you on top of the podium was missing." However, he said he was pleased with his silver. "We have to accept what we have," he said. "I am happy with what I got." Chopra built on his breakout success in Tokyo by winning world championship gold last year, but missed a few competitions due to a groin injury. But the well-built star, who hails from the northern Indian state of Haryana – a nursery of athletes including Olympic wrestlers and boxers, remains confident of future success.

Shaheens qualify for Semi-final of Top End T20

DARWIN (Monitoring Desk): Muhammad Irfan Khan registered his maiden T20 century as Pakistan Shaheens beat Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Comets by 91-runs in their last league game on Saturday in the Top End T20 series at the DXC Arena in Darwin. With this win, Shaheens secured top position on the points table with five wins in six games and have qualified for the semi-finals along with Adelaide Strikers, Bangladesh 'A' and Northern Territory Strike. Defending a huge total of 202 runs, the Shaheens made light work of ACT Comets batting line-up as they were bundled out for a mere 111 in 16.1 overs. Mubasir Khan dismissed opening batters, Esam Rahman (9, 4b, 2x4s), Nicholas Broes (3, 7b) early while Arafat got rid of Michael McNamara (5, 3b) reducing the ACT Comets to 24-3 in 3.1 overs.

Tyler van Luin (29, 17b, 4x4s, 1x6) and Zak Keogh (26, 20b, 2x4s, 1x6) looked threatening as the duo added 49 runs for fourth-wicket off just five overs but fell in the ninth and tenth over respectively with the scorecard reading 79-5. ACT Comets lost their next five wickets for just 32 runs as the Shaheens spinners ran riot taking all ten wickets. Arif Yaqoob bagged figures of 4-36 while Arafat dismissed three batters. Mubasir had two wickets to his name while Faisal Akram picked up one. Earlier, after opting to bat first, Pakistan Shaheens lost their opening batters, Abdul Faseeh (8, 3b, 2x4s) and Mohammad Harris (15, 13b, 2x4s) in the first and fourth over, respectively. Omair Bin Yousuf (7, 6b, 1x4) and Usman Khan (5, 5b) were the other Shaheens wickets to fall in subsequent overs as they stood 48-4 at the end of the field restrictions.

At this point, Muhammad Irfan Khan and Haseebullah joined forces to take Shaheens out of trouble. The duo put on a mammoth 140-run fifth-wicket partnership off 13 overs. Irfan struck a brilliant century scoring 106 off 56 balls clubbing 14 fours and two sixes before departing in the 19th over. Haseebullah remained unbeaten for 49 which came off 34 balls hitting four boundaries and a solitary six. Shaheens posted 202-6 in the allotted 20 overs as Hanno Jacobs took two wickets for ACT Comets while Zak Keogh, Tyler Hays, Esam Rahman and Jake Smith picked one wicket each. Semi-finals Pakistan Shaheens vs Adelaide Strikers at DXC Arena (5.30am PKT) NT Strike vs Bangladesh 'A' at TIO Stadium (5.30am PKT) Final - TBD vs TBD - Tomorrow.

Rana Mashhood inaugurates basketball tournament at LCWU

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has emphasized that the youth can play a crucial role in the nation's prosperity and development. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of Emerging Talent Basketball Tournament 2024 at Basket Ball Ground, Lahore College for Women University (LCWU) here on Saturday, he highlighted that Pakistan's talented young generation is pivotal in driving the country towards development. At the event, Rana Mashhood highlighted Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif's commitment to women empowerment, saying that the Prime Minister had taken several initiatives to support women in Punjab. Today, 12,000 young women are benefiting from these initiatives, he observed. He emphasized that no society can advance without empowering its women and assured that the government stands with athletes in the sports field. Rana Mashhood said the tournament aims to spotlight new talent in the sports arena, adding that the tournament would feature players selected from remote areas of Lahore, who would compete in various matches. New players

would showcase their skills alongside the basketball teams from LCWU and Kinnaird Colleges. The tournament comprises four matches, promising exciting contests between different teams. Rana Mashhood expressed confidence in Pakistan's economic future, commending recent progress. He stressed the importance of ongoing effort and commitment to build on these achievements and drive further economic advancement. LCWU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shagufta Naz, other senior faculty members and a large number of athletes and students were present.

Abrar, Kamran released from first Test squad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wrist spinner Abrar Ahmed has been released from the Pakistan Test side and he will now represent Pakistan Shaheens in the second four-day match against Bangladesh 'A', which will start at the Islamabad Club on Tuesday. The decision has been made after the selectors have opted to go with an all-pace attack in the first ICC World Test Championship match against Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday (21 August). Instead of benching him for the Test, the selectors named him in the Shaheens squad so that he could gain some match practice ahead of the sec-

ond Test, which will start on 30 August. Uncapped top-order batter Kamran Ghulam is the other player to be released from the Pakistan Test side and has been retained in the Pakistan Shaheens side for the second four-day match. He has also been appointed as the captain. This means the Pakistan Test squad has been trimmed to 15 players, but will be back to its original 17-player strength after the conclusion of the second four-day match when Abrar and Kamran will rejoin the side for the second Test. Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Huraira, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Sarfaraz Ahmed and Saud Shakeel, who were part of

the Pakistan Shaheen side, have now joined the Test side, while Mohammad Rameez Jnr has been left out for the second four-day match. These eight players have been replaced in the Shaheens side by Abrar Ahmed, Ali Zaryab, Imam Ul Haq, Mohammad Awaiss Anwar, Niaz Khan, Qasim Akram, Rohail Nazir and Sharoon Siraj. Pakistan Shaheens squad (for second four-day) - Kamran Ghulam (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Ali Zaryab, Ghulam Mudassar, Imam-ul-Haq, Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Awaiss Anwar, Niaz Khan, Qasim Akram, Rohail Nazir (wicket-keeper), Saad Baig (wicket-keeper), Saad Khan, Sharoon Siraj and Umar Amin.

Niewiadoma leads going into Tour de France finale

LE GRAND-BORNAND (Agencies): Katarzyna Niewiadoma retained the overall lead in the Tour de France Femmes as Justine Ghekiere won the penultimate stage. Niewiadoma finished fourth in the 166.4km seventh stage from Champagne to a summit at Le Grand-Bornand to keep hold of the yellow jersey. The Polish rider has a 27-second advantage over second-placed Belgium's Puck Pieterse, who came home seventh on Saturday, heading into Sunday's final stage. "It was a very good day for us. We rode a perfect race. I was getting a lot of support from my team which allowed me to save energy for the final," said Canyon-SRAM rider Niewiadoma. "Of course it was super long and very challenging from the start so I'm very happy. We didn't lose anything, we're still up there with 24 hours to go. "It's going to be a very important day in my career and in my team's existence. We're ready for it and we're



happy to still be in yellow. I think everyone is very motivated. We're here to pursue our dreams." Pieterse's compatriot Ghekiere clinched her second career win as she showed resilience on the gruelling mountainous route. Ghekiere raced away from a breakaway group in the final two climbs to cross the line in four hours 26 minute and 58 seconds which consolidated her position as the tour's best climber. France's Suihan of Maeva came home in second, one minute 15 seconds behind Ghekiere and just ahead of defending champion Demi Vollerling in third. Dutch rider Vollerling had outsprinted

Niewiadoma on the home straight and pipped her on the line. Vollerling lost the leader's jersey on stage five after losing time in a crash near the finish, and is eighth in the standings, now 1:15 behind Niewiadoma. France's stage six winner Cedrine Kerbaol lost time in the gruelling finish to come in 18th and is now third in the overall rankings. The final stage on Sunday is another for the climbers: a 149km mountain run from Le Grand-Bornand to Alpe d'Huez. It features a 13.8km ride to the summit at a gradient of 8.1 per cent, the riders also having to crest the Col du Glandon over 19.7km at 7.2 per cent.

Slot starts with Liverpool win, Arsenal beat Wolves to launch Premier League bid



LONDON (Agencies): Arne Slot got off to a winning start as Liverpool manager with a 2-0 win at newly-promoted Ipswich on Saturday as Arsenal began their Premier League title challenge by beating Wolves by the same scoreline. Newcastle defied an early red card for Fabian Schar to edge past Southampton 1-0, while Brighton ran riot under new manager Fabian Hurler in a 3-0 victory at Everton. Slot has huge shoes to fill at Anfield after the departure of Jurgen Klopp, who restored the Reds to the top of the English game. The Dutchman was left less than impressed by his side's first 45 minutes at Portman Road as Ipswich flew out of the traps on their return to the Premier League for the first time in 22 years.

However, Liverpool were a different side after the break as goals from Diogo Jota and Mohamed Salah barely reflected their dominance to get Slot off to the perfect start. "We as a team made a big change at half-time because we came out totally different to how we had come out in the first half," said the former Feyenoord boss. "Second half, we won more duels, we won more second balls and we played more balls in behind because if the other team takes the risk of playing one-v-one and you have the likes of Luis Diaz, Mo Salah and Diogo Jota then use them, play the balls in behind." - Havertz, Saka fire for Arsenal - Arsenal have finished second to Manchester City in each of the past two sea-

sons and are highly-fancied to be the champions' closest challengers again. Kai Havertz opened the scoring at the Emirates from Bukayo Saka's cross to reward the Gunners' early dominance. However, Mikel Arteta's men needed a vital save from David Raya to deny Jorgen Strand Larsen and Matheus Cunha missed a huge chance to level before Arsenal made the points safe. The roles from the first goal were reversed as this time Havertz teed up Saka to lash home. Newcastle's hopes of a winning start to the season looked to have been undone when Schar was sent off after just 28 minutes for what the referee deemed a headbutt on Ben Brereton Diaz despite limited contact between the pair.

Southampton had dominated even the early exchanges against the Magpies' full compliment but failed to convert from 19 shots and nearly 80 per cent possession. By contrast, Newcastle were clinical as Alexander Isak teed up Joelinton for the only goal just before half-time. Everton's final season at Goodison Park got off to a nightmare start as 31-year-old Hurler enjoyed a dream start to life in the Premier League. Kaoru Mitoma fired Brighton in front on his return from injury that saw the Japanese international miss much of last season. Danny Welbeck added a second after the break before Everton were reduced to 10 men when Ashley Young saw red. Simon Adingra made it 3-0 late on and only a VAR review denied Brighton a fourth through Yasin Ayari. Antoine Semenyo stepped into the void left at Bournemouth by the departure of Dominic Solanke with a late equaliser to salvage a 1-1 draw at Nottingham Forest. Aston Villa travel to West Ham in Saturday's late match. City begin their defence of the title in the standout fixture of the weekend at Chelsea on Sunday. Manchester United got their campaign off to a winning start on Friday when debutant Joshua Zirkzee came off the bench to grab a late winner in a 1-0 victory over Fulham.

Shaukat Khanum Memorial KP Squash Tournament begins

PESHAWAR (APP): Shaukat Khanum KP Squash Tournament got under way at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex here Saturday under the aegis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association with more than 150 female and male players taking part. Adviser to the Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhr Jahan was the chief guest at the event. Chairman KP Squash Association Qamar Zaman, General Secretary of Provincial Squash Association Mansoor Zaman, Chief Organizer and Squash Coach Sports Directorate Munoor Zaman, Director Blue Tone Squash Academy Wazir Gul, former champion and coach Mohibullah Khan, Shaukat Khanum Hospital Peshawar representatives, Provincial Squash Association Finance Secretary Mohammad

Sajjad Khalil, Squash Coaches Amjad Khan, Executive Members Squash Association Sher Bahadur Fazal Khalil, Coaches M Adil Faqir Maqsood Hanif Gulab Sher and other personalities were also present on the occasion. Sports Syed Fakhr Jahan paid tribute to the squash association for holding more than 25 tournaments for both male and female players in different age groups and said that the government is taking steps for the development of the game of squash. All the players will have to work day and night to regain the lost glories, he said. He also announced Rs. 0.6 million as cash prizes to be awarded to the position holders players. Squash Legend Qamar Zaman while paying tribute to Sports Advisor Syed Fakhr Jahan, said that the

association under the supervision of the President Dawood Khan is encouraging the youth to actively participate in different age group tournaments. He said that Shaukat Khanum Memorial KP Squash Tournament would be a regular feature and would be organized every year and now part of the annual calendar. We will make the tournament a part of the annual calendar, Qamar Zaman said. It is being organized for a good cause and we are all involved, he said. Ali Bahadur and M Hamza won their matches in the second round of U17 categories. Shayan Ali, Hasan Zahid, Nouman Khan, Yasin Khattak, M Azan Khalil, Hasan Farid, Harira Khan and Muhammad Shoaib also secured victories against their respective rivals during the tournament.

Alcaraz says sorry for racquet smash in 'worst' career loss

CINCINNATI (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz made his apologies on Saturday, a day after smashing his racquet in fury during a second-round loss to Gael Monfils at the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Open. The Spaniard, who currently owns both the French Open and Wimbledon titles, erupted in frustration at his game against the French veteran. The Spanish second seed called his 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 defeat the "worst match" of his career. But he took to Instagram on Saturday to calm the waters as he prepares to make amends on court at the US Open. "I want to apologise for my attitude yesterday, it was not good and that should not happen on court," he posted. "I'm human, the nerves had accumulated and sometimes it is very tough to control when there is that tension. I will work so that it doesn't happen again."

AJGL golfers celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day in style

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a patriotic bid to hoist the national flag higher, the Ace Junior Golf League (AJGL) celebrated Jashn-e-Azadi with a series of Azadi Matches across the country in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Peshawar. Around 134 junior golfers registered and 116 competed. "The AJGL progressive regimen is a telling observation." Lt. Gen (ret'd) Hilal Hussain, patron-in-Chief AJGL said, according to a press release issued on Saturday. "The participation of a large number of juniors is a source of pride for AJGL Chairperson Dr. Asma Afzal Shami," while expressing her deep commitment to the golf and its development in Pakistan. Reflecting on the Azadi Matches, the Lahore Azadi Match held at Gymkhana Club was marked by the Club's signature hospitality. The unwavering support of Shaukat Javed, Convener of Lahore Gymkhana Golf Club, has been instrumental in fully sponsoring, thus, establishing AJGL Monthly Medal Matches and an Azadi Match as a permanent fixture in the Club, thus cementing the foundation

of the Ace Junior Golf League. The Garrison Greens in Lahore also holds a special significance in the history of the Ace Junior Golf League, as it was the venue for the inaugural event, marked by a lively atmosphere. Maj. (ret'd) Amjad Chaudhry's persistent backing of the League's founders has enabled AJGL to thrive. The Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Golf Club in Karachi has become a stalwart supporter of the Ace Junior Golf League's Karachi Chapter, serving as its hub, as per the instructions of Brig. Sheeraz Kashif, the club secretary. The inaugural event to the ongoing Monthly Medal Matches and Azadi Match, DHA Golf Club, Karachi has consistently demonstrated its commitment in nurturing the game of golf at its grassroots level. In Islamabad, the prestigious Bahria Garden City Golf Club has been graciously chosen as the new headquarters of the Ace Junior Golf League, a testament to the relentless dedication of Brig. (ret'd) Saeed Dar, the Club Secretary, under the guidance, of the President, Air Commodore Muhammad

Illyas, Bahria Garden City Golf Club, has become a hub for junior golfers, providing a sponsorship and a platform for juniors to hone their sporting skills and realize their full potential. Secretary, KPGA, Col.9ret'd0 Imtinan and Secretary PGC, Sqn Ldr (ret'd) Saqib have gone an extra mile to facilitate and finance the AJGL Monthly Matches. In the recently held Independence Day Cup, Prize Distribution Ceremony, the chief guest not only appreciated the junior, as a token of encouragement; he gave cash prizes to all the participants. The backbone of the Ace Junior Golf League's success lies in the visionary guidance of Patron-in-Chief, Lt. Gen.(ret'd) Hilal Hussain, the exacting standards of Dr. Asma Shami and the unyielding dedication of its lady volunteers, who faithfully work behind the scenes to bring events to life, President Munazza Shaheen, VP Lahore Iffat Zahra, VP Karachi Nida Huq, VP Peshawar Dr. Ghazala Shams, and VP Islamabad Munazza Azhar Winners:

A Hole-in-One was won by Master Abdullah Virk of IGC. Lahore: Mustafa Ahmed (91/18-Albatross), Ahad Aziz (97/18-Eagle), Huzaifa Adnan (46/9-Birdie) (Girls) Humna Irfan (124/18-Elite), Bushra Fatima (80/18-Albatross), Nataliya Chaudry (95/18-Eagle), Zainab Akram (57/9-Birdie) Karachi: Jameel Khan (74/18-Albatross), Shahmir Ahmed (82/18-Eagle), Saad Hameed (46/9-Birdie) (Girls) Almeerah Shaikh (101/18-Eagle), Rubab Tabish (58/9-Birdie) Peshawar: Daniyal Durrani (41/9-Elite), Danyal Khan (36/9-Albatross), Abu Hureera (40/9-Eagle), Anas (78/9-Birdie) (Girls) Sara Amin (41/9-Albatross), Dua Farid (56/9-Eagle), Noori Farid (50/9-Birdie) Following the international standards, AJGL juniors compete for gross prizes, only. AJGL management is poised to leave a lasting impact on the legacy of junior golf in Pakistan, providing a platform for young golfers. The AJGL's vision is to create a thriving junior golf ecosystem in Pakistan, and it is heartening to see this vision taking concrete form.



In brief

42 applications received for CM's Fund

RAWALPINDI (APP): A total of 242 applications have been received for the Chief Minister's (CM) Punjab Artists Support Fund (PASF) from the entire division. The applications will be sent to the concerned department in Lahore for financial assistance approval for the artists. According to the details, a meeting of PASF, Rawalpindi Division was held on Saturday under the chairmanship of Director Punjab Arts Council, Rawalpindi Sajjad Hussain in which matters pertaining to PASF were discussed. Famous artist Batin Farooqi (TI), Deputy Director Arts Council Abdul Shakoor, Public Health Representative Habib Ahmed Chaudhry and Other members of the committee attended the meeting. Sajjad Hussain informed the participants about the aims and objectives of the Artists Support Fund. He informed that for the year 2024-2025, a total of 242 applications have been received from the entire division. The applications, completed in all respects will be sent to the department in Lahore for approval, he said. Batin Farooqi (TI) on the occasion thanked Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz for the release of support funds for artists and expressed hope that the government would continue to take similar steps for the welfare of the artist community.

NHMP issues advisory for safety of motorists

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Saturday called upon road users to follow safety precautions while driving on rainy roads. NHMP North Zone spokesman, Muhammad Saqib said that due to continued intermittent rainfall slippery road conditions were prevailing on M-1 from Islamabad to, Kot Momin, Dera Ismail Khan Swat and Thakot. Saqib added that slippery conditions could lead to an increased risk of accidents, particularly for those travelling at high speeds. He said that NHMP officials were providing briefings to the motorists at Toll plazas about the precautionary measures and road conditions. He advised the travellers to get updated information on NHMP helpline 130 and also contact NHMP social media accounts before starting the journey.

Police arrest liquor suppliers gang

RAWALPINDI (INP): Police have arrested three members gang involved in liquor suppliers and recovered more than 90 liters of liquor from their possession during crackdown here on Saturday. According to police spokesman, Bani police held three members gang for supplying liquor who were identified as Zubair, Sunny Manzoor and Daniyal. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was underway. SHO revealed that the gang was used to supply liquor in different areas. SP Rawal Faisal Saleem commended police team efforts in arresting the gang and said that crackdown against drug dealers will be continued to end the drug menace. Similarly, police have arrested eight drug dealers and recovered more than 05 kg drugs from their possession. According to police spokesman, police have registered separate cases against all of them and started investigation.

Naqvi visits residence of martyred deputy commissioner

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visited the residence of martyred Deputy Commissioner Panjgur Zakir Baloch in Mastung.

He met with the father of Zakir Baloch, Kanoor Baloch, his brothers, and other family members. Inspector General Frontier Corps South Balochistan Major General Bilal Sarfraz Khan was also present on the occasion.

Expressing deep sorrow over the martyrdom of Zakir Baloch, Mohsin Naqvi condoled with the father of Zakir Baloch. He announced the financial assistance of Rs. 2 crores for the family of martyred Deputy Commissioner. He also handed over the allot-

ment letter of a plot to the father of Zakir Baloch.

The interior minister conveyed special condolence messages from President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif.

He stated that this is not a substitute for anyone's life, but a humble effort to take care of the family of martyr Zakir Baloch.

He assured that it is their responsibility to take care of the family of martyrs. He further said, "we are proud of the parents like you who have provided higher education to all their sons".

The minister stated that the entire nation salutes the father of the martyr. He said that Zakir Baloch was

a dutiful, hardworking, and brave officer who achieved the highest rank of martyrdom and that martyrs are always alive.

He further said, "Deputy Commissioner Panjgur Zakir Baloch will always live in our hearts and we salute his sacrifice as he embraced martyrdom while performing his duties. He prayed that May Allah Almighty elevate the ranks of martyred Deputy Commissioner Panjgur Zakir Baloch and grant patience to his family".

Regional Police Officer Gwadar, Deputy Commissioner, and high-ranking civil and military officials were also present on the occasion.

Speaker NA forms fact-finding committee to investigate inappropriate remarks by Afridi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Ayaz Sadiq on Saturday formed a special fact-finding committee to investigate the inappropriate remarks made by MNA Iqbal Afridi regarding a female officer's attire.

The Speaker expressed strong displeasure over the objection raised about the clothing of a female officer from K-Electric during a meeting of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Energy.

The fact-finding com-

mittee, headed by Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, included members Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Amin-ul-Haque, Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar, and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, said a statement issued here by the National Assembly Secretariat.

The committee will have the authority to include five female members from parliamentary parties. The investigative committee is expected to

submit its report to the Speaker within 15 days.

MNA Iqbal Afridi's comments about the female officer's attire during the Standing Committee on Energy's session have been widely criticized and female members of the assembly have also voiced their dissatisfaction with his behavior.

Ayaz Sadiq said that he was committed to enhancing respect and dignity for women and has reiterated his ongoing efforts in this regard.

DC reviews Monkeypox screening measures at Islamabad Airport

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to growing concerns about Monkeypox, the district administration has taken proactive steps and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz, personally visited Islamabad Airport to review the screening process for incoming international passengers.

According to a spokesperson for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), the DC visited the airport to evalu-

ate the existing measures for screening travellers. He instructed that the screening process be expedited to ensure the timely identification of any potential Monkeypox cases.

The DC said that health department personnel have been deployed at the airport, where every passenger arriving from overseas is being thoroughly screened. If any symptoms are detected, the individual will be isolated and transferred to PIMS

Hospital, which is equipped with special arrangements for treating Monkeypox patients.

DC Islamabad said that Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital has been designated as an Isolation Management Unit for Monkeypox cases. A special focal person has been appointed to oversee the unit's operations, ensuring that all necessary precautions and treatments are effectively managed.

NHA Chairman launches tree plantation campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the National Highway Authority (NHA) Muhammad Sheheryar Sultan has inaugurated a Tree Planting Campaign on the NHA road network by planting a sapling on the Thalian Airport carriageway.

According to an NHA spokesman, the campaign aims to plant over 46,000 saplings and wild plants along the Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway (M-1) this year.

The chairman said that tree plantation was a form of Sadaqah Jariyah (ongo-

ing charity).

He said that Pakistan was among the countries most affected by climate change and reiterated the NHA's commitment to increasing greenery, reducing temperatures and mitigating the impacts of climate change through this national initiative.

The tree plantation campaign will be carried out in three phases; in the first phase, 23,000 saplings, including olive trees, local fruit-bearing and shade trees and forest plants, from the NHA Gate to the Thalian

Interchange on the Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway (M-1) would be planted. In the second phase, two 23,000 saplings around the road network near the Burhan and Brahma Bahtar Interchanges would be planted.

The third phase will focus on making the section of the motorway from the Islamabad Toll Plaza to Brahma Bahtar environmentally friendly, green, and aesthetically pleasing. This year, the country has set a target to plant over 100 million trees.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Health, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath addressing press conference regarding Monkeypox virus. —APP Photo

Pakistan honors Chinese scientist with Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prestigious Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam award was bestowed upon Chinese scientist Liu Xinmin for his outstanding contribution to bilateral relations and scientific advancement.

Announcement to this effect was made at a ceremony held on the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, Gwadar. Professor Liu, the Chief Scientist of the Institute of New Drug Technologies at Ningbo University and Co-Director of the Sino-Pakistani Cooperation Centre on Traditional Chinese Medicine (SPCCTC) received this national honor in recognition of his pivotal role in fostering Sino-Pakistani cooperation in traditional medicine.

The announcement highlighted Professor Liu's pioneering achievements since he spearheaded the establishment of the SPCCTC in 2021 – the first of its kind in Pakistan at the national level. This center has catalyzed fruitful international collaborations between over 30 Chinese and Pakistani enterprises engaged in research and development, education, medical services, and production of traditional medicine products, particularly in the fields of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Unani Tibb.

With Professor Liu's efforts, partnerships were forged between

Chinese institutions such as the Institute of Medicinal Plant Development and Laboratory Animal Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, the Institute of Agricultural Products Processing, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Hunan University of Chinese Medicine, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Medical and Pharmaceutical Research Institute, among others.

These institutions collaborated with Pakistani counterparts like the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) at the University of Karachi, Hamdard University, etc. Together, they have accomplished remarkable feats, including authenticating the origins of over 20 Pakistani herbal medicines, evaluating the pharmacological effects of more than 50 components, and publishing over 30 academic papers in international journals.

Beyond research collaborations, Professor Liu has been instrumental in fostering people-to-people exchanges and capacity building in traditional medicine. Regular staff visits, seminars and doctoral/post-graduate training programmes have nurtured a new generation of Pakistani researchers in traditional medicine development who now form the backbone of their respec-

tive institutions.

One of Professor Liu's most notable achievements is the orchestration of the first clinical multicenter study of a traditional Chinese patent medicine, Jinhua Qinggan Granules, for COVID-19 treatment at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences' (ICCBS) National Clinical Research Center.

Moreover, he facilitated the inaugural Sino-Pak 'Seeds in Space' project, an unprecedented endeavor that saw seven types of Pakistani medicinal seeds journey into space aboard China's spacecraft. The seeds returned to Earth after six months in orbit, bringing with them the promise of new genetic traits and possible medical breakthroughs.

The Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam, one of Pakistan's highest civilian honors, is bestowed upon individuals who have rendered exceptional service to the nation or made outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

Professor Liu Xinmin's receipt of this award underscores the deepening ties between China and Pakistan, particularly in the realm of science and medicine. The investiture ceremony, where Professor Liu and the other recipients will be formally decorated with their awards, is scheduled for March 23, 2025.

Punjab completely bans kite flying, dangerous string making

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Punjab Cabinet Committee has approved a ban on all activities related to kite flying and the manufacturing of dangerous twines and strings.

The decision was made during a meeting of Punjab Cabinet Committee on Law and Privatisation, presided over by Punjab Finance Minister Mujtaba Shujaat Rahman. Law Minister Sohaib Bharath was also present, and Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafique participated via video link.

Key amendments were approved to the Punjab Arms Ordinance 1965 and the Prohibition of Kite Flying Ordinance 2001. As a result, kite flying and the production of harmful kite strings will be completely banned.

The preparation and sale

of kite strings, including those made from metal wires and other hazardous materials, are now strictly prohibited. Violators of the ban would face severe consequences, with a minimum sentence of three-year imprisonment for kite flying and at least five-year imprisonment, or a hefty fine, for the manufacture and distribution of such dangerous materials.

The committee has proposed in the amendment that the fines would be collected from parents of children found violating the kite flying ban. Additionally, unauthorized sale, repair, manufacturing, and sports shooting of firearms without a license

will also be banned under new amendments.

The committee proposed further amendments to the Punjab Vagrancy Ordinance 1958 and the Probation of Offenders Ordinance 1960, aiming to crack down on illegal activities across the province. "No concessions should be given to those who risk people's lives in the name of entertainment," emphasized Finance Minister Mujtaba Shujaat Rahman.

The new regulations reflect a broader commitment to public safety and legal enforcement, with officials determined to ensure that entertainment does not come at the cost of human lives.

DPM reviews measures over urea availability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday chaired a meeting to review various measures to ensure ample availability of urea at suitable rate during the upcoming wheat cultivation in Rabi season.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed its satisfaction on the availability of urea and its price during the current Kharif season.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Industries and National Food Security Rana Tanveer, Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, relevant secretaries and other officials, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister said in a

press release. The meeting decided that the Petroleum Division would ensure continuous supply of gas to all fertilizer plants for the Rabi season. The decision was taken to avert the negative impacts caused by imports upon the country's reserves.

The deputy prime minister stressed upon the provincial governments to increase their vigilance of markets so that prices should remain stable and the profiteers should not get a chance of profiteering.

With provision of uninterrupted gas supply, the fertilizer plants would run on full capacity and with sufficient production and buffer stock, the price of urea bag would be stabilized. The stable price was a good news for the farmers and rural economy, the press release in Urdu language said.

Tahira Aurangzeb visits HFH

RAWALPINDI (APP): Member National Assembly, Tahira Aurangzeb along with Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema visited Holy Family Hospital (HFH) on Saturday. During the visit, she inspected the emergency wards, operation theaters, city scan room and other medical departments.

According to the details the MNA visited the patients and inquired about the medical facilities provided for treatment. She said that HFH has been developed in the style of state of the art. "Holy Family Hospital is one of the major hospitals of Punjab where patients visit from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit to benefit from the medical facilities of HFH", she said.

Tahira further said that providing medical facilities to the people is the top priority of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Later, Tahira Aurangzeb visited the Sasta Model Bazaar, established in Committee Chowk, where she reviewed arrangements, prices and quality of essential items. She said that three model bazaars have been set up in Rawalpindi city, which need to be increased in different parts of the city.

She highlighted that Sadiqabad being a thickly populated area needed such a Bazaar for people's ease.

"Model Bazaars will be created wherever there is a need, the purpose of creating such bazaars is that people can get essential items at a controlled rate", she said. The DC said that according to the vision of CM Punjab, the district administration was taking all possible steps to provide relief to the people of Rawalpindi.

Sasta model bazaars have been set up in Haidari Chowk, Allama Iqbal Park and Committee Chowk in Rawalpindi city from where people are getting control rate and standard items, he said.



ISLAMABAD: The last day of annual Urs of the 17th century mystic, Shah Abdul Latif Bari Imam.

Security measures inspected

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of National Defense, along with the Commander of the 201 Khalid bin Walid Army Corps, inspected security locations and newly established posts along the Durand Line in Dangam district of Kunar province. During this visit, Acting Minister Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid issued necessary directives to security officials and personnel for the defense of the nation's borders and territorial integrity.

UAE president meets IEA PM

KABUL (Ariana News): Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, met with the United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during his visit for medical checkup, it was announced. During the meeting, UAE's president said that his country supports "brotherly" Afghanistan in its rebuilding, according to IEA's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

Uzbek PM's visit to Kabul:

Five trade and investment deals signed



KABUL (Ariana News): Five trade and investment agreements were signed between Kabul and Tashkent during the visit of Uzbekistan's prime minister to Kabul on Saturday, officials said.

en economic relations between the ministries of mines, agriculture and finance of the Islamic Emirate and the relevant ministries of Uzbekistan. During the signing ceremony of the agreements in Arg, the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulla Aripov emphasized on supporting Afghanistan in international forums and said that his country is ready to cooperate with Afghanistan, and the opinion of the President of Uzbekistan is that progress is not possible without engagement with the Islamic Emirate. In the ceremony, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the economic deputy of the prime minister of IEA, was also present.

Baghlan carpet weavers thrive with rising exports

BAGHLAN (BNA): In Baghlan, local carpet producers are expressing satisfaction with the growth of their business, noting significant improvements as domestic carpets gain popularity in international markets. Nasima, a resident of Pul-e-Khumri's Chap Darah area, who is engaged in carpet weaving, mentioned that compared to previous years, the carpet industry has experienced considerable growth recently, leading to a higher demand for their products. She highlighted that in earlier years, the demand for carpets was low, causing discouragement among producers. However, with the industry now flourishing, they are pleased with the progress.

Shakiba, another carpet producer from the Khwaja Alwan area of Baghlan, shared that her business has seen significant improvement this year. She proudly noted that a large volume of their carpets has been exported to foreign countries this year, marking a successful period for their trade. Additionally, carpet weavers Nasrullah and Feroz pointed out the increasing employment opportunities in Baghlan due to the rising demand and global recognition of Afghan carpets. They emphasized that local authorities are making efforts to further support the development of handicrafts by creating more job opportunities. Mawlawi Izzat Mir Haqqani, the Director of Tourism and Culture for Baghlan's Information and Culture Directorate, stated that since the re-establishment of Islamic Emirate, various initiatives have been undertaken to support the carpet industry. These efforts include providing facilities to artisans and securing markets for their products to boost sales.

Mawlawi Haqqani added that over 500 families in Baghlan are involved in carpet production, with most of them operating in rural areas. According to them, due to the lack of equipped healthcare centers, sometimes their patients lose their lives on the way to Farah or Zaranj city. Abdul Basit, a resident of Pusht-e-Rod district in Farah, said: "The people's wish for many years has been that a hospital with 50 to 100 beds, specialist doctors, and equipment be established."

Haroon, another resident of Pusht-e-Rod district, said: "We request that the Islamic Emirate provides us with healthcare services as soon as possible because we cannot take our patients to the city." Local officials, with the financial cooperation of a relief organization, distributed medical and non-medical equipment and supplies to the healthcare centers in Farah. Ehsanullah Shakir, head of public health in Farah, said: "Today, we are distributing 131 items of medical and non-medical equipment, out of which 119 are medical items and 17 are non-medical, amounting to one hundred thousand US dollars, which will be distributed to the healthcare centers in the districts and the regional hospital."

MAZAR-E-SHARIF (TOLONews): A woman in Mazar-e-Sharif has created a restaurant that provides employment opportunities for several other women. Shayesta Hakimi, who took on the responsibility of caring for her children after her husband's death, has managed to cover her and her children's living expenses by establishing this restaurant. She says that she initially started the restaurant in her home with 16,000 afghani and has now invested nearly one million afghani into it. Shayesta Hakimi told TOLONews: "It's been almost a year and eight months since I started this restaurant after my husband's death. We are twelve women working day and night. The food we prepare includes mantu, börek, Badakhshi cookies, baked samosas, fried samosas, and other people's orders like baklava, komach, bread, and cake."

In addition to Shayesta, around 12 other women also work in this restaurant, earning a livelihood for themselves. Hadia, a worker, said: "Since our schools were closed, I became very upset and tired of staying at home. When I came here, it has been very good for me. I have learned cooking, and with the salary I earn here, I can buy clothes for myself and help my parents. It's very good that I work here; I'm happy."

Another worker, Mina, said: "Since I came here, I don't have to ask my husband for money for the children's expenses. I use the income from here to support myself and my children."

Some women who visit this restaurant urge the authorities in the caretaker government to support businesswomen like

Bamiyan-Dushi power line to resume soon

BAMIYAN (TOLONews): Three years after the suspension of work on the 220 kV Bamiyan-Dushi power line, the governor of Bamiyan says that the work will soon resume. Abdullah Sarhadi, the governor of Bamiyan, said that in a meeting with the acting minister of Energy and Water, he assured us that efforts would be made to bring electricity to Bamiyan. 70% of the work has progressed, and we will try to solve the remaining 30% of the issues.

According to officials, more than four thousand families in Bamiyan city currently benefit from state electricity services. Residents of Bamiyan, most of whom do not have access to electricity, are demanding the immediate implementation of this project. Meysam Nazari, a resi-

dent of Bamiyan, said: "Unfortunately, we have electricity for only 3 to 4 hours a day, and we don't have any power at night. We cannot use any electronic devices." Mohammad Hashim, another resident of Bamiyan, said: "We use electricity, but unfortunately, in the current situation, there is no work, and the price of electricity is 50 afghani per kilowatt, which is very expensive for us." Bamiyan, with its seven districts, is one of the central provinces of the country where more than 90% of families are deprived of electricity, and many are forced to use solar power in their homes.

Provincial challenges discussed in meeting



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, emphasized that ensuring security, providing services, and improving the welfare of citizens are key responsibilities of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan during a meeting with Deputy Governor of Badakhshan. Ahmad Tayyib, the Deputy Governor of Badakhshan, who presented a detailed report on the social, economic, and security conditions in the province. He highlighted the efforts of local authorities and Mujahideen in providing services and ensuring the safety and comfort of the people. Qari Ahmad Tayyib also discussed the challenges in education, healthcare, transportation, and the implementation of developmental projects such as the

fortification of the Amu River banks and the expansion of telecommunications services in Badakhshan. Qari Ahmad Tayyib also requested the Islamic Emirate's leadership to pay special attention to addressing these issues. In response, Deputy PM Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi reaffirmed that the Islamic Emirate is committed to fulfilling its duties within the limits of its available resources and will work towards resolving the mentioned challenges.

Kabul to host bilateral trade meeting, Uzbek products exhibition

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce of Afghanistan, along with Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade, visited the site where a new exhibition showcasing Uzbek products and goods is set to open in Kabul. According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce's press office, Nooruddin Azizi, the Acting Minister, and Laziz Kudratov, Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade, inspected the venue for the

upcoming bilateral trade meeting and the two-day exhibition of Uzbek products. During their visit, they emphasized the importance of organizing the events effectively and provided necessary directives for the same. It is noteworthy that a

bilateral trade meeting between Afghanistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan is scheduled to be held in Kabul today. Additionally, the two-day exhibition of Uzbek products will be inaugurated at Afghanistan's International Exhibition Center.

Restaurant provides opportunity for women entrepreneurs

MAZAR-E-SHARIF (TOLONews): A woman in Mazar-e-Sharif has created a restaurant that provides employment opportunities for several other women. Shayesta Hakimi, who took on the responsibility of caring for her children after her husband's death, has managed to cover her and her children's living expenses by establishing this restaurant. She says that she initially started the restaurant in her home with 16,000 afghani and has now invested nearly one million afghani into it. Shayesta Hakimi told TOLONews: "It's been almost a year and eight months since I started this restaurant after my husband's death. We are twelve women working day and night. The food we prepare includes mantu, börek, Badakhshi cookies, baked samosas, fried samosas, and other people's orders like baklava, komach, bread, and cake."

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Some women who visit this restaurant urge the authorities in the caretaker government to support businesswomen like



Shayesta. Fatima, a resident of Mazar-e-Sharif, said: "This is a very good place in our area, a recreational spot for women and girls. We want the government to support them."

Another resident, Masouda, said: "We can order something from the restaurant in the morning, or if we have guests or are going somewhere. Whenever we want, there is ready and healthy food at the restaurant, and it's very convenient for us."

The Balkh Department of Industry and Commerce

pledged it supports all kinds of women's economic activities in this province. Nasir Ahmad Niazi, Deputy Director of Industry and Trade in Balkh, said: "We have agreements with various institutions and NGOs under which we oversee their work from start to finish." The manager of this restaurant says that if supported by cooperating organizations, she can provide employment opportunities for many more women and girls.

Over 1,300 families receive essential food aid



GHOR (Khaama Press): Officials at the Ghor Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department have announced that the World Food Programme, in collaboration with the technical assistance of World Vision and coordination with this department, has distributed food aid to 1,365 families in the Firozkoh and Charsadda districts of Ghor province. Zabihullah Ghousi Zada, the Ghor Rural Development Directorate spokesperson, stated that the food items distributed included flour, oil, chickpeas, salt, and nutritional supplements for children and pregnant

women. Residents of Ghor have welcomed the distribution of this food aid, expressing that these supplies can help alleviate some of the hardships the people face. This comes amid a dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which the forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan has further exacerbated. Thousands of families have been forcibly returned to a country already struggling with economic collapse, food insecurity, and a lack of basic services. In addition to the refugee crisis, Afghanistan has been hit by a series of deadly dis-

asters, including floods, earthquakes, and droughts, which have compounded the already desperate situation. These natural calamities have destroyed homes, crops, and infrastructure, leaving millions in urgent need of assistance. The combination of forced deportations, natural disasters, and the ongoing economic crisis has created a catastrophic humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. International organizations continue to call for urgent support and intervention to prevent further suffering and loss of life among the most vulnerable populations.

Residents call for support

FARAH (TOLONews): Residents of Pusht-e-Rod district in Farah province say they are facing challenges due to the lack of access to healthcare services. According to them, due to the lack of equipped healthcare centers, sometimes their patients lose their lives on the way to Farah or Zaranj city. Abdul Basit, a resident of Pusht-e-Rod district in Farah, said: "The people's wish for many years has been that a hospital with 50 to 100 beds, specialist doctors, and equipment be established."

Haroon, another resident of Pusht-e-Rod district, said: "We request that the Islamic Emirate provides us with healthcare services as soon as possible because we cannot take our patients to the city." Local officials, with the financial cooperation of a relief organization, distributed medical and non-medical equipment and supplies to the healthcare centers in Farah. Ehsanullah Shakir, head of public health in Farah, said: "Today, we are distributing 131 items of medical and non-medical equipment, out of which 119 are medical items and 17 are non-medical, amounting to one hundred thousand US dollars, which will be distributed to the healthcare centers in the districts and the regional hospital."

Personnel shortage seen behind Herat traffic mess

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Traffic Department officials in western Herat province blame the unending traffic mess in the provincial capital on a shortage of traffic wardens. Herat is a major city in western Afghanistan. The city experienced substantial population growth and urban development, highlighting the need for an expanded traffic force to manage the increasing congestion effectively. Col. Ghulam Mohammad Nagib, director of the traffic department, told Pajhwok Afghan News that Herat's vast size and

numerous areas were served by only 40 employees, including both traffic police and administrative staff. He noted that this number was insufficient for the city's current traffic demands and called on the government to address this issue. Nagib emphasized that increasing the number of traffic management personnel would greatly improve convenience for residents. The rise in manual cars, non-compliance with traffic rules, and overall congestion contributed to the urban traffic chaos, he remarked. Several traffic officials echoed these concerns.

Mobarak Shah, a traffic police officer, noted the city's expansion and the increased number of intersections necessitated additional staff. Abdul Rahim, another officer, reported working long hours across various parts of the city and expressed hope for more traffic management positions to enhance service. Nasar Ahmad Siddiqui, a taxi driver in Herat, said many roads were without traffic police, leading to severe congestion. He suggested that mapping out city areas and recruiting additional per-

sonnel could address these issues. Experts also emphasize that the shortage of traffic officers contributes to increased traffic accidents and calls for immediate action. Abdul Ghaffar Karimi, a social expert in Herat, warned that insufficient traffic forces lead to higher accident rates and greater loss of life and property. The lack of traffic personnel in Herat remains a pressing issue, requiring urgent attention and effective solutions to improve traffic management in the province.

Indian hospitals hit as doctors strike to protest rape, murder of medic

KOLKATA (Reuters): Hospitals and clinics across India turned away patients except for emergency cases on Saturday as medical professionals started a 24-hour shutdown in protest against the brutal rape and murder of a doctor in the eastern city of Kolkata. More than one million doctors were expected to join the strike, paralysing medical services across the world's most populous nation. Hospitals said faculty staff from medical colleges had been pressed into service for emergency cases.

The strike, which began at 6am, cut off access to elective medical procedures and outpatient consultations, according to a statement by the Indian Medical Association. A 31-year-old trainee doctor was raped and murdered last week inside the medical college in Kolkata where she worked, triggering nationwide protests among doctors and drawing parallels to the notorious gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in New Delhi in 2012.

Outside the RG Kar Medical College, where the crime took place, a heavy police presence was seen on Saturday while the hospital premises were deserted, according to the ANI news agency. Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal, which includes Kolkata, has backed the protests across the state, demanding the investigation be fast-tracked and the guilty be punished in the strongest way possible.

A large number of private clinics and diagnostic centres remained

closed in Kolkata on Saturday. Dr Sandip Saha, a private paediatrician in the city, told Reuters he would not attend to patients except in emergencies. Hospitals and clinics in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Guwahati in Assam and Chennai in Tamil Nadu and other cities joined the strike, set to be one of the largest shutdown of hospital services in recent memory.

In Odisha state, patients were queuing up and senior doctors were trying to manage the rush, Dr Prabhas Ranjan Tripathy, additional medical superintendent of All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the city of Bhubaneswar, told Reuters. "Resident doctors are on full strike, and because of that, the pressure is mounting on all faculty members, which means senior doctors," he said.

Patients queued up at hospitals, some unaware that the agitation would not allow them to get medical attention. "I have spent 500 [Indian] rupees (\$6) on travel to come here. I have paralysis and a burning sensation in my feet, head and other parts of my body," an unidentified patient at SCB Medical College Hospital in the city of Cuttack in Odisha told local television. "We were not aware of the strike. What can we do? We have to return home." Raghunath Sahu, 45, who had lined up at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, told Reuters that a daily quota set by the doctors to see patients had ended before noon.

"I have brought my ailing grandmother. They did not see her today. I

will have to wait for another day and try again," Sahu said while moving away from the queue. India's Central Bureau of Investigation, the agency investigating the rape and murder, has summoned a number of medical students from the RG Kar college to ascertain the circumstances of the crime, according to a police source in Kolkata.

The CBI also questioned the principal of the hospital on Friday, the source said. India's government introduced sweeping changes to the criminal justice system, including tougher sentences, after the Delhi gang-rape, but campaigners say little has changed. Anger at the failure of tougher laws to deter a rising tide of violence against women has fuelled protests by doctors and women's groups.

"Women form the majority of our profession in this country. Time and again, we have asked for safety for them," IMA President RV Asokan told Reuters on Friday. The IMA has called for further legal measures to better protect healthcare workers from violence and swift investigation of the "barbaric" crime in Kolkata. "Punishment certainly is needed (and it has to be a very harsher punishment, but at that same time the execution, the final culmination of the punishment should take place. And that is not happening," said senior criminal lawyer Shobha Gupta, who represented a Muslim woman gang-raped during religious riots that swept the western state of Gujarat in 2002.



PESHAWAR: Director Public Health, Dr. Irshad Roghani recording history of Monkeypox virus patient.

Heavy rain lashes several parts of Lahore

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Heavy rain and windstorm lashed Lahore and its adjoining areas on Friday night. Rain – light to moderate – was reported from Lakshmi Chowk, Shimla Pahari, Davies Road, The Mall, Chowburji, Johar Town, Iqbal Town, Gulberg, Mozang, Ferozepur Road and Ichhra.

Tajpura had the highest 22 millimeter rain. WASA, LWMC, MCL, and administration have been directed to stay alert to avoid any untoward situation and facilitate citizens. The showers made the weather pleasant but disrupted the power supply leading to agonising experience for people in many areas. Low-lying areas turned puddles, creating hurdles in commuting.

A few days earlier, it rained in several parts of Lahore and adjoining areas and the showers provided relief to the weather-beaten people. It proclaimed the onset of monsoon. People rejoiced at the showers of relief which brought the temperature down and mitigated sultry conditions.

Meanwhile, there was heavy rain in Gujranwala, Jhang, Gujra, Sangla Hill and Nankana Sahib while Ferozwala, Muridke, Ahmedpur Sharqiya and Och Sharif also received heavy rain. Three labourers died and one injured as a result of roof collapse in Faisalabad.

Meanwhile, torrential rains have occurred in various cities of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. There is a possibility of rain with thunderstorms in Karachi.

In Balochistan, rivers and streams are in spate, low-lying areas have been submerged, crops and link roads have been destroyed. Rainfall has also been reported in Islamabad, and the Meteorological Department has forecast more rains in the next 24 hours.

Moreover, heavy downpours in Burewala city and its suburbs have caused widespread inundation, with low-lying areas submerged and water entering homes and shops. Roads like College Road and Arif Bazar have also been submerged. Power supply also remained disrupted due to the tripping of various feeders.

Low lying areas are likely to be inundated by flooding in Balochistan and Sindh. Torrential rains may generate landslides and flash flooding in local nullahs and streams of D.G Khan, Dadu, Kalat, Khuzdar, Barkhan, Awaran, Panjgur, Washuk, Mastung, Lasbella, 16th to 18th August. They may generate landslides and flash flooding in Murree, Galliat, Mansehra, Kohistan, Chitral, Gilgit-Baltistan, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Nowshera, Swabi, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Northeast Punjab, Hill torrents of and Kashmir from 16th, 18th & 19th August.

Internet disruption LHC directs govt, PTA to submit response

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Amid intermittent internet disruptions troubling netizens all across the country, the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Saturday directed the federal government and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to submit their response on the matter.

LHC's Justice Shakil Ahmad, while hearing a petition filed by a citizen named Noman Sarwar against the nationwide internet "shutdown", announced the reserved verdict on Saturday. Justice Ahmad ordered all the parties to the case to ensure their representatives' appearance and submit their responses on the next hearing of the case due on August 21.

The development comes as millions across the country continue to face trouble accessing internet services due to limited connectivity, particularly while using mobile data in some regions. The Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led administration has attributed the issue to the purported testing of an internet firewall to rein in social media which is

equipped with filters that will block unwanted content from reaching a wider audience.

The plea, which mentions the federal government, the PTA, the cabinet secretary, the secretary for information and technology (IT), the secretary of interior and Ministry of Human Rights as respondents, complains that the authorities didn't give any reason for shutting down social media platforms in the country. It also calls for immediate restoration of internet access and the revocation of the Centre's decision to restrict access to it.

"Businesses and every sphere of life are being affected because of the internet's closure. Shutting down the internet is also a violation of fundamental rights," the petition read. A day earlier, Justice Ahmad, while reserving the verdict, had expressed displeasure over the state counsel's non-seriousness and "lack of knowledge" on the matter of the nationwide internet service disruptions.

The government's move has been under scrutiny from various sections of society for its adverse economic effects. Chairman

Wireless and Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan has warned that online and electronic-related businesses, an essential pillar of the country's digital economy, are now "struggling to maintain operations, and the slowdown is threatening their very survival".

Meanwhile, the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) has said that frequent internet disruptions threaten to hinder the development of a strong digital infrastructure as the backbone of the country's economic development. However, the federal government has defended its decision to enforce an internet firewall terming it a cybersecurity measure "that every country in the world takes". "Look at the cybersecurity attacks being carried out on the country and the world as well. With the evolution of cybersecurity threats, states need to have a better capability to ensure that the threats are [well] responded to," Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said.

Ukraine used Western arms to destroy bridge: Russia

MOSCOW: Russia has accused Ukraine of using Western rockets – likely made in the United States – to target a strategic bridge over the Seym River in the Kursk region, killing volunteers trying to evacuate civilians. Ukrainian forces hit the bridge in the Glushkovsky district of Kursk as they pushed forward with their incursion into the territory in western Russia.

"For the first time, the Kursk region was hit by Western-made rocket launchers, probably American HIMARS," Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said late on Friday on the Telegram messaging app. "As a result of the attack on the bridge ... it was completely destroyed, and volunteers who were assisting the evacuated civilian population were killed." Russia's news agency TASS released the names of two volunteers it said were "murdered" in the attack.

Russian officials also have said the destruction of the bridge will hinder the evacuation of civilians from the area. Ukraine's incursion into Kursk comes just months after the US and several of its NATO allies said in May that they had authorised Kyiv to use their weapons to attack targets inside Russia. Al Jazeera's Defence Editor Alex

Gatopoulos said Friday's bridge bombing will make it difficult for Russian forces to defend the area against Ukrainian advances and access supplies. "Russian units there [are] caught between a river and a hard place – not very many places for them to go at the moment," he said.

"Now, there's going to be an issue for the Russians because if they can't supply these units with the ammunition that they need – and the fuel – then these units will be forced to retreat over the river." The Ukrainian military, which has been battling a Russian invasion since February 2022, launched the Kursk offensive earlier this month – a campaign that has been described as the first incursion by a foreign army into Russia since World War II. On Thursday, Ukraine said it captured the Russian town of Sudzha, a strategic natural gas hub in the Kursk region. Kyiv claims it has taken control of 82 settlements in Russia over an area of 1,150sq km (440sq miles) since August 6.

Ukrainian officials have said the country does not aim to hold on to Russian territory. On Thursday, a Ukrainian presidential adviser said the Kursk incursion can be "used to convince the Russian Federation to enter into a fair negotiation process". Marina

Miron, a military analyst at King's College London, told Al Jazeera that politically, Ukraine is hoping to use its Kursk operation "as a bargaining chip" in negotiations with Russia. "It is important [that] Ukraine is saying they are not going to occupy that land," said Miron.

She noted that the incursion – and the use of Western equipment on Russian oil – "has caused some concerns even if it was accepted that Ukraine is doing this operation to defend itself". Kyiv also is trying to "relieve pressure" from the Donbas region by drawing Russian troops into Kursk, Miron added. That "doesn't seem to be working as of yet, but it is clear that the Ukrainian forces are trying to entrench themselves in that region", she said.

For its part, Moscow has insisted that it is succeeding in repelling the Ukrainian offensive and inflicting heavy losses on Kyiv's forces. On Saturday, TASS reported – citing the Russia's Ministry of Defence – that Russian forces shot down 10 HIMARS rockets and 35 Ukrainian drones, and killed 420 "enemy servicemen" in the past 24 hours. Reporting from Moscow, Al Jazeera's Dorsa Jabbari highlighted that both sides are releasing contradictory accounts of what is happening. — Aljazeera

Hundreds evacuated as forest fire rages in Turkiye

ISTANBUL (AFP): Fire-fighters are battling a strong forest fire in the Aegean resort city of Izmir for a third day, Turkish media and officials said on Saturday, with hundreds more people evacuated overnight.

Helicopters and water bombers which were grounded due to strong winds continued their fight against the flames on Saturday morning, the NTV news channel reported. The fire started on Thursday and was quickly spread to residential areas by winds blowing at 50 kilometres an hour. Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said that 900 residents in five affected districts were evacuated overnight in Izmir.

A witness told AFP that thick smoke had turned the sky grey, with the smell of smoke hanging over the city, the third most-populated in Turkiye. "Currently, two planes and eleven helicopters are continuing to intervene," said Agriculture and Forestry Ministry's Ibrahim Yumakli, saying that residents of the city should not be "worried". Around 1,600 hectares (3,900 acres) have been affected, the minister said.

Six other fires continue to rage in forest areas in other cities in Turkiye, including northwestern Bolu and Aydin in the west. Over 300 personnel are actively involved in the firefighting efforts in the Aegean province of Aydin's Bozdogan district — using 32 fire trucks, 11 water tankers and five bulldozers, Anadolu Agency reported. The fire in Karsikaya district has already destroyed 16 homes and forced the evacuation of 87 houses and 45 businesses.

An animal shelter was also evacuated as the fire spread, and smoke from the burning forests has affected multiple parts of the city, including the Bayrakli and Cigli districts.

Hamas rejects 'new' Gaza truce conditions

DOHA (AFP): Hamas said it rejected "new conditions" in a Gaza ceasefire proposal that US-led mediators presented during two days of talks in Qatar. Diplomatic efforts have so far failed to alleviate the suffering endured over more than 10 months of war, but US President Joe Biden insisted after the latest round of talks that "we are closer than we have ever been."

He is sending US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to Israel this weekend to push the latest proposal, the State Department said. Egyptian, Qatari and US mediators have been seeking to finalize details of a framework initially outlined by Biden in May, which he said Israel had proposed.

In a joint statement, the mediators said they had presented both sides with a proposal that "bridges remaining gaps" and will continue working in the coming days to hash out the specifics on humanitarian provisions and the hostage-prisoners swap. Talks aiming to secure a rapid deal are set to resume in Cairo "before the end of next week." Hamas, which did not attend the Doha talks, swiftly announced its opposition to what it called "new conditions" from Israel in the latest plan.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on mediators to "pressure" Hamas to accept Biden's framework. Threats by Iran and its proxies to attack Israel have added renewed urgency to the efforts to hammer out a Gaza ceasefire, with mediators seeking a deal in the hopes of dousing a wider regional conflict. "No one in the region should take actions to undermine this process," Biden warned, later telling reporters, "There's just a couple more issues, I think we've got a shot."

An informed source told AFP Hamas had objected to conditions about keeping Israeli troops on Gaza's border with Egypt and terms related to the release of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Israeli hostages. Western ally Jordan, however, put the blame squarely on Netanyahu for blocking a deal, with Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi urging pressure "by everyone who wishes to see this through to completion."

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy and his French counterpart Stephane Sejourné held talks in Israel on Friday to press the deal. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz told his visiting counterparts

he expects foreign support if Iran seeks to avenge the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. Sejourné replied that it would be "inappropriate" to discuss responding to any attack while diplomacy to stop it from happening is in high gear.

A senior US official, speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity, said Iran would face "cataclysmic" consequences if it strikes Israel. A deadly attack by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank late Thursday drew international condemnation and calls for sanctions, including against government ministers, over the surge in settler violence against Palestinians since the Gaza war began. The Israeli military said "dozens of Israeli civilians, some of them masked," entered the village of Jit and "set fire to vehicles and structures in the area, hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails." A Palestinian man was shot dead.

The West Bank-based Palestinian foreign ministry described the attack as "organized state terrorism." The European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said he would propose sanctions against Israeli government "enablers" of Jewish settler violence.



HYDERABAD: People waiting for their turn at a government hospital during a nationwide doctors' strike against the rape and murder of their colleague.

Trump, Harris to vie for Pennsylvania votes

WILKES-BARRE, Pennsylvania (Reuters): Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris will hold dueling campaign events this weekend in Pennsylvania, the political battleground that could be the most critical state in the Nov. 5 presidential election.

Trump, the former president, will hold a Saturday rally in Wilkes-Barre in the northeastern section of the state. Vice President Harris will conduct a bus tour of western Pennsylvania starting in Pittsburgh on Sunday, ahead of the Democratic National Convention kickoff on Monday in Chicago. Pennsylvania was one of three Rust Belt states, along with Wisconsin and Michigan, that helped power Trump's upset victory in 2016. President Joe Biden, who grew up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, flipped the trio back to Democrats in 2020.

The three states are true bellwethers - the only US states to have

voted for the eventual winner of the presidential race in every cycle since 2008. In related polls published on Saturday, the New York Times said that since entering the race, Harris "has stormed into contention" in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and North Carolina, Sun Belt states where Trump appeared to have been forging ahead. The New York Times and Siena College surveys found Harris leading Trump among likely voters in Arizona, 50% to 45%, and in North Carolina, 49% to 47%, and narrowing the former president's leads in Nevada, 47% to 49%, and in Georgia, 46% to 50%.

With 19 electoral votes out of the 270 needed to secure the White House, compared with 15 in Michigan and 10 in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania may be the biggest prize in November's election. A statistical model created by Nate Silver, the election forecaster, estimates that

Pennsylvania is more than twice as likely as any other to be the "tipping point" state - the one whose electoral votes push either Harris or Trump over the top. Harris' entry into the race after Biden ended his reelection bid last month has upended the contest, erasing the lead Trump built during the final weeks of Biden's shaky campaign. Harris is leading Trump by more than two percentage points in Pennsylvania, according to the poll tracking website FiveThirtyEight.

Trump won Pennsylvania in 2016 by around 44,000 votes, a margin of less than one percentage point, while Biden prevailed by just over 80,000 votes, a 1.2% margin. Both campaigns have made the state a top priority, including blanketing the airwaves with advertisements. Of the more than \$110 million spent on advertising in seven swing states since Biden dropped out in late July, roughly \$42 million was spent in

Pennsylvania, more than twice any other state, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday, citing data from the tracking site AdImpact. Democratic and Republican groups have already reserved \$114 million in ad time in Pennsylvania from late August through the election, more than twice as much as the \$55 million reserved in Arizona, the next highest total, according to AdImpact. Those figures are sure to increase, given the Harris campaign has not yet made any reservations past the Labor Day holiday on Sept. 2, according to the firm.

Both Trump and Harris have visited the state more than half a dozen times each this year. Trump was wounded during an assassination attempt at his rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13. He has said he will return to Butler in October, and also announced he will give remarks on the economy at a campaign event in York, Pennsylvania, on Monday. Trump's

running mate, Senator JD Vance, will deliver remarks in Philadelphia that day as well. Trump's trip to Wilkes-Barre on Saturday in Luzerne County is aimed at solidifying support among the white, non-college-educated voters who lifted him to victory in 2016. The blue-collar county voted Democratic for decades before swinging heavily toward Trump in 2016, mirroring other similar regions around the country.

Trump won Luzerne in 2020 by 14.4 percentage points, a smaller margin than his 19.4 point win in 2016. With Biden out of the picture Trump likely sees room for gains in this area of the state, said Chris Borick, a political science professor at Muhlenberg College. "This is the type of place where Trump has lots of strengths," Borick said, referring to the state's northeast region. "Marginal gains in a region like this certainly could have some impact on his ability to take

back Pennsylvania." Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, will make multiple stops across Allegheny and Beaver counties on Sunday, the campaign said. The tour is the first time Harris, Walz and their spouses have campaigned together since their first rally as a presidential ticket in Philadelphia earlier this month. Pennsylvania was at the heart of Biden's winning 2020 strategy across the Rust Belt states: limiting Trump's margins among working-class white voters while building majorities among suburban voters and driving higher turnout in urban areas with large Black populations. The Harris campaign is pursuing a similar "win big, lose small" strategy, aiming for large margins in the cities and suburbs of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, while limiting losses in smaller counties like Beaver County, where Trump won 58% of the vote in 2020.