

PA proceedings adjourned

PESHAWAR, Aug 18 (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly proceedings has been adjourned till Monday August 26, at 2pm due to unknown reason. Earlier, the assembly proceedings were adjourned for Monday August 19 at 2pm, said a notification issued here on Sunday.



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Blinken to push for Gaza ceasefire

Israel launches fresh strikes killing 21 people in Gaza

CAIRO/GAZA (Reuters) Israeli strikes killed at least 21 people in Gaza on Sunday, including six children, Palestinian health authorities said, ahead of a visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to try to push forward ceasefire talks.

The children and their mother were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a house in the central town of Deir Al-Balah, health officials said. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The Israeli military said it destroyed rocket launchers used to hit Israel from the southern city of Khan Younis, the scene of intense fighting in recent weeks, and killed 20 Palestinian fighters.

Diplomatic efforts to halt the Israel-Hamas conflict and secure a deal to return hostages held in Gaza have intensified in recent days. Talks mediated by the U.S., Egypt and Qatar are set to continue this week in Cairo, following a two-day meeting in Doha last week.

Making his 10th trip to the region since the war began, Blinken was due in Israel on Sunday, days after the United States put forward bridging proposals that the mediating countries believe would

close gaps between the warring parties.

There has been increased urgency to reach a ceasefire deal amid fears of a regional escalation. Iran has threatened to retaliate against Israel after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31.

At Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah relatives gathered around the bodies of the mother and her six children, who were wrapped in white shrouds bearing their names. The youngest was aged 18 months, their grandfather Mohammed Khattab told Reuters at the funeral.

"What was their crime? ... Did they kill a Jew? Did they shoot at the Jews? Did they launch rockets at the Jews? Did they destroy the state of Israel? What did they do? What did they do to deserve this?" said Khattab.

Israel has denied targeting civilians as it hunts down Hamas militants, accusing the group of operating from civilian facilities including schools and hospitals. Hamas denies this.

After 10 months of war, Palestinians in Gaza are living in constant desperation to find a safe place.

"We are tired of displacement. People are being

pushed into narrow areas in Deir Al-Balah and Al-Mawasi, which have become pressure cookers," Tamer Al-Burai, who lives in Deir Al-Balah with several relatives, told Reuters via a chat app. Tanks were just 1.5 km (0.9 miles) away, Burai added.

On Friday, the military ordered the evacuation of areas north of Khan Younis and east of Deir Al-Balah where hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the fighting had been sheltering in dire conditions.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Friday's orders, which included other enclave areas outside the humanitarian zones, had reduced the size of the "humanitarian area" designated as safe by Israeli forces to about 11% of the total area of the Gaza Strip. The Deir Al-Balah municipality, estimating the current population in the city at 1 million, said the evacuation orders meant more people were crammed into a smaller space.

Additionally, water shortages loomed as several water wells and tankers that used to provide residents with 60% of supplies were located in the areas under evacuation orders, the

municipality said in a statement on Sunday.

BLINKEN TRIP
In Israel, Blinken is expected to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other senior officials.

Netanyahu's office said in a statement on Saturday there was "cautious optimism" a deal could be reached and U.S. officials have also been positive, while cautioning there was still work to be done.

However Hamas said optimistic U.S. comments were "deceptive" and accused Netanyahu of making new conditions in an attempt to "blow up" the negotiation.

Hamas wants a ceasefire deal to end the war, while Israel wants a temporary pause.

The war erupted on Oct. 7 when Hamas fighters rampaged into Israel, killing around 1,200 people and seizing around 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's subsequent military campaign has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to Palestinian health authorities, and reduced much of Gaza to rubble. Israel says it has killed 17,000 Hamas fighters.



GAZA STRIP: Mourners react next to the bodies of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on Sunday.

Serbian police kill armed man in arrest shootout

BELGRADE (AFP): A man has been shot dead by Serbian police, the interior minister said Sunday, after being connected with the attacker behind a crossbow shooting at the Israeli embassy in Belgrade in June.

Interior minister Ivica Dacic said the man fired shots toward the police near the southern city of Novi Pazar late Saturday and refused to surrender.

"During the arrest, he resisted, fired three to four shots at the police, and members of the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit neutralized him," Dacic told local media.

He added that the man had previously been convicted and jailed for terrorist offenses.

The police operation took place in the village of Hotkovo, near Novi Pazar — a historical and political center of Serbia's Bosniak Muslim minority.

Police said the man was wanted in connection with another man killed by police in Belgrade on June 29th, after shooting a police officer in the neck with a crossbow outside the Israeli embassy.

The attack in the Serbian capital was characterized as a "terrorist act" by officials, who described the assailant as a Serbian convert to Islam.

The man killed Saturday night was the landlord of the June attacker, police said, who had lived in his apartment in Novi Pazar prior to his attack at the embassy.

He had been on the run since the June attack, the police minister stated.

Local media described the man killed in Novi Pazar as a "well-known follower" of the Wahhabi movement — a purist form of Islam that dominates in Saudi Arabia.

PM vows to tackle power issues

Says streamlining energy matters on priority

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed the government's resolve to stop electricity theft, reduce line losses, and improve the power distribution system across the country.

He informed that recently the government had appointed new board chairmen and members in five power distribution companies (DISCOs) through a transparent process, hoping that these appointments would further improve the performance of DISCOs.

Presiding over a meeting held here to review the matters of Power ministry, the prime minister directed the Power Minister and Secretary Power Division to coordinate with the provinces with respect to

halting the electricity theft, performance of DISCOs and other matters of the sector.

"A whole of the government approach should be adopted to resist power theft across the country," the prime minister said.

He also directed the provincial governments to maintain the number of police force and Tehsildars as per the DISCOs' needs.

He also ordered the concerned authorities to deal with the corrupt elements in the power distribution companies with iron hand and take strict action against them.

He directed DISCOs to make the kutchehri system more effective and result oriented with respect to the public complaints.

PM Shehbaz said the meeting of the steering committee that was formed

in connection with shifting of agriculture tubewells to solar energy in Balochistan, should be called immediately.

The meeting was informed that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regarding the transfer of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan to solar energy had been notified to the Steering Committee.

The meeting was further informed that a package was being prepared regarding acknowledgement of officers who had shown good performance.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Power Awaiz Khan Leghari and other officers of the relevant ministries and divisions.

PTI to hold public rally in Islamabad on Thursday

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Adviser on Information to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, on Sunday during a press conference, announced that the senior leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in consultation with Imran Khan, has decided to hold a public rally in Islamabad on August 22. He emphasized that all party workers have been mobilized for the event, and a large number of supporters from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will travel to Islamabad for the rally.

Barrister Saif further stated that PTI Chairman Imran Khan has made it clear that the party will not engage in any illegal activities during the rally. However, he expressed concerns that the

Islamabad district administration might deny permission for the rally based on false and baseless allegations.

"I urge the Islamabad government and district administration to fulfill their legal duty by granting permission for the rally, as it is our constitutional right," Barrister Saif asserted. He emphasized that, according to Pakistan's constitution, citizens have the right to hold political gatherings wherever they choose.

"We request the district administration not to create obstacles, as the rally will be peaceful," he added. Barrister Saif warned that any attempts to disrupt the rally with claims of armed groups or Taliban involvement would not deter PTI from holding the event. "I

appeal to the authorities in Islamabad not to create a situation that could further escalate tensions," he said.

Addressing the recent dismissal of provincial minister Shakeel Khan, Barrister Saif shared some facts with the media, stating that the removal was based on the recommendations of a committee formed by PTI's founder, Imran Khan. The committee, which was tasked with investigating corruption allegations against Minister Shakeel Khan, was established under Imran Khan's directives.

The committee members, including former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Shah Farman, senior leader Qazi Anwar, and retired Brigadier Musaddiq Abbasi, were personally selected by Imran Khan.

Kundi worries about worsening law and order situation in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Sunday emphasized the critical issue of maintaining peace in the province.

He said that the situation is dire when judges themselves are not safe, highlighting the deteriorating conditions in the province.

The Governor said this during a meeting with a delegation from the Peoples Lawyers Forum led by Sardar Hashmat Nawaz Khan Saddozai.

The meeting included key figures such as Shah Fahad Ansari Advocate Supreme Court and Divisional President of Peoples Lawyers Forum, Sardar Adnan Saddozai District President, Sardar Hizbullah Khan Gundapur Divisional General Secretary, Sardar Qaisar Zaib District General

Secretary, and Abid Awan Advocate District General Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party. Also present were Gohar Rahman Khattak, Provincial President of the People's Lawyers Forum, and Lajbar Khan Khaleel, Provincial General Secretary, Advocate.

Governor Kundi assured that he would contact the Chairman of the State Life Insurance Corporation regarding benefits for lawyers.

He also proposed that land be identified for a lawyers' colony in Dera Ismail Khan. In addition, he suggested that a judicial complex be established in the Tank area, discussing the matter with the Federal Minister for Law.

The Governor proposed allocating a quota for young lawyers in the Judicial Academy that

would address the issue of starting LL.M. classes at Gomal University.

He also mentioned plans to discuss with relevant authorities regarding the establishment of a Narcotics Court in Dera Ismail Khan.

Shah Fahad Ansari, the Divisional President of the Peoples Lawyers Forum, expressed gratitude to Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, acknowledging his role and performance as a significant contributor to the province and particularly to the Peoples Lawyers Forum, of which they are proud.

Meanwhile, the delegation of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Hazara Division, led by President Malik Farooq Khan, called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House in Peshawar.

The discussion focused on the challenges faced by the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in the Hazara Division.

During the meeting, Governor Kundi assured the delegation of his commitment to fulfilling the trust placed in him by the party leadership.

He emphasized that resolving issues related to federal departments is a top priority, and he will not tolerate any negligence in this regard.

The Governor highlighted his focus on promoting sports, engaging youth, and empowering women as key priorities.

He mentioned a recent meeting with Federal Interior Minister and PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, where he proposed the establishment of an international-level cricket academy and hotel in Abbottabad.

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.



SPRINGFIELD, NEW ZEALAND: A road sign is being covered with snow during heavy snowfall in Springfield, in the Selwyn District of Canterbury, in the South Island, New Zealand, on Sunday.



KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari planting a sapling at Bilawal House as part of the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign.

Prosperity in Balochistan linked to sustainable peace: Naqvi



QUETTA (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday said that the prosperity and development of Balochistan are linked to sustainable peace.

During his visit to Frontier Corps South Balochistan, he praised the Frontier Corps for their exemplary services in

maintaining peace under challenging circumstances. Inspector General of Frontier Corps South, Major General Bilal Sarfraz Khan, accompanied the minister.

During his visit to the Frontier Corps South headquarters, the minister paid his respects at the Martyrs'

Memorial, laid a wreath, and offered prayers for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks.

He also paid tribute to the sacrifices of the martyrs of the Frontier Corps.

Earlier, he chaired a meeting wherein he was briefed on operations against the Khawarij and

anti-smuggling efforts.

He was told that over the past six months, illegal goods worth 4.7 billion rupees have been seized. Frontier Corps South is on the front line in thwarting the malicious intentions of the Khawarij.

The minister emphasized that the officers and soldiers of Frontier Corps South are playing a pivotal role in maintaining peace in Balochistan. He expressed pride in their professional skills and bravery, and assured that their needs would be met within available resources.

He reiterated that the prosperity and development of Balochistan are tied to sustainable peace, and stressed the need for comprehensive measures to empower the youth of Balochistan.

Furthermore, he emphasized that all stakeholders must come together for the sustainable development of Balochistan.

Efforts being made to extend relief, basic facilities to masses: Gilani

MIAN CHANNU (APP): Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, on Sunday, stated that every possible effort was under-way to extend relief and basic facilities to the masses and they should be relieved of inflation.

He expressed these views while addressing a convocation as the chief guest at a private college.

"We are giving the incumbent government the right advice, and I am hopeful that we will soon steer the country out of crises and set it on the path to

progress. All political parties should play their role in the country's development and prosperity", he maintained.

Gilani congratulated the students who completed their degrees, especially their parents. He said that the youth should make the nation proud with their education and skills and it must become an essential part of the country's economic development along with their families.

The educated youth needs to bring about significant change in society with

their acquired education, he said and added that they should introduce new research and innovations in their respective fields.

"Our youth is second to none in terms of talent and capability", Chairman Senate observed.

Later, speaking to the media, he said that Arshad Nadeem was a national hero and he commended him for winning a gold medal for the country in the Paris Olympics.

He said that their elders were among those who made Pakistan, and the

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has rendered great sacrifices for the restoration of democracy. The 1973 constitution given by the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a monumental achievement while differences of opinion were the beauty of democracy, he informed.

"Each one of us should work together for the national interest, he said adding that all political leaders must set their direction with the country's interests in mind", Gilani suggested.

Gandapur harming KP through corruption: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Information Minister Azma Bokhari said that ministers, who accused others of corruption were themselves labelling their own Chief Minister a thief and corrupt.

She said that it was known about Imran Khan that he committed corruption and allowed others to follow suit. "On the other

hand, Ali Amin Gandapur is indulging into corruption all alone and does not involve other cabinet members to share his misdeeds of corruption," she added.

The minister made these remarks while giving a rebuttal to Barrister Saif's press conference. She said that in reality, the KP government had badly failed to manage the affairs of the province. "KP is being

harmed by the corruption of Ali Amin Gandapur alone, and he is disallowing his cabinet members to share his corruption. It has led to conflicts, disputes arising between them and are even noticed in talk shows and press conferences," she added.

The minister said that disputes have arisen over the distribution and allocation of government funds

in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "These people came to power to change the fate of Pashtuns," she added. Azma Bokhari stated that she was surprised to know as few people still pin their hopes on the KP government. "The corrupt and inept members which were part of Imran Khan and Buzdar cabinets are part of Gandapur's cabinet as well.

IG instructs all regions to eliminate criminal gangs

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, has said that zero tolerance should be ensured for delays in registering FIRs, restricting complainants, and corruption, with strict action to be taken.

He expressed these views while giving instructions to officers during a meeting he chaired at the Central Police Office. He emphasized that the crack-down for arrest of A-category proclaimed offenders should be made more effective, and the rate of challans and recovery should be further improved.

He instructed that DNA samples in cases of abuse against women and children be sent immediately

for forensic analysis. In high-profile cases, the quality of investigation and compliance of issued protocols must be ensured at all costs.

The IG directed all regions to eliminate criminal gangs and resolve pending complaints on 1787 and the CM Portal within the given timeline.

He appreciated the performance of DPOs in districts, including Khushab and Bhakkar, for their crackdown on notorious gangs and also praised the excellent command and public service delivery of RPOs Sargodha and Faisalabad.

He reviewed the performance, issues, and challenges faced by the six regions and their districts.

President for enhancing forest coverage to mitigate impacts of climate change

KARACHI (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday called for enhancing the national forest coverage by planting more trees to help mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and global warming.

He said that Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and global warming and urged the youth and civil society in helping increase forest cover and planting more trees to mitigate their adverse impacts.

The president expressed these views while planting a "Neem" sapling at Bilawal House, Karachi, as a part of the annual Monsoon tree

plantation campaign. August 18 also marks the National Tree Plantation Day in Pakistan. President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, the president said that "Neem" was an environment friendly tree, offering numerous environmental benefits, such as clean air, cool shade, and acting as a natural mosquito repellent.

He recalled that during Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed's first tenure as prime minister, he had served as the minister for climate and had initiated a tree plantation campaign, wherein Neem trees were planted

throughout the country.

He said that the need to plant trees had become of paramount importance in view of the rising temperature in Pakistan.

President Asif Ali Zardari urged the nation, particularly the youth and civil society, to actively participate in the Monsoon tree plantation campaign and plant as many trees as possible in their neighbourhood and surroundings for a better environment.

The president said that Monsoon tree plantation campaign was a great opportunity to enhance forest cover, increase greenery in Pakistan, and make their environment healthy and clean.

He remarked that enhancing forests and greenery would make the environment healthier and safer for their future generations.

The president said that Pakistan had undertaken successful mangrove restoration, under which mangroves on millions of acres of land had been planted in Sindh.

"We are working committedly to further enhance mangroves cover and plant more trees", he added.

He said that all segments of society should actively participate in tree plantation campaigns to bring down the temperatures, increase greenery and forest coverage.

CM House bans plastic bottles

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has raised the bar for environmental accountability by prohibiting disposable plastic water bottles in all government offices, beginning with the CM House.

The initiative aimed at cutting plastic waste and bolstering sustainability, was enacted immediately after a notification on August 16, the CM said.

To support this mission, Murad Shah instructed his secretariat to substitute all plastic water bottles with glass jugs during meetings at the CM House. Footage from Sunday showed glass jugs and cups on the meeting tables, showcasing the government's effort to minimize plastic waste.

The CM emphasised the importance of this change during a meeting, directing participants to follow suit by eliminating plastic bottles and other disposable plastic items from their offices and public spaces.

He advocated for the use of sustainable alternatives, such as glass and biodegradable materials, to help protect the environment and improve public health.

"Our drains, rivers, ponds, and seas are being choked by plastic waste, which is endangering marine life and polluting our environment," said Mr Shah. "We, as a nation, must adopt environmentally friendly practices to safeguard our natural resources and ensure a cleaner, healthier future."

In addition to banning plastic bottles, CM Murad Ali Shah promised further actions to fight environmental degradation. He detailed plans to tackle air pollution throughout the province, showing his administration's commitment to comprehensive environmental reform.

"This initiative is just the start," CM Shah stated. "We are determined to take significant steps to control air pollution and improve our overall environmental quality."

The introduction of glass jugs at the CM House is a symbolic but important move towards a greener Sindh, setting a precedent for other government institutions and the public to combat plastic pollution.

Tajikistan envoy calls on Punjab Governor



F.P. Report

LAHORE: The ambassador of Republic of Tajikistan, Yusuf Sharifzoda called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. Honorary Consul General of Tajikistan Mian Nazir Ahmad was also with him. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest, strengthening of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan in the fields of trade, culture and education were discussed.

Talking on this occasion, Punjab Governor, Sardar Salim Haider Khan said that Pakistan and Tajikistan have deep brotherly relations due to common religion and culture. The two sides expressed

determination to enhance relations in every sector, especially in the field of trade. Governor Punjab said that there are investment opportunities for foreign investors in various sectors in Pakistan and Tajik investors can benefit from the facilities given to businessmen through the Special Economic Facilitation Council.

He said that business activities should increase between Pakistan and Tajikistan. He said that high quality furniture is made in Pakistan? adding that opportunities should be explored in the markets of Tajikistan.

Governor Punjab said that people to people contact between Tajikistan and Pakistan need to be enhanced.

Ambassador of Tajikistan, Yusuf Sharifzoda, said that Pakistani students affected by the Kyrgyzstan incident can continue their studies at the same level in Tajik universities. He said that special facilities will be given to Pakistani investors in Tajikistan.

The Tajik ambassador said that cultural delegations from Tajikistan will come to Pakistan. He said that Pakistani businessmen have vast opportunities to export surgical instruments and leather products of Pakistan to the markets of Tajikistan.

The Tajik ambassador added that Pakistan is a peaceful country and its people are very hospitable and loving.

Bilawal seeks report from Sindh CM

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has sought a detailed report from the Chief Minister (CM) of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, regarding the damage caused by the ongoing rains across the province and the measures taken by the provincial government to assist the affected people.

The PPP Chairman expressed his deep concern over the damage caused by the heavy rains

in various parts of Sindh. He instructed the CM to provide a comprehensive report on the damages and relief efforts in Sukkur, Larkana, Khairpur, and other areas across the province.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari remarked that the Sukkur and Larkana divisions are once again bearing the brunt of climate change effects. He directed the mayors of Sukkur and Larkana to ensure the swift drainage of rainwater from the low-lying areas of these cities.

He further instructed that an immediate investigation be conducted into the breach in the dam in Khairpur district, emphasizing the need to minimize the damage and provide prompt assistance to the affected people.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stressed that the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) must fulfil their responsibilities in assisting the rain-affected communities.



KARACHI: A view of rainwater accumulated on road after Karachi received moderate rainfall on Sunday. — INP photo

حکومت پاکستان
(وزارت داخلہ)
نیشنل ڈیٹا بیس اینڈ رجسٹریشن اتھارٹی (نادر)

نوٹس بوجہ غیر حاضری

آپ ڈیٹا بن علی شاہ (اسسٹنٹ ڈائریکٹر) ای۔ آر۔ بی۔ نمبر: 13260، ولد سید اقصیٰ امجد شاہ (بی۔ بی۔ ایس۔ ڈیٹا سروس) ڈاکٹر کاؤڈہ جنگ تحصیل منگل نوشہرہ) مورخہ 29-Mar-2024 سے اپنی ڈیوٹی سے بغیر درخواست اجتنابی اجازت بغیر حاضری مسلسل غیر حاضری ہیں۔
محلہ بدے دے (2) نوٹس بحوالہ نمبر: RHO/NADRA/Disp/08/HR/13260/First Notice Dated: 30-May-2024 اور دوئم نوٹس بحوالہ نمبر: RHO/NADRA/Disp/08/HR/13260/Second Notice Dated: 26-June-2024 کے ذریعے ڈیوٹی پر حاضری ہونے اور اپنی غیر حاضری کی وجوہات کی وضاحت کرنے کی ہدایت کی گئی لیکن آپ ان کی نیکل میں ناکام رہے اور آپ کا یہ عمل سروس آرگنائزیشن (کارکردگی اور نظم و ضبط) 2020 کی سرخیا خلاف ورزی کے ضمن میں آتا ہے۔ آپ کو بدیز نوٹس بدہدایت کی جاتی ہے کہ آپ فی الفور اپنی ڈیوٹی پر حاضری ہوں اور بری طور پر اپنی غیر حاضری کی وجوہات کی وضاحت پیش کریں۔ بصورت دیگر سروس آرگنائزیشن (کارکردگی اور نظم و ضبط) 2020 کے تحت کیٹگریز تادیبی کارروائی عمل میں آکر آپ کو ملازمت سے برطرف کر دیا جائے گا۔

ڈائریکٹر جنرل (مجاز آفیسر)

رجسٹرڈ ہیڈ آفس نادر اے۔ ای۔ او۔ بی۔ ای۔ بلڈنگ پلاٹ نمبر 31 یکٹر B-1، فیر، 5، حیات آباد، پشاور۔ فون نمبر: 091-9217735



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi is talking to a delegation of People Lawyers Forum which called on him at Governor's House.

Chanzeb visits Jazz Mosafir office

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzeb, Adviser to Chief Minister KP on Tourism and Culture, visited the head office of a private tourism technology company "Jazz Mosafir" and overlooked the ongoing work on the project "Eye Of Pakistan" being accomplished jointly in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture & Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and private sector company.

The Online virtual journey of the country's hill stations and scenic spots would be made possible under this project. Moreover, pre-travel arrangements, weather updates and access to Tourism facilities would also be made available with the click of a special mobile app.

DG KPCTA Tashfin Haider, CEO of Jazz Nusafir Sajad Khan,

Manager Digital Transformation Cell (DTC) Abdul Baseer and other officers of the Authority were present at the moment.

Zahid Chanzeb eulogized the innovative and round-the-clock efforts of the project officials and acknowledged that the use of modern technology in the tourism industry would make it more functional and greatly contribute in accentuating our natural tourism and cultural resources globally which would ultimately tend to raise government revenue including the precious foreign exchange.

He said that in the modern era, there is a growing trend to endure and evaluate different tourist places in the world without traveling to these places through virtual tourism, which includes technologies such as VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality) and 360 degrees videos.

Zahid Chanzeb on this occasion highly valued the

role of the private sector in the tourism industry in terms of technology, contributing to the development of the economy and creating job opportunities. He said that best facilities can be provided for domestic and foreign tourists by just using technology, including online booking, flat forms, modern navigation systems, timely weather conditions and virtual reality tours of tourist places in the modern age.

He emphasized on streamlining the online reservation systems for the convenience of tourists and said it would permit access to the services of hotels, transport and guides easily and tourism opportunities would be improved. While this is also the goal of the "Eye of Pakistan" project.

An advisory meeting of the Department of Tourism and Culture and company officials was also held under the chairmanship of Zahid Chanzeb on this

occasion.

During the meeting problems hindering the promotion of tourism and culture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the measures to solve them were reviewed and necessary decisions were taken.

During the meeting, Sajjad Khan, CEO of the company, also presented an overview of some of its innovative services and products, including weather forecasting system "Weather walay", agri-tech platform "Bakhabar Kisan" and its flagship tourism platform "Jazz mosafir". Highlighting the collaborative project "Eye of Pakistan", he said that it aims to provide live exposure of natural spots and hill stations not only in KP but across Pakistan along with additional facilities such as reduction of travel risks, up-to-date weather conditions and data sharing through which, digital tourism will get a huge boost.

Governor KP seeks judiciary support in VCs appointments

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) who is the Chancellor of universities, Faisal Karim Kundi, has expressed serious concerns over the delaying tactics in the appointments of permanent Vice Chancellors (VCs) in 26 universities of the province and requested the court to play its immediate role in the matter.

Governor Kundi, in a special video message here on Sunday, criticized the provincial government's attempts to influence the appointment process by pushing for the selection of VCs from among its workers. He pointed out that the

search committee had completed its selection process, but the appointment procedure has been stalled, which he finds alarming.

The governor warned that if the process remains unresolved, 26 universities will continue to lack permanent VCs for an additional six months. He said that the delay is causing significant distress among students.

He explained that the process for appointing VCs involves several steps including the search committee's recommendations are forwarded first to the Chief Secretary, then to the Chief Minister, and finally to the Governor and this entire process typically takes six months.

Governor Kundi revealed that despite the search committee's recommendations being submitted earlier, the summary was not forwarded to him. He criticized the provincial cabinet for rejecting the summary during its meeting, revealing false claims made to the court that the summary had been sent to the governor.

He urged the judiciary to expedite hearings and to ensure that the previous search committee's recommendations are acted upon swiftly to prevent further damage to the universities.

Governor Kundi also highlighted a discrepancy in funding, saying that Sindh allocated Rs32 billion, Punjab Rs7 billion, and Balochistan Rs5 billion, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has allocated only 3 billion rupees for its 34 universities. He accused the provincial government of using the universities' funds in other places for their interests.

He mentioned that pensioners of the universities can't be paid.

He further criticized the prevailing corruption within the KP government, saying ministers blame the chief minister and the chief minister blames his ministers.

SIDB launches tree plantation drive

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) has launched a tree plantation drive at the Small Industries Estate in Peshawar.

The campaign, organized in collaboration with the welfare organization Khidmatul Ebad, aims to promote environmental sustainability within the industrial areas of the province.

A ceremony to inaugurate the campaign was held at the estate, with Managing Director (MD) of SIDB, Habibullah Arif, serving as the chief guest. The event was attended by Deputy Managing Director (DMD) Nauman Fayaz, Director of Finance Muhammad Sher, and numerous members of the social organization.

As part of the initiative, the board has planned to plant 500 saplings in the Peshawar Industrial Estate. The campaign will later be expanded to include the industrial estates in Charsadda, Mardan, Haripur, Havelian, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Khalabat, D.I. Khan, Karak, and Bannu.

Speaking on the occasion, MD Small Industries Development Board Habibullah Arif emphasized the importance of tree planting as a continuous charitable act in which everyone should actively participate.

He further stressed that if environmental responsibility is not taken seriously, pollution will continue to rise, urging every Pakistani to play their role in combating environmental pollution.

This tree plantation drive is a significant step toward reducing environmental degradation and promoting greener industrial practices across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Food Authority launches massive crackdown

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority has launched a large-scale crackdown against hazardous food items across the province.

Inspection teams of the Food Authority set up checkpoints on major highways and conducted surprise raids on food businesses in various districts. According to a spokesperson for the Food Safety Authority, significant operations were carried out in Mardan, Peshawar, Swabi, Nowshera, and Malakand districts.

During these operations, authorities seized 1,700 liters of counterfeit and substandard beverages from a vehicle in Nowshera, 1,200 liters from a factory in Mardan, 300 liters from a shop in Yar Hussain, Swabi, and approximately 2,000 liters from a vehicle in Sakha Kot, Malakand.

The spokesperson further stated that heavy fines have been imposed on the owners involved in the production and sale of hazardous food items. Additionally, strict legal actions have been initiated under the Food Safety Act.

In Mardan, a raid was conducted on a warehouse, following a tip-off, where 140 dozen spoiled eggs

were seized and destroyed. Similarly, 400 liters of mislabeled milk were seized from Forest Bazaar, Peshawar, which was found to be tea whitener upon testing.

The milk was destroyed, and legal proceedings have been initiated against the owner. Director General of the Food Safety Authority, Wasif Saeed, commended the successful operations by the Food Safety teams.

He emphasized that strict actions will continue against those involved in the business of substandard and hazardous food items, with the aim of eliminating such elements from the province.

Qamar for media integrity amid AI, social media challenges

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former world squash champion Qamar Zaman emphasized Pakistan's remarkable 37-year dominance in the world of squash, during which seven players achieved the prestigious title of world champion. He expressed concern that social media has shifted players' focus away from the game, drawing them into excessive use of mobile phones. Zaman shared these views while addressing the executive committee meeting of the Pakistan Sports Writers Federation in Peshawar.

Discussing the success of Arshad Nadeem at the Paris Olympics, Zaman highlighted how it has reignited interest in javelin throw among both athletes and the public.

He pointed out that when athletes succeed in any sport, it not only brings them personal recognition but also boosts the sport's popularity nationwide.

Zaman strongly emphasized the media's critical role in the development of sports, particularly in the current digital age. He acknowledged that while social media has largely

supplanted traditional print and electronic media, it comes with significant challenges, especially the spread of fake news. Zaman warned that fake news is not just a nuisance but a serious issue that can tarnish the reputations of athletes, disrupt their careers, and harm the integrity of sports. He urged journalists and media outlets to engage in positive and responsible reporting, ensuring that information shared is accurate and beneficial to the sports community.

Furthermore, Zaman addressed the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) in journalism and sports reporting. He highlighted the need for sports journalists to adapt to modern technologies and leverage AI to enhance their reporting capabilities. According to Zaman, AI

offers tools that can help in fact-checking, data analysis, and personalized content delivery, which are essential for maintaining high standards of journalism in the fast-paced digital era. However, he also cautioned that AI should be used responsibly, ensuring that it complements human judgment rather than replacing it.

Recognizing the 100th anniversary of AIPS as a significant milestone, Zaman praised the organization for its role in providing a global platform for sports journalists to improve their efficiency and exchange ideas on various important issues. He welcomed the committee's meeting, emphasizing the importance of such gatherings in advancing the standards of sports journalism in Pakistan.



PCP to rehabilitate patients with skull injuries in future: Dr. Ilyas



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Director General of Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) Capt (R) Adnan Gul has highly praised the meritorious services of Dr Syed Muhammad Ilyas, CEO Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP) for the treatment and rehabilita-

tion of patients disabled by spinal cord injuries as well as running the hospital established for this purpose in an efficient manner.

He expressed the confidence that this unique medical institution in the entire South Asia will further march ahead under his leadership.

In this regard, he presented a shield to Dr. Muhammad Ilyas on behalf of PARD in a simple ceremony organized in the academy, and declared him as the best teacher for the under training administrative officers.

He said that apart from Dr Ilyas' professional approach, the trainee offi-

cers are also appreciative for the medical, social and teaching services of the Paraplegic Center which is a matter of honor.

Dr. Muhammad Ilyas on this occasion said that in addition to the treatment and complete rehabilitation of patients with spinal cord disabilities in the Paraplegic Center, the treatment and rehabilitation of children suffering from clubfoot and autism are also going on successfully while under a future plan, the treatment and rehabilitation of people with disabilities due to skull injuries would also be carried out at PCP as, he regretted, no such institution is available in the country at present.

He also presented the annual performance report of PCP to Capt(R) Adnan Gul, highlighting the rehabilitation, academic and research activities that was highly appreciated and he was assured of full cooperation in this regard.

Majestic journey of Babusar Pass adds colors on Independence Day

P E S H A W A R (APP): Abdul Hadi, an eight-grade student, was overwhelmed by the grandeur of Pakistan's mesmerizing beauty as he travelled to the famous Babsar pass on the eve of the 77th Independence Day celebrations.

Accompanied by his parents, Hadi's dream of visiting Babusar top—connecting Upper Kaghan Manshera with Chilas Gilgit Balistan over an altitude of 13,691 feet above the sea level with national flag hoisting high—came true after witnessing its picturesque waterfalls, serene lakes and melodious chirping of birds in lush green valleys of its routes starting from Naran-Kaghan and Babusar Top, making his joy doubled.

"I have waited eagerly for this joyful day as my

father, a government servant, has promised me for this memorable visit on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day for which a big thank you to my sweet papa for fulfilling my childhood dream today," said Abdul Hadi while enjoying soft drinks that were kept chilled in huge glacier at Babusar top where national flag is hoisting on all government buildings, houses and shops amid Jashin e Azadi's magic.

Narrating story of the captivating journey, Abdul Hadi, a resident of Peshawar explained the stunning beauty of these waterfalls emanating after melting of small and large glaciers on the Snowclad Mountains such as Malika Parbath of Hamalaya, Saiful Malook, Ansu and Lalusar lakes taking tourists into lap of seren-

ity.

The river Kunhar's gushing water and trout fish besides glaciers' water and Sowani waterfall enroute to Upper Naran add additional charm to the captivating journey.

The roadside's small shops at Bhattal town offer 'Palosa and Ber' honey to travelers as gift along with woolen Chaddar and other garments.

Noor Khan, a honey seller told APP that these special honeys are also being exported to GULF due to its purity, adding these products were mostly brought from Karak and Lachi Kohat, a home of Palosa and Ber honey in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as special offer.

However, the unplanned construction of houses on roadsides,

fast glaciers' melting and poor communications made negative effects on the region's beauty.

Hadi's father Waheed Khan said their Naran-Babusar's journey began from Naran, a popular tourist town in Kaghan Valley where they enjoyed Chappli Kabab along with Peshawar Polao before proceeding to the famous Saiful Malook Lake known for fairytales of the Persian Princes Saiful Malook and fairyprinces Badri Jamala.

There are many passes in Pakistan including Bolan Pass, Khyber Pass, Lowari Pass, Malakanad pass and Broghail pass but the beauty of Babusar carried a unique charm and distinction for visitors.

Hired a jeep on Rs10,000 from Naran-Babusar trip, Waheed said after enjoying free

boating and brown trout at Saiful Malook lake amid waterfall emanating from Malika Parbath's snow covered mountains, our next destination was Ansu lake located about six kilometers north east of Saiful Malook with climbing road steadily," he told APP and added that Sooch waterfall's cold water was the most frequented site of tourists.

The route is characterized by its scenic beauty, featuring rivers, dense forests, meadows and unexplored waterfalls.

"The ascent is gradual but noticeable, offering spectacular views of the surrounding snow-clad peaks and valleys on the way to Babusar top.

The tourist's family enjoy Lulusar, a glacial lake located at an altitude of about 3,410 meters (11,190 feet) and its azure waters in the back-

drop of snow-capped peaks make it a picturesque top.

The final stretch to Babusar Top was a thrilling drive, with hairpin bends and steep ascents.

The pass itself provides panoramic views of the Himalayas and Karakoram ranges, and the valleys in its surroundings especially of Azad Kashmir.

Ms Dervla Murphy, an Arish Adventure Cyclist and Author wrote in her book 'two wheels over nine glaciers' while visiting Babusar top on bicycle in 1960 revealed about her memorable journey from Naran-Babusar-Gilgit.

She was highly impressed of the hospitality of its residents and the region's mesmerizing natural beauty, lush green Mountains and serene lakes.

The road to Babusar top in some areas is very challenging especially for new drivers due to fall of glaciers and waterfalls besides delapidated conditions.

The climate change's damages could be easily seen in the region as evidence of glaciers fast melting.

Omar Khattak, General Manager Investment, KP Tourism Authority said Babusar pass would be linked with Ghanool Manshera integrated tourism zone which would be constructed with the assistance of the World Bank. ITZ Ghanool Mansehra would be established on 59.6 acres, ITZ Mankiyal Swat on 29.5 acres, ITZ Madaklasht on 540 Kanal and ITZ Thandyani on 640 Kanal of land respectively.

As a pilot project, ITZ Ghanool with a proposed

cost of Rs5.5 billion and Mankiyal with an estimated cost of Rs2.9 billion to be developed first to promote sustainable tourism.

The rules and regulations for Mankiyal and Ghanool ITZs have been prepared that would be completed on the patterns of ITZs of Malaysia and Indonesia.

These ITZs are expected to create 200,000 direct and indirect job opportunities and USD 2.8 billion investment.

The captivating journey to Babusar Top is not only a drive but an adventure with clouds hovering around with chances of rainfalls any time as the visitors travel through some of Pakistan's most stunning mountain sceneries, providing a memorable experience for nature and mountain sports enthusiasts.



In brief

Canal breach damages crops

B A H A W A L P U R (APP): Breach occurred in a canal in the Head Rajkan area of the Bahawalpur district, causing extensive damage to standing crops spread over hundreds of acres of land. Reports here suggested that a breach had occurred in a canal passing through Bangla Khutri, Head Rajkan area which had badly damaged standing crops spread over hundreds of acres of land. "Cotton crops standing on hundreds of acres of land in Khutri Bangla, Head Rajkan area have been inundated by a flash flood caused by the breach in a local canal passing through the area," local people said. Water has also entered houses of nearby villages. However, local people have started to fill the gap in the canal. Teams of Irrigation Department and the Government of Punjab have reached the area to join rescue and relief operations by filling the breach in the canal.

Four injured as bus overturns

NAROWAL (INP): Four people were injured when a passenger bus turned turtle after hitting a dumper here on Sunday. According to details, an over speeding Lahore bound passenger bus coming from Shakargarh got out of control while trying to save pedestrians and it turned turtle after hitting a dumper at Muridke road near Tatley Bridge in Narowal. As a result of accident, four passengers including Sohail 32, Aamir 53, Kaneez 40, and another were injured. The injured were shifted to District Headquarter (DHQ) Hospital for treatment and police after registering a case into the incident have started investigations.

Fesco to replace transformers

FAISALABAD (INP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) to redress the low voltage complaints in its regions will replace 25 transformers of two-phase with three-phase. A spokesman of FESCO said on Sunday that Chief Executive Officer (CEO) FESCO Engr Muhammad Amir has approved the replacement of 25 two-phase transformers in different subdivisions and this project would be completed within next fortnights. The spokesman said that these transformers would be replaced in Gol Fowara Model Town-B in City Subdivision, main Katchery Bazaar Street No.4 in Civil Line Subdivision, Lasani Town and Tariq Town in Islampura Subdivision, Suhawardi Town in Sargodha Road Subdivision, Bawa Chwk Street No.1 in Muslim Town Subdivision, C-Block Edan Garden and Madina Town in Madina Town Subdivision, Waheed Park in M a n s o r a b a d Subdivision, Chak No.197-RB in Gattwala Subdivision, Astana in Jaranwala Road Subdivision, Usman Town in Niamat Colony Subdivision, Anwar Abad in City Jaranwala Subdivision, Chak No.23-GB in Faisalabad Road Subdivision, Chak No.109-GB in Haidar Ali Shah Subdivision, Chak No.136-RB in Chak Jhumra No.1 Subdivision, Chak No.143-RB in Chak Jhumra No.2 Subdivision, G-Block Gulistan Colony in Tariq Abad Subdivision, Chak No.201-RB Talanwan in M a n n a n w a l a Subdivision, A-Block Millat Town in Millat Town Subdivision, Naseer Abad in Hajji Abad Subdivision, Mehriyya Masjid near Qureshian in City Lalian Subdivision, Chak No.50 in Rural Lalian Subdivision.



KHANEWAL: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani awarding certificates and medals to the position-holder students during the Convocation of the Punjab College Mian Channu.

All deptt ensure implementation of CM's agenda: DC

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In order to review progress on the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda" an important meeting of the Line Departments was held with Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali in the chair.

The meeting besides the Tehsil Chairmen Gumbat, Lachi and Darra Adam Khel was also attended by ADC (G). Officers of District Administration and Heads of Line Departments.

The meeting reviewed the issues of cleanliness, good governance, revenue, public service delivery,

food price control, quality control, sports and culture and other sectors in detail of the Awami Agenda Program in Kohat district and several important decisions were taken in this regard.

The meeting was informed in detail about the performance, sanitation situation, machinery, human resource and other responsibilities of the departments in their zones and areas. Deputy Commissioner strictly directed, every department should ensure that the assigned responsibilities under the Awami Agenda are fulfilled in the scheduled time, otherwise there will be no concession to anyone in this regard. Deputy Commissioner

Kohat also ordered to do the Commissioner's 6-Day Massive Cleanliness Campaign under the Awami Agenda. He said that the 1st Phase of the 6-Day Campaign will be started from hospitals and educational institutions and will be extended to government buildings, hostels, colonies and madrasas while in the 2nd Phase markets, bus stands, parks, rivers, petrol pumps and public places will be cleaned.

Deputy Commissioner directed the WSSC and TMA to remove garbage from the streets and public places well in time and ensure cleanliness as per hygienic rules so that the public can be as safe as possible.

Senator deplores atrocities in Kashmir and Palestine

QUETTA (APP): Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, the chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Senate on Human Rights, said the world has remained a silent spectator on the violation of human rights in Kashmir and Palestine. In her statement issued here on Sunday, she said that there is so much contradiction in saying and acting on these things in this world. "On the occasion of the International Day of Humanitarianism today, no one has remained the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Palestine. The world has remained a silent spectator on the violation of human rights in Kashmir and Palestine", she remarked. She said that thousands of innocent Palestinian Muslims have been martyred, including many innocent children. On the ongoing persecution of Kashmiris in India, other major organizations, including the United Nations Security Council, have not raised a strong voice against the ongoing oppression in Palestine, she added. She said that Israel is stubbornly not willing to stop the self-inflicted war against the innocent Palestinians and this process is going on.

Youth commits suicide

OKARA (INP): A youth committed suicide after killing his wife and injuring sister-in-law over domestic disputes here on Sunday, police said. According to details, the incident took place in Mohallah Faridabad of Okara, where accused Saqlain visited house of in-laws to back his disgruntled wife staying with parents. An exchange of hot words took place after which Saqlain slit throat of him wife Humaira with sharp edged weapon and injured his sister-in-law during attempt to save her sister.

Five dead, 15 hurt in Buner Accident

A R Abid Bunery

BUNER: A tragic accident involving a flying coach left five people dead and 15 others seriously injured in the Sangahu Hill area of Buner. The coach was carrying passengers from Bazar Jowar in the Salarzai area of Buner to Katlang, Mardan, when it plunged into a deep ravine at Shaheedano Sar in the Sangahu hill range due to unknown reasons.

Among the deceased, four individuals were residents of Jowar Salarzai, Buner, while one was from Matta, Swat. The injured include one person from Jowar Salarzai Buner, one from Mian Khan Wadan, and one from Gudar, Mardan.

The ill-fated coach was en route from Jowar Bazar to Katlang, Mardan, when it lost control and fell hundreds of feet into the ditch. Local residents, who were the first to arrive at the scene, reported that four people had died instantly, while another was in critical condition. Fifteen others were badly injured.

The rescue operation

began immediately, with passing vehicles stopping to assist. Mardan rescue teams were called and promptly arrived at the scene to help in the rescue efforts. The injured and deceased were transported to Katlang Hospital, with the critically injured later being transferred to Mardan Medical Complex for further treatment.

The deceased have been identified as Nasib Dad from Salarzai Buner, Nawaz Khan from Penara Salarzai Buner, Saleh Zada from Kingar Galai Salarzai Buner, Saheb Zada from Matta Swat, and the driver, Muhammad Syed.

The injured include Shakeel from Nanser Buner, Fayyaz from Patora Buner, Qaiser Ahmad from Buner, Mustaqeem from Jowar Buner, Masood from Buner, Mst Bibi from Buner, Tufail from Chaghorzai Buner, Shahmand from Kaka Abad, Mst Gulaba from Nanser Buner, Zwar Hassan from Gadar Mardan, an unknown individual from Salarzai Buner, Makhtiar from Jowar Buner, Syed Umar from

Jowar Buner, Mst Gul Roshan from Mian Khan Wadan, and Walid from Girarai Buner.

The accident has left the Salarzai tribe and the surrounding region in deep mourning. Upon hearing the news, residents, including elders, youth, children, and mothers, rushed to the scene, desperate to find their loved ones.

The site of the accident was described as a scene of utter devastation, with the cries of the injured and the sight of the deceased filling the air.

Local men bravely navigated the mountainous terrain to collect the bodies and assist the injured.

The rescue operation intensified upon the arrival of rescue teams, with all the injured and deceased quickly transported to Katlang Hospital.

The harrowing scene left many onlookers faint, and tears filled the eyes of all who witnessed the aftermath. Despite the efforts of doctors and health staff, who worked tirelessly to save lives, the community remains in shock and grief over this tragic incident.

PTI believes in merit, transparency: Shakoor

F.P. Report

P E S H A W A R : The Khyber Khyber minister for labour, Fazal Shakoor Khan has said that PTI believes in merit and transparency, saying all decisions in PTI government will be made on justice and every deserving will be provided their rights.

He said that tangible steps are being taken regarding illegal allotment of family quarters in labour colonies while the family quarters will be vacated and allotted to the deserving workers.

The provincial minister expressed these views while talking to media persons during his visit to the labour Colony in

Mardan. The KP labour minister was accompanied by provincial minister for food, Zahir Shah Toru, members of the provincial assembly Ikhtisham Advocate and Abdul Salam Afridi, additional secretary of labour, DG ESS, director of labour, and other officials from the labor department.

The provincial minister inquired about the facilities provided in the labour colony and the issues faced by the residents of the colony. He directed the concerned officers to take solid steps to resolve the issues in the labour colony and ensure the provision of basic facilities.

He warned that stern action will be taken

against those who were found not paying the wages to their labourers fixed by the KP government. Mr Fazal Shakoor Khan also visited the Working Folks Grammar Higher Secondary School Mardan, wherein the labour minister inspected various sections and laboratories of the school while principal gave him a detailed briefing about the administrative affairs and issues faced by the school.

The provincial minister assured that immediate steps would be taken to resolve the issues. He also planted a sapling as part of the tree plantation drive and gave special instructions to ensure the protection of the plants.

Pakpattan admin mobilized to tackle rainwater issues

PAKPATTAN (APP): Following the Meteorological Department's forecast, Deputy Commissioner Pakpattan, Sadia Mehr, directed local authorities and municipal staff to remain on alert and actively address potential flooding.

The administration worked to ensure efficient drainage of rainwater from areas prone to flooding.

According to the Chief Digital Monitoring Officer Punjab Dr Abdullah Tabassum, the

Assistant Commissioner Pakpattan, Naem Bashir, conducted an emergency inspection of the city during the rain, as per the Deputy Commissioner's instructions.

He assessed the presence of municipal committee staff, checked safety equipment, and evaluated the functionality of machinery used for rainwater management.

Deputy Commissioner Sadia Mehr instructed the Assistant Commissioner and the Chief Officer of the Municipal Committee to keep the machinery

and cleaning staff on duty around the clock in the low-lying areas.

She expressed satisfaction with the presence of Revenue Officers and Municipal Committee workers actively addressing the situation during the rain.

The residents of Pakpattan expressed their gratitude to Deputy Commissioner Sadia Mehr for the continuous efforts made by the teams throughout the night to restore sewer lines and drain rainwater from the city.

DC,DG MESE chair meeting

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad, Zain-ul-Abedin Memon, and Director General Monitoring & Evaluation School Education Department, Zain-ul-Abedin Ansari, called an urgent meeting of the District Oversight Committee at the Camp Office of the Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad.

During the meeting, the Director General highlighted significant issues discovered during a surprise visit to a local school earlier that morning. It was found that several employees and teachers were absent without prior notice. Conversely, in some schools, teacher deployment exceeded the actual student enrollment, indicating mismanagement and improper allocation

of teaching staff.

The meeting further identified a concerning lack of performance among Taluka Education Officers (TEOs), District Education Officers (DEOs), and the Chief Monitoring Officer (CMO).

These officials were found to be failing in their responsibilities, contributing to the inefficiencies within the school system.

25 BISP retailers blocked on complaints

LODHRAN (APP): District Director, Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Lodhran, Irfan Malik, said that 25 retailers have been blocked while an FIR got registered against one retailer on complaints of deduction from financial assistance of BISP beneficiaries.

While talking to APP here on Sunday, District Director BISP Lodhran,

Irfan Malik, further informed that the action was taken against retailers during disbursement of previous quarterly tranche.

He added that strict monitoring of the disbursement of quarterly tranche would also be ensured in upcoming tranche to provide full payment to the deserving beneficiaries in a transparent manner.

He stated that the arrangements for quarterly tranche of new financial year were in progress. He said that as many as 11 campsites would be established across the district in collaboration with district administration for disbursement of quarterly financial assistance which would likely be started by the end of the current month.

Diminishing cotton production affecting textile sector

MULTAN (APP): The breathable cotton fabric makes suitable attire given the hot weather conditions which at times turn extreme and is still the choice fabric for many whether at home in casual mood or out to enjoy a party. However, the fluffy cotton flowers that used to dominate the South Punjab landscape are not that much dominating these days. And textile sector does not like the story to go this way.

Khawaja Muhammad Usman, an Industrialist associated with textile and former president of Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said that Pakistan agriculture does not grow as much cotton as the textile millers' need, to spin, weave and stitch enough yarn, fabric and garments that can turn cotton chain into a smart forex earning machine. The operations chain of cotton economy employs a larger work force from field to ginning factories and onward to textile mills and garment factories.

Pakistan's total work force, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) survey 2020-21, was 71.76 million out of which 67.25

million were employed. Over 37.4 per cent were associated with agriculture, and 37.2 per cent in services sector. Some 25.4 per cent human resources earn working for industry, a significant portion of which is associated with textiles.

They earn livelihood for families by developing products ranging from yarn, towels, bed sheets, fabric, garments, sports garments that fetch dollars from lucrative foreign markets and this national scale effort contributes 60 per cent in the total yearly export earnings for Pakistan.

Recently, Vice President, Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC), Dr. Yusuf Zafar raised concerns over the statistics of ongoing cotton season and forecast the production would likely be around 6-7 million bales, far below what the textile sector and the overall national economy expected.

He attributed the decline to a smaller cultivation area, prolonged heatwaves, unexpected rains, and severe whitefly infestations. It would be far below the textile industry's demand of 16 million bales and the shortfall will

necessitate the import of approximately 5-6 million bales, the PCCC top scientist said.

The PCCC media focal person and head of CCRI technology transfer wing Sajid Mahmood recalls that cotton production decline started after 2016 due to lack of funding on research. He said that the country's ace cotton research body PCCC had faced financial crisis owing to non-payment.

He said, Pakistan achieved over 14 million bales production once and later it remained oscillating between 11-13 million bales. However, after 2016, the production started declining and had touched new low in 2022 with 4.5 million bales when floods had swept away crop lands in South Punjab.

South Punjab Secretary Agriculture Saqib Ali Ateel described climate change as a big trouble confronting cotton and everybody was worried about the unpredictability of weather patterns. Farmers got good results from early farming last year but early sown crop was confronted by heat-wave this season. He admitted that cotton area was less this year by

around 22 per cent, however, adding that despite troubles, the crop was overall good with better fruiting and flowering. Statistics show that average cotton production remained 8.8 million bales in a decade from 2008 to 2018 but only 5.1 million bales from 2019 to 2022.

Khawaja Usman said that several textile units are closed owing to higher power tariff that left them uncompetitive compared to international rivals. However, if we consider a scenario where all textile units are functioning to full potential, then they would need total 17 to 18 million bales for processing. This also includes three million bales of long fiber lint textile sector must improve every year to add quality. This means they would need at least 12-14 million bales of domestic cotton per annum when all units are functioning.

However, in the current scenario when around 30 per cent of textile units are closed, this requirement would be down to 8-9 million bales, said Hussain, another forward looking entrepreneur textile miller who also runs a software house in Multan.

Exports of textile manu-

facturers witnessed a remarkable increase of 25.5%, US\$ 19.33 billion in FY 2021-22 in comparison to US\$ 15.40 billion in previous year.

According to figures from Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), country's total export earnings in 2022-23 stood at US\$ 27700 million of which textiles contributed US\$ 16501 million. Textile sector earnings from EU countries in 2022-23 stood at US\$ 6528 million (39 %), USA US\$4405 million (26%), UK US\$1563 million (9%), China US\$586 million (4%), and others US\$3419 million (22%).

It may be noted that exports of home textiles, bed wear, towels, knitwear, and ready-made garments increased in value and quantity in 2022 due to high demand in post-Covid scenario. Knitwear exports grew by 34.2% in value despite a decline of 6.1% in quantity. Garments export increased by 49.2 % in quantity and 28.8 % in value. Cotton yarn and cloth also witnessed surge in exports.

Textiles and Apparel Policy, 2020-25 is aimed at fully utilizing potential of home-grown cotton

augmented by manmade fibers/filaments to boost value-added exports and become one of the major players in global textiles and apparel supply chain.

According to the provisional figures compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, overall exports from Pakistan in January, 2024 amounted to \$ 2,792 million (provisional) as compared to \$ 2,822 million in December, 2023 showing a decrease of 1.06% but increased by 24.81% as compared to \$ 2,237 million in January, 2023.

The PCCC Vice President Dr. Yusuf Zafar highlighted the need for protecting farmers' interests by reducing their cost of production and ensuring higher returns to farmers. He also sought higher funding for research and development and tougher measures to eliminate the role of middle men and cotton price manipulation.

Meanwhile, two important developments have taken place at federal and provincial level. A Variety Evaluation Committee (VEC) has been set up by federal government with PCCC VP as its chairman. This committee met recently in Multan and dis-

cussed 22 new cotton varieties evaluating them on tough standards put in place before their submission to Punjab Seed Council for final approval for general cultivation.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has formed an Agriculture Price Commission (APC) tasked with formulating a policy on two key points, making agriculture profitable for farmers by making it a sustainable earning activity.

Secretary agriculture Saqib Ali Ateel said that scientists at were now working on CRISPR/Cas9 system involving gene editing in cotton to keep productive traits intact and deletion of aspects that affect production and quality negatively. This technology could be a ray of hope in developing climate resilient varieties of cotton, he added.

Despite the troubles, Khawaja Muhammad Hussain was upbeat on cotton survival and textile prospects. "We still hope for the best for cotton and textiles if corrective measures are taken timely," Saqib Ali Ateel described cotton as a thread of hope that can weave a better future for Pakistan's economy.



Nearly a third of Belarus army deployed on Ukraine border, Lukashenko says



MINSK (Reuters): Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said on Sunday that Ukraine had stationed more than 120,000 troops at its border with Belarus and Minsk had deployed nearly a third of its armed forces along the entire

border, the Belta state news agency reported. Lukashenko, a staunch ally of Vladimir Putin, was speaking against the backdrop of a Ukrainian incursion into Russia that began on Aug. 6 when thousands of Kyiv's troops smashed through Russia's

western border in a major embarrassment for Putin's top military brass. "Seeing their aggressive policy, we have introduced there and placed in certain points - in case of war, they would be defence - our military along the entire border," Belta cited Lukashenko as saying in an interview with Russian state television. Kyiv did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. Andriy Demchenko, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian border service, told Ukrainian media outlet Ukrainska Pravda on Sunday that the situation on the border with Belarus remained unchanged. "As we can see, Lukashenko's rhetoric does not change either, constantly escalating the situation with regularity to please the terrorist country," Demchenko said.

"We are not seeing any increase in the number of equipment or personnel of Belarusian units near our border." Lukashenko did not say exactly how many troops Minsk deployed along the border. Belarus' professional army has about 48,000 troops and around 12,000 state border troops, according to the 2022 International Institute for Strategic Studies' Military Balance. Belarusian Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin said on Friday there was a high probability of an armed provocation from neighbouring Ukraine and that the situation at their shared border "remains tense". Lukashenko said the Belarusian-Ukrainian border was mined "as never before" and that Ukrainian troops would incur huge losses if they tried to cross it.



BOURNEMOUTH, ENGLAND: Police are seen along with a St George's fla during far-right and counter protests in Bournemouth, on Sunday.

Malnutrition worsening in Yemen's govt-controlled areas

ADEN (Reuters): Acute malnutrition is rapidly increasing in areas of Yemen controlled by the government, with the most critical cases along areas of the Red Sea coast. U.N. food security experts said in a report issued on Sunday. The war between the Saudi-backed government and Iran-aligned Houthi militia, stalemated for years, has caused the economic collapse of the already widely impoverished Arabian Peninsula country and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

In a report, the U.N.'s Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Technical Group in Yemen said malnutrition had worsened from the combined effect of the spread of diseases such as cholera and measles, a shortage of nutritious food, a lack of drinking water, and broader economic decline. The number of children in Yemen under the age of five suffering acute malnutrition, or wasting, has risen by 34 per cent compared with the previous



year across government-controlled areas, the report said. This equated to some 600,000 children, including 120,000 who were severely malnourished. For the first time, it said, "extremely critical" acute malnutrition level was reported in the southern Hodeidah lowlands, including the Al Khawkhah and Hays districts, fringing Yemen's Red Sea coast, as well as

the Al Makha district of the Taiz lowlands between November 2023 and June 2024. The report did not say whether there had been any recent deaths from severe hunger or what conditions were like in Houthi-held areas of the country. Houthi forces hold most large urban centres of Yemen including the capital Sanaa while the Saudi-backed government

is based in Aden in the south. The Riyadh-led coalition intervened in Yemen in March 2015 after the Houthis ousted the government from Sanaa. The Houthis say they are fighting a corrupt system and foreign aggression. The multi-faceted conflict, in which several factions are vying for power, has killed tens of thousands of people.

Libya's central bank suspends operations

DUBAI (Reuters): Libya's Tripoli-based central bank said on Sunday it would shut down all operations and not resume work until a senior bank official kidnapped earlier in the day was released. The central bank is the only internationally recognised depository for Libyan oil revenues, a vital economic income for a country torn for years between two rival governments in Tripoli and Benghazi. The bank said an unknown party was behind the abduction on Sunday of Musaab Muslam, head of its information technology department. "The bank rejects the mob-like methods that are practiced by some parties outside of the law," it said in a statement. It added that other bank officials had also been

threatened and therefore it would suspend operations until "these practices are stopped and the concerned authorities intervene". Richard Norland, the U.S. ambassador to Libya, said last week that attempts to replace the bank's senior management by force could result in the North African country losing access to international financial markets. Norland met with bank governor Sadiq Kabir to discuss concerns about armed groups gathering around the bank's headquarters in Tripoli, the U.S. embassy said. "Disputes over distribution of Libya's wealth must be settled through transparent, inclusive negotiations toward a unified, consensus-based budget," Norland said. Libya has enjoyed little peace since the 2011

NATO-backed uprising that overthrew longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi, and it divided in 2014 between warring eastern and western factions. On Aug. 9, at least nine people were killed and 16 wounded after clashes erupted between two armed factions in Tajoura, an eastern suburb of Tripoli. Libya's Tripoli-based Government of National Unity is headed by interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah, who was installed through a U.N.-backed process in 2021. Eastern Libya, where the national parliament is based, is under the effective control of military commander Khalifa Haftar. Despite a 2020 truce and efforts to formally reunify institutions, a political solution has proven elusive.

Visit by Vietnam's new leader to China reflects key relationship

BEIJING (AP): Vietnam's new leader To Lam is making China the destination for his first overseas visit, signaling the continuing importance the Southeast Asian country places on its giant neighbor even as it strengthens ties with the United States and others. Lam stepped off a Vietnam Airlines plane on an overcast Sunday morning in Guangzhou, a major manufacturing and export hub near Hong Kong, China's state media reported. He later flew to Beijing, where he will meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping. His three-day visit comes about two weeks after Lam was confirmed as general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party, the country's top political position. He succeeded Nguyen Phu Trong, who died last month after 13 years as leader.

Lam also has held the largely ceremonial title of the nation's president since May. The new leader is expected to continue his predecessor's strategy of balancing ties with China, the United States, Russia and others, Yu Xiangdong, the director of the Institute for Vietnam Studies at China's Zhengzhou University, wrote Saturday in the state-run Global Times newspaper. "The fact that Lam chose China as his first overseas visit destination since taking office is a sign that Vietnam attaches great importance to its relations with China," Yu said in an opinion piece.

Yunus vows to hold Bangladesh election after judiciary, media reform

DHAKA (Arab News): Prof. Muhammad Yunus, the chief of Bangladesh's interim government, vowed on Sunday to shortly restore normalcy and introduce a series of reforms in the country after PM Sheikh Hasina quit and fled amid violent protests calling for her to be ousted. Yunus, an 84-year-old Nobel prize laureate, took charge of Bangladesh on Aug. 8 as the chief adviser of its caretaker administration. He was nominated for the role by the student movement that led the weeks-long nationwide demonstrations, in which hundreds of protesters were killed and thousands

injured and arrested. The interim government will prepare the country for new elections after a series of reforms, Yunus said during a special briefing in Dhaka, where he addressed foreign diplomats for the first time since taking office. "We will hold a free and fair participatory election as soon as we can complete our mandate to carry out the vital reforms in our Election Commission, judiciary, civil administration, security forces and media," he said. "We will undertake robust and far-reaching economic reforms to restore macro-economic stability and sustain growth with priority

attached to good governance and combating corruption and mismanagement." An economics professor, Yunus is a social entrepreneur and banker who was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his pioneering microfinance work that helped alleviate poverty in Bangladesh. It has now been widely adopted around the world. The main issue currently being tackled by the interim administration is law enforcement, which has been in disarray since 150,000 of the country's police officers went on strike a day after the ousting of Hasina's government on Aug. 6. Many police feared ret-

tribution and punishment from the new administration and the student movement for the force with which they tried to crush the uprising. Most of them returned to work last week after negotiations with the new government. "We will be close to normalcy within a short period," Yunus said. "We also made it a priority to ensure justice and accountability for all the killings and violence committed during the recent mass uprising. I have spoken to UN Human Rights chief Volker Turk." The UN will send its team on a fact-finding mission next week to investigate the killings that preceded Hasina's downfall.

75% of Muslims in UK fear for safety

LONDON (Arab News): Three-quarters of Muslims in the UK are concerned for their safety following a spate of far-right riots across the country, according to a survey by the Muslim Women's Network. Just 16 percent said they felt the same before the violence erupted. Nearly 20 percent said they had encountered hostility in the UK before the first riot on July 30 in Southport, which was sparked after a mass stabbing at a youth club left three young girls dead and multiple others injured. Misinformation spread

on social media attributed the attack variously to a Muslim or an asylum-seeker. The alleged attacker was later identified as 17-year-old Axel Rudakubana, who was born in Cardiff. Rioting spread to other major cities across the UK, with mosques being targeted at numerous locations. In an interview with Sky News, two Muslim women who were at one of the mosques targeted by rioters — Abdullah Quilliam Mosque in Liverpool — voiced their fears about the prevailing climate in the UK. Lila Tamea, a 26-

year-old student, said: "There was almost a sense of the police aren't going to protect us. And so, it was really important that there was that show of solidarity from not just the Muslim community. "It was quite a lot of the non-Muslim kind of community who came out that Friday to defend the mosque." Amina Atiq, a 29-year-old poet, told Sky News: "I felt as if it was not fair that we didn't get a chance as a Muslim family to grieve for the three little girls. Because soon after that, we felt as if we were more suspect to that attack."

Shinawatra becomes Thai prime minister after royal signoff

BANGKOK (AP): Paetongtarn Shinawatra, daughter of the divisive former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, became Thailand's prime minister after receiving a royal letter of endorsement Sunday, two days after she was chosen by Parliament following a court order that removed her predecessor. She replaces another leader from the same Pheu Thai Party, at the head of a coalition that includes military parties associated with the coup that deposed the party's last government. Paetongtarn is the third Shinawatra to hold the job, after her billionaire father and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra. Both were removed from office and forced into exile in coups, although Thaksin returned to Thailand last year as Pheu Thai formed a government. She received the letter of appointment in a ceremony at the party's headquarters in Bangkok, attended by senior members of parties in the governing coalition and her father, who has no formal role but is widely seen de

facto leader of Pheu Thai. The father and daughter held hands as they walked in with beaming smiles. Both wore white civil servants' uniforms, which are used for royal and state ceremonies. Paetongtarn thanked the king, the Thai people and lawmakers, saying she will perform her duties "with an open mind," and will "make every square inch of Thailand a space that allows Thai people to dare to dream, dare to create and dare to dictate their own future." Paetongtarn became Prime Minister days after the Constitutional Court removed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, after less than a year in office. The court found him guilty of a serious ethical breach for appointing a Cabinet minister who had been jailed for contempt of court after an alleged attempt to bribe a judge. Paetongtarn is also Thailand's second female prime minister after her aunt, and the country's youngest leader at 37. Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, Paetongtarn said she is determined to push for-



ward key policies such as economic stimulus, improvement for universal healthcare and promoting cultural "soft power" on the global stage. She did not initially mention Srettha's signature proposal for a digital

cash handout of 10,000 baht (about \$275) to 50 million citizens to spend at local businesses in order to boost the economy. The project has been criticized as an ineffective way to contribute to sustainable economic

growth, and has faced several hurdles that include its sources of funding. When pressed by reporters, Paetongtarn said she still has an intention to push forward a major economic stimulus for Thailand, but she will

need to "continue to listen to opinions." She also said she will ask for her father for advice when she needs, but insisted that she would make her own decisions. "I am my own person. I have my own things and my own goals

that I have to achieve in the future, but of course all the comments from him (have) value to me," she said. Pheu Thai is the latest in a string of populist parties affiliated with Thaksin, who was ousted in a 2006 military coup, which triggered nearly two decades of deep political divisions that pitted a mostly poor, rural majority in the north that supported Thaksin against royalists, the military and their urban backers. Parties linked to Thaksin won the most seats in every national election from 2001 until 2023, when it lost to the more progressive Move Forward Party. Pheu Thai was able to form a government after Move Forward was blocked by the military-appointed Senate, partnering with former rivals in what was widely interpreted as a political bargain with the conservative establishment to stop Move Forward from forming a government. The same day, Thaksin returned from exile and briefly reported to prison to for an eight-year sentence on charges related

to corruption and abuse of power. He was moved almost immediately from prison to the hospital on grounds of ill health, and about a week after that the king reduced his sentence to a single year. He was released on parole in February after spending six months serving time in the hospital. Since his release, Thaksin has maintained a high profile traveling the country, making public appearances. On Saturday, Thaksin's lawyer Winyat Chatmontree posted on Facebook that Thaksin was among the convicts granted a royal amnesty by the king on the occasion of his birthday in late July. It took effect Sunday, which means Thaksin is free ahead of his original parole schedule. However, the amnesty does not protect Thaksin from an ongoing case for defaming the monarchy, which was indicted in June after being originally filed in 2016. It has been seen by some analysts as a warning from Thaksin's enemies that he should tone down his political activities.

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Mpox outbreak leaves no room for complacency

ONE consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic was that the World Health Organisation, previously a body of interest mainly to doctors, policymakers and diplomats, was catapulted into the global public consciousness. As humanity faced collective danger, the WHO's pronouncements were followed avidly by ordinary people across the world during the pandemic.

As a result, when the WHO speaks, people listen. On Wednesday, its director general, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, confirmed that an outbreak of a new strain of the mpox virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries has been classified as a public health emergency. Mpox is a dangerous virus that can cause fever, swelling of the lymph nodes, pain and skin lesions. In some cases, it can be fatal, especially to children.

Although we have been here before – the WHO declared another mpox emergency in July 2022 – there are worrying indications that this outbreak could be different. Speaking in early July as more information about this new strain – called clade 1b – emerged, Prof David Heymann of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine warned that the virus had an estimated mortality rate of 10 per cent, much higher than the 1.4 per cent mortality rate for Covid-19 in New York City. The strain was behaving differently too, Prof Heymann added, with human-to-human transmission posing a “great risk” to younger populations born since smallpox vaccination was discontinued.

Although it is important not to be alarmist – Covid and mpox are very different illnesses – a failure to act decisively could have serious consequences for global health. Already, senior WHO figures are warning against complacency. One such expert – Prof Dimie Ogoina – this week described the current wave of mpox infections as “an emergency, not only for Africa, but for the entire globe” and blamed previous neglect for contributing to 2022's global outbreak.

In the battle against infectious disease, it is vital that governments and global healthcare bodies follow the science. Sadly, many unhelpful misconceptions surround mpox. An earlier variant was spread largely among men who have sexual contact with other men, but that is no longer the case. Nor is the virus destined to be confined to sub-Saharan Africa. Allowing these notions to breed complacency would be a repeat of mistakes made in the 1980s, when HIV/Aids was identified. The WHO has previously warned of the dangers that accompany such attitudes. Speaking during the previous global mpox emergency in 2022, Meg Doherty, the organisation's global director for HIV, Hepatitis and STI Programmes, said the WHO had “learned over the 40 years of the HIV response that stigma and discrimination are critical barriers to equitable access to prevention, treatment and care”.

Indeed, the focus should now be on a co-ordinated international approach to help the infected and prevent the disease from spreading further. The WHO has said \$15 million in immediate funding is needed to support surveillance, preparedness and response activities. Underlining this urgency is that fact that some experts think the true number of mpox infections is much higher than official totals due to unreported cases.

Humanity learned much from the painful experience of the Covid years. If those harsh lessons are to be put to good use, a fitting place to start is in ensuring that other threats to global health – such as mpox – are nipped in the bud.

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We must not succumb to despair, Palestinians need our help

Renee Lewis

As someone who lived in Palestine, made lifelong friends there and spent a decade working as a journalist, I had seen the devastation Israel left behind with each brutal attack on the defenceless people of Gaza. The impact on civilians, especially children, in the densely populated territory, was always disturbing for anyone who cared to read about Israel's attacks. But I could not have ever imagined Israel would carry out the level of destruction and mass extermination it has since October 7.

The official death toll in Gaza has come close to 40,000 by now. An article published by medical journal The Lancet in June estimates that it could reach at least 186,000 – that is 8 per cent of Gaza's population. In addition, more than 90,000 people have been wounded, many with life-altering injuries. The majority of casualties are women and children.

Watching the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza has been soul-wrenching and I, like so many other people, have felt helpless and guilty.

No amount of shocking images of dead Palestinian children, and no amount of reports about war crimes being committed by Israel have managed to sway world leaders to actually do something to stop Israel. Protesting and pleading have seemingly done nothing to convince governments to act. The complete disregard for Palestinian lives by our leaders has been frustrating.

Meanwhile, I – like millions of other people in the West – have no worries about war or occupation in my daily life. I feel guilty I am safe here in the United States, while my government is funding and arming genocidal Israel.

Seeing images and videos of parents picking up their dead children from the rubble of homes and schools has been heart-wrenching. I have a little daughter and I can't imagine the helplessness and rage I would feel if I were a Palestinian parent in Gaza.

I have tried my best to fight this paralysis of helplessness and guilt. I have checked regularly with friends in the West Bank and tried to help with whatever I can. Through them, I have often heard heart-breaking stories about people they know in Gaza.

But there has been one story that stuck with me. An old friend in Ramallah told me about Ahmed*, a father from Gaza, who got stuck in the occupied West Bank after October 7, while his whole family remained in the Strip. Ahmed had come to the West Bank to seek treatment for a medical problem he had. When the war started, he wanted to go back but could not find a way.

He was living with the constant pain of separation and dread that something could happen to his family. The stress of not being able to protect his wife and kids was worsening his health condition.

Ahmed had heard about GoFundMe campaigns that raise money to help evacuate Palestinian families from Gaza by paying the fees required by Egyptian

brokers – about \$5,000 per person. There were some success stories of fundraising that had given him hope that he could get his loved ones to safety, as well.

Ahmed mentioned the idea to one of my friends in the West Bank, who thought I might be able to help set it up since I have a bank account eligible to set up a GoFundMe campaign. I was more than willing to help. I set up the campaign in April and have been trying to fundraise since then.

I have spoken to Ahmed and reached out to his children in Gaza. Their harrowing story has made me that much more motivated to do everything I could to make this campaign successful.

Ahmed's 20-year-old son Karam gave me a detailed account of the horrors he and his siblings – Mahmoud, 18; Amneh, 15; Saja, 12; Zaina, 9 and Mohammed, 6 – and their mother and aunt – Aman and Zaina – had been through. At the start of the Israeli invasion of Gaza, they had to flee their home in the at-Tawam district, north of Gaza City with almost nothing but the clothes on their back, as it was indiscriminately bombed. They first headed to an uncle's home in Tal al-Hawa in southern Gaza City, then to another relative in Jabalia refugee camp. There, in December,

the house where they were staying got bombed while they were all inside.

“The walls in the house started to fall around us, with shrapnel flying in all directions,” Karam described. “It was a moment of sheer chaos and destruction.”

Karam's right leg was broken and he got third-degree burns in the bombing. Six-year-old Mohamad was burned on the face and hands. Other family members also suffered from burns. Because of Israel's attacks on hospitals, they could not get proper medical treatment. The family heard that there was a functioning hospital in Deir el-Balah, so that's when they decided to start the journey south to central Gaza to find medical treatment.

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Karam and his brother still suffer from their wounds, as they were unable to get the correct medicine necessary to treat their third-degree burns. Their youngest sister Zaina now suffers from PTSD, and panics to the point of having convulsions when she hears Israeli planes flying over – especially when they fly low and make sonic booms. All three of the boys have contracted hepatitis from dirty water and their eyes and skin have started to turn yellow. There is no treatment for this available in Gaza.

The family relies heavily on canned food from aid organisations to survive. Fresh food is too expensive and firewood is increasingly unaffordable. Fuel for cooking has virtually disappeared.

Karam and his siblings spend most of the day searching for water, both seawater and freshwater – the latter being especially difficult to find.

The family lives in constant dread that their tent will be bombed.

“They do not care about children or women, death is the easiest thing in Gaza,” Karam said. “We have reached the point where at any time you can find any kind of body part in an apartment.”

The family had been through so much that when I talked to them the despair was palpable. With everything that has happened since October, it is hard to feel hopeful. But as impossible as hope feels given the ongoing, horrific crimes committed against innocent Palestinians, it is truly the only way forward.

The Rafah border has been closed since Israeli forces attacked it in May. That has put a stop on Egypt-brokered evacuations for now. Ahmed's family hopes to evacuate once it is reopened whether or not a ceasefire happens. That is because their home and everything they had is destroyed, and the medical problems they have cannot be reliably treated in Gaza. They also want to reunite with Ahmed as soon as possible. If they cannot evacuate, the money would be used for whatever medical treatment they can get and for rebuilding their life in Gaza.

I have to believe that taking some action, any action, could change things for the better. None of us individually can put a stop to Israel's genocide, but each of us individually can make a huge difference for Palestinian families like Ahmad's. Fundraising campaigns – even if they take long – give these families hope. It proves to them that the rest of the world cares, that Palestinian lives matter.

Tensions in the Middle East fuel growing global ‘polycrisis’

Andrew Hammond

Geopolitics was not widely viewed as a key trigger for the turmoil in international financial markets this month. However, several potential political fissures might yet emerge in 2024, including in the Middle East, bringing greater economic disequilibrium in their wake.

Take, for example, the conflict in Gaza, which could yet descend into a full-scale regional war involving Israel and Iran. The most immediate context to this is Tehran's pondering of a response to the recent assassinations of Hamas political chief in Tehran and a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut.

US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said this week that Iran might carry out imminent retaliatory military operations against Israel. He warned that “we have to be prepared for what could be a significant set of attacks” potentially greater

challenges such as the global information technology meltdown last month, the climate crisis, and economic inequality. Security challenges include the ongoing war in Ukraine, the continuing threat from international terrorism, and North Korea having acquired nuclear weapons.

While some in the financial markets appear not to have geopolitical risks foremost in their minds right now, such international turbulence has been a recurrent feature for a number of years. Several market commentators have been asserting for some time, at least since about 2016, that geopolitical risks are at a post-Cold War high. That was, of course, the year in which anti-establishment populism, fueled by an anti-globalization mood, might have reached its apotheosis, so far, with the election of Donald Trump as US president, and the UK voting to leave the EU.

The risks in the Middle East are only one ingredient in a larger cocktail of potential global fissures. The macro context for this is that for decades there has been a long cycle of globalization and geopolitical stability, but now a new, riskier era appears to have dawned — so much so that experts increasingly predict a broader “polycrisis” emerging as a result of the growing number of overlapping challenges. Such an assessment suggests we are living in an era of successive, interconnected disruptions in which a permanent sense of crisis is the new normal.

than the assault in April in which Iran targeted Israel with 300 missiles and armed drones.

As the US builds up its military assets in the region, there are not only growing doubts about the possibility of securing a long sought ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, despite continuing peace talks in Qatar, there is certainly a growing, real possibility of a wider regional war.

With Iran's religious leadership under heavy internal pressure to respond with force, traditional assumptions long made about Tehran's military posture might have become more fragile.

One of these assumptions is that Iran prefers to fight its wars via proxies. However, the regime might now be positioning itself for a confrontation that is more hands-on and does not only rely on proxy forces such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad or the Houthis to carry out its strategic aims.

As Tehran contemplates its next step, a key risk for all sides is miscalculation. This in a region in which geopolitics have been upended since Hamas perpetrated a major terrorist attack in October last year that was Israel's worst intelligence failure for decades.

Despite recent rises in crude oil prices, there has still not been any extensive discussion of the possibility of an oil shock of the kind experienced in 1973-1974, in which prices nearly quadrupled in less than a year after Arab oil-producing nations imposed an embargo in response to US support for Israel during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

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Such an assessment suggests we are living in an era of successive, interconnected disruptions in which a permanent sense of crisis is the new normal. This has implications not only for politics but for financial markets as well. Further significant volatility could be on the horizon.

The global fractures right now include health risks in the post-pandemic landscape, technological

What was so striking about both of those events was that the actions of two countries previously known for political stability, and as traditional rule makers in the international order, caused the world to become more uncertain.

In this landscape, there might not be any easy answers to efforts to address the present array of crises. But it is sometimes forgotten that there have been some successes.

One example is the global climate change deal in Paris in 2015. While the agreement was far from perfect, it nonetheless represented a welcome shot in the arm for efforts to tackle global warming and, crucially, a new, post-Kyoto treaty framework was put in place. Moreover, the review framework of the agreement means that countries can toughen their responses to climate change, especially if the political and public will to tackle the problem increases.

So Paris was a potentially very important stepping stone and what is now needed is for well-informed lawmakers from across the political spectrum to help ensure effective implementation of the agreement and hold governments to account so that it truly delivers.

In terms of potential solutions to the emerging polycrisis, there is inevitably much focus on whether or not the US will step up to the plate. However, China, one of the countries that is a bystander to several current crises, could also have a big bearing on whether things get better or worse. Beijing's rise to power has the potential to be either a growing source of tension with Washington and the wider West or, just possibly, the start of a more fruitful partnership.

A growing bilateral rivalry is certainly the most likely scenario for future relations, rather than an increasingly cooperative relationship. However, there remains an outside chance that a different future might be possible in which there is more cooperation on softer issues, such as climate change, and less tension generated by harder issues, such as security.

The trajectory of this bilateral relationship will therefore perhaps be the single most important uncertainty in the late-2020s. While the prospect of greater Western collaboration with China is widely dismissed, the outside chance of a more cooperative relationship might yet offer the prospect for a different global future.

What would a second term for Kais Saied mean for Tunisia?

As the presidential election in Tunisia approaches, the reelection of Kais Saied seems inevitable. A poll by TunisiaMeters in April 2024 put him in a substantial lead. The prospect of his victory in October portends a deepening of the authoritarian trend that characterized his first five-year term. Under his leadership, Tunisia has undergone significant constitutional changes and a notable concentration of executive power. This concentration of power has been accompanied by the routine use of legal systems and institutions to stifle dissent.

The erosion of civil liberties has sparked localized protests and strikes but they have ultimately failed to prompt any support or notable criticism of the regime from influential world powers such as the US or the EU. As Saied gears up for what seems a likely second term, concerns are growing about further restrictions he might impose on civil society and, in particular, on nonprofit organizations through the introduction of proposed laws governing foreign funding.

His administration remains cautious of antagonizing the country's powerful unions, including the Tunisian General Labor Union, which has more than 1 million members in a country with a population of 12 million, but the pushback so far remains limited. Overall, Saied's strategies seem poised to perpetuate his authoritarian model of governance, extending and tightening his grip on the political landscape while sidelining long-overdue economic reforms and instead leveraging unsustainable foreign funding to ameliorate the ongoing economic crisis in the country.

His tenure has been characterized by constitutional maneuvers bordering on the bizarre, and reactionary governance aimed at consolidating power by scapegoating Tunisia's "enemies," real or imagined. To recap, Saied's self-coup in 2021, followed by his dismissal of the prime minister and dissolution of parliament, laid the ground-

work for subsequent actions, such as a constitutional referendum in 2022. Turnout was low, at just over 30 percent, but of those who did vote, nearly 95 percent approved the new constitution.

The president soon expanded his own authority under the revised constitution, which limited parliamentary checks while legislation such as Decree Law 54 provided a legal basis for the arrest of dissenters under the pretext of combating misinformation. He crippled Tunisia's judiciary by dissolving the High Judicial Court and granting himself the power to dis-

Hafed Al-Ghwel

efforts. The unions, in particular the huge General Labor Union, represent a force even Saied must navigate carefully.

The powerful union has demonstrated its ability to organize large-scale strikes and protests, which is a crucial deterrent against more aggressive executive actions. Aside from the arrest of some union leaders, the president has largely avoided a direct confrontation to prevent widespread unrest, and this strategy would likely continue in a second term.

However, should Tun-

icant social upheaval, while attempting to appease them might stymie vital economic reforms. It will be a precarious path to navigate and one that could lead him to dig ever deeper into the authoritarian handbook in an effort to maintain a semblance of stability, placate generous European benefactors, achieve his own political goals and, above all, ensure his regime is coup proof.

Regarding his approach to civil society, Saied is expected to double down on ever more restrictive measures. His proposal to curb the foreign financing of nongovernmental organ-

second term. Historically marginalized, the armed forces have gained unprecedented perks under his rule, including prominent ministerial roles and leadership positions in major public health efforts.

Such institutional and personal incentives suggest a strategic alignment rather than mere coercion. Moreover, the relatively weak and apolitical nature of the Tunisian military means it is more susceptible to simply following orders that might seem undemocratic, driven by a professional ethos that prioritizes obedience over constitutional scrutiny.

This deference to civilian leadership, which paradoxically is intended to prevent military overreach, creates fertile ground for Saied's autocratic approach. While Tunisia's economic crisis and governmental inefficiencies exacerbate the context in which it operates, the military's newfound status and the roles it is afforded under his tenure provide a compelling reason for continuing allegiance, even as democratic norms are eroded.

For Tunisians, the prospect of a second Saied term presents a paradox of stability and suppression. The erosion of democratic pluralism is almost complete, as the reality of the constitutional referendum two years ago, and subsequent legal reforms, sinks in. It marks an irreversible shift away from the aspirations that toppled the previous regime, and the idealism that followed.

While Saied's strong grip on power might offer a semblance of order amid the economic challenges, it portends endless limits on personal freedoms and on those political institutions that survive.

The faith of Tunisians in democracy has been tested to the limits and it is likely that a second Saied term would relegate once resilient ideals to the status of distant memories. Any likelihood of reviving similar aspirations appears dim, suffocated by a web of resurgent authoritarianism, international ambivalence, and societal fragmentation.

Far-right rioters expose a much deeper schism in British society

Yossi Mekelberg

For now, peace and order have been restored to the streets of the UK after one of the ugliest episodes of far-right, ultranationalist mobs attacking mosques and hotels that host asylum seekers, assaulting police officers, and looting shops and other businesses.

The rapid spread of the riots, which took place simultaneously in a number of locations, suggests the violent eruptions were not spontaneous and that these white supremacists were just waiting for an opportunity to unleash their cancerous, racist, and xenophobic hatred.

The quick and effective response by the government, police, and courts, as well as by anti-racist civil society groups in the form of counter-demonstrations, should not conceal the fact that there is an underlying problem of racism in the UK, in this case manifested by Islamophobia and anti-migrant sentiment, that should not be swept under the carpet. Instead, its root causes must be thoroughly investigated and addressed.

The scale of this phenomenon should not be exaggerated nor must the unrest be belittled or dismissed as belonging to a small fringe segment of society. One of the most obvious signs that the organizers of these riots had been lying in wait for an opportunity to attack people whom they perceive as not belonging to British society was the tragic event that triggered the eruption of this mindless violence.

It happened following the horrific fatal stabbing of three girls at a dance class in the seaside town of Southport, in the north of England. The person arrested and charged with the unforgivable killing of young girls enjoying summer holiday activities was a British-born 17-year-old from a nearby village.

Police did not consider it a terror-related incident but almost immediately after it happened, posts began to appear on social media falsely suggesting the killer was Muslim. It cannot be stressed enough that even if he had been, attacking mosques and the Muslim community cannot be justified in any way, shape or form. In this case, the attacks included the torching of buildings housing hundreds of people, which could have caused massive losses of life.

The riots presented Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government with its first severe test since coming to power in July, and it passed with impressive results. It might be the case that those behind the riots were deliberately testing a government they consider to be too liberal and too progressive, especially when it comes to issues related to immigration and multiculturalism.

The swift police response — which resulted in hundreds of arrests, with many people immediately charged and more than 20 already sentenced to up to three years in jail — was a clear declaration of zero tolerance for the racist rioters. Considering the huge backlog of cases in UK courts, many of which wait years to be heard, the aim of this unusually swift application of justice was not only to punish the perpetrators of extreme violence but to deter the racists from returning to the streets.

It might be the case that the racist thugs underestimated the new prime minister, a barrister who before entering politics was chief

prosecutor and head of the Crown Prosecution Service, and so has intimate knowledge of the legal system. He would also have been aware that any failure to quickly and firmly deal with these clearly organized outbursts of violence so early in his premiership could have derailed his party's time in office when it had barely begun.

Certain commentators have tried to diminish, almost trivialize, the riots as merely the actions of a small bunch of thugs who every now and again look for an excuse to take to the streets. By claiming that they are politically motivated or attributing to them an ideology, the argument goes, we undeservedly elevate their importance.

runs much deeper.

And these are just a tiny example of the kinds of vitriolic language used not only to vilify immigrants but also leveled at born-and-bred Brits who happen to be of "different" ethnicities or religions.

Driving a wedge between communities and exploiting such divisions by blaming the hardships experienced by certain segments of society on immigrants is one of the oldest and dirtiest tricks at the disposal of right-wing, populist leaders, and it made a major contribution to the racist violence we recently witnessed in the UK.

The reality is that it is the failures of previous governments, and present social structures, that have caused so many people to feel they have been left

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Admittedly, exaggerating the numbers of those involved and the extent of their influence might serve to falsely glorify them as defenders of the country, its society, and its culture, and tap into some innate, nativist fear of "the other."

However, as much as the vast majority of British people might be appalled by the bigotry of the rioters, and even more by their violent behavior, and despite the UK being one of the most tolerant societies in the world, there are nevertheless strong and dangerous undercurrents in British society, especially in England, that reject immigration of any kind — Brexit was a clear manifestation of this — along with modern-day multiculturalism.

Racism and xenophobia in British society, as in other Western societies, should not be ignored or dismissed as a fringe phenomenon, particularly as it is encouraged and unscrupulously exploited by mainstream right-wing politicians.

In a society in which describing Muslim women wearing burqas as "looking like letter boxes" did not prevent a politician from becoming a Conservative prime minister, and in which a home secretary from the same party deemed it acceptable to stand up in Parliament and describe asylum seekers as invaders, as if they were enemies from a hostile country, the issue clearly

behind in British society, and minorities are used as scapegoats to divert attention from these failures.

The recent UK general election resulted in an impressive victory for Labour but also opened the door for the Reform Party, which won four seats in Parliament, and its main defining characteristic is a creed of national-chauvinism that blames immigrants and immigration for all the country's ills.

There are those who promote nativism and cannot accept that the nature of British society, like that of many other European societies, has changed, and who refuse to acknowledge the contribution of migrants and migration to their society and economy.

The events of recent weeks, and the worrying relative success at the ballot box of parties that promote ultranationalism, demand a nationwide conversation, perhaps even a royal commission, to help define modern Britain and embrace the best of its values and traditions, while equally recognizing and welcoming the increasingly multicultural nature of its society and the contribution this has made to all walks of life.

Instead of rejecting multiculturalism we need to learn to do it better, and to improve the integration of all communities into what must become a more just and tolerant modern Britain.

Building a sustainable Kingdom from the ground up

Saudi Arabia stands at a pivotal moment in its sustainability journey. Since the launch of Vision 2030, the Kingdom has crafted policies aimed at reaching net-zero emissions by 2060 and generating 50 percent of its electricity from renewables by the end of the decade.

These are undeniably bold aspirations. Yet, the true measure of success will hinge on the extent to which Saudi citizens embrace and drive this transformation. While top-down policies are essential, they must be complemented by a bottom-up movement.

Several countries have shown that successful sustainability requires broad public support. Germany's Energiewende, a long-term energy and climate strategy to move the country toward a climate-neutral energy system by 2045, demonstrates the power of national commitment.

Costa Rica's award-winning Payments for Environmental Services (Pago por Servicios Ambientales), launched in 1996, which compensates landowners for forest conservation, has been very successful in raising awareness and fostering eco-friendly behaviors.

The social acceptance of Brazil's massive biofuel program has been essential to its success. The widespread adoption of flex-fuel vehicles, capable of running on gasoline or ethanol derived from sugarcane, has created a robust market

Rodrigo Tavares

The transition to renewable energy and a sustainable lifestyle is often hindered by personal challenges and anxieties. Financial strain, resistance to lifestyle adjustments,

Introduced in 2003, flex-fuel cars now account for about 90 percent of total passenger vehicle sales in the country. And all gas stations in Brazil offer biofuels at competitive prices. The transition to renewable energy and a sustainable lifestyle is often hindered by personal challenges and anxieties. Financial strain, resistance to lifestyle adjustments, technological uncertainties and fear of missing out can create significant barriers. A lack of clear guidance on eco-friendly products, effective recycling and energy-saving measures can be overwhelming. What are the best energy-saving practices? These personal matters are not trivial and must be dealt with.

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saving practices? These personal matters are not trivial and must be dealt with.

To foster a sustainable future, education is essential. By integrating sustainability into all levels, from primary school to higher

ideas around eco-friendly behaviors can be effectively disseminated.

Since its establishment in 2018, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture has fostered a new generation of cultural producers and consumers by incorporating creative disciplines into the curriculum of public schools.

This approach has led to a very large number of graduates in culture-related university programs, and the development of new academic departments and institutes.

Saudi Arabia can further bolster its sustainability efforts by investing in academic research, data management and vocational training.

A new generation of young climate leaders is already making significant strides in both the public and private sectors. However, to harness the potential of its young population, Saudi Arabia must significantly expand this talent pool.

With more than 63 percent of its population under the age of 30, sustainability offers a wealth of job opportunities and a compelling purpose for the Kingdom's youth.

World leaders must recommit to pandemic preparedness

Four years ago, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments were scrambling to protect their populations and prevent an economic meltdown. No one would dispute that addressing that existential threat was the top political priority at the time.

As a former prime minister and director general of the World Health Organization, I was impressed by the coordinated international response to COVID-19. To be sure, there were large inequalities within and between countries, resulting in the most vulnerable in societies paying too high a price, especially when it came to vaccine access.

But I saw reason to hope

that the devastating effects of the pandemic would prompt a political sea change and lead to a greater commitment to future preparedness, prevention, and response.

I was wrong. It is depressingly obvious that the lessons of COVID-19 are being forgotten. The world remains stuck in the familiar cycle of panic and neglect that characterized the pandemic.

Political leaders are largely ignoring current threats, including COVID-19 itself (which has not been consigned to the history books, despite no longer being a public health emergency), H5N1 bird flu, and dengue fever. And new pandemics with potentially catastrophic outcomes will

almost surely occur, especially as climate change and environmental degradation worsen.

These are not hypothetical risks. On Wednesday, WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared the latest outbreak of mpox in East Africa a "public health emergency of international concern." Not only must the international community now rally behind affected African countries and those at highest risk, it must also prepare itself for the potential spread of the disease to more countries around the globe.

Even before COVID-19 hit, I was warning that our failure to break this vicious cycle was putting us at grave risk. In September

Gro Harlem Brundtland

2019, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board, which I co-chair, issued a report highlighting the acute risk of a devastating global epidemic or pandemic. Little did we know how prescient our warnings were.

And now we find ourselves in a new phase of neglect, which can only be understood as a failure of political will. For all the pious words uttered during the COVID-19 era, heads of state and governments are failing to address the inequalities that stymied recovery efforts. It is unacceptable that rich countries have done so little to ensure the next pandemic response is more equitable, and

therefore more effective.

In June, for example, the 77th World Health Assembly failed to finalize a new pandemic accord, even though the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body had been working for two years on a global pact that aimed to prevent a repeat of COVID-19. Member states have extended talks for up to 12 months but, crucially, they still seem unwilling to provide negotiators with the political support needed to agree on measures that could address inequities in pandemic readiness, response, and recovery.

The failure to reach a consensus on substantive matters is symptomatic of

the growing trust deficit between advanced and emerging economies, and of the ineffectiveness of the multilateral system in an era of deepening geopolitical tensions.

But this cannot be an excuse to delay action on one of the biggest threats of our time. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body needs a new approach that enables maximum engagement from independent experts and civil society organizations, while ensuring that member states remain focused on improving global equity instead of simply paying lip service to it.

Moreover, if the past four years have taught us anything, it is that WHO-led processes alone are not

enough to tackle the existential threat of pandemics. Other multilateral institutions should take up the cause of improving levels of preparedness.

The UN's Summit of the Future in September, as well as upcoming meetings of the G7 and the G20, must highlight the urgent nature of this challenge and encourage world leaders to act. More visible advocacy within these forums for global health security could prove crucial in securing the political leadership and financing needed to bring about meaningful change.

To that end, the group of former political leaders known as The Elders supports the adoption during the Summit of the Future of an emergency platform, a

set of protocols that would allow UN leaders to respond quickly to global shocks.

World Trade Organization members should also agree to review, as proposed by Colombia, the implementation of the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. This agreement governs patent protections for vaccines and treatments, and so plays a key role in pandemic response efforts.

Recommitting to pandemic preparedness is essential. But it should be part of a broader revival of multilateralism. Only through compromise and collaboration can we confront humanity's gravest challenges.



Indonesian Expo 2024 attracts public attention

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad has been successfully attracting more public attention through the a three-day Indonesian Expo 2024.

The Expo is the first of its kind ever held from August 16-18th 2024, having the iconic shopping center, as part of a series of events to commemorate the 79th Anniversary of the Indonesian Independence Day held at the Centaurus Mall, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

The Indonesian Expo aimed to provide a vibrant cultural backdrop to the business-oriented events as well as programs related to people-to-people contact. Among schedules on the stage are traditional and cultural shows including Indonesian martial arts called Pencak Silat, creative and religious performances by Indonesian students in Pakistan, and theme-based discussions on crucial issues to bring Indonesia and Pakistan closer in trade, tourism, and investment as well as education and religious moderation.

Many options are avail-

able during the Expo to elevate public awareness about Indonesia. Thousands of enthusiastic visitors enjoyed the Expo atmosphere by visiting photo booths designed in an iconic Indonesian heritage background such as Rumah Gadang from West Sumatera Province and the Embassy's vehicle in Pakistan's truck art with Indonesian motifs.

Moreover, curious visitors also seem interested in reading the Indonesian short history through a miniature museum and historical display.

During the main session of the Indonesian Independence Day celebration on 17 August 2024, the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires (CDA) in Pakistan, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma highlighted the Embassy's two priority areas of diplomacy in Pakistan; stronger economic relations and closer people-to-people contact.

He said the Expo is designed as a fusion of commerce and culture to portray Indonesia's dynamic economic growth and cultural diversity.

"We have cordial politi-

cal and diplomatic relations. In turn, we need to translate it into more concrete works. Indonesia has huge potential and opportunities in many sectors that the Pakistani counterparts can further explore. The Centaurus as our option for the current Expo aims to bring peoples of the two brotherly countries closer," he said.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Centaurus Sardar Yasir Ilyas expressed his appreciation to the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad for selecting the Centaurus Mall as the venue for the Indonesian Expo 2024.

"Everyone should learn from the Embassy of Indonesia for very active diplomacy in bringing peoples of the two brotherly countries even closer. We make the Centaurus Mall a perfect place for other foreign missions to promote their respective countries in Pakistan. So it is expected that all Pakistani people can learn from other countries such as Indonesia in successfully reaching its great achievement," he said.

Furthermore, both sides

proceeded to the "Tumpeng Cutting Ceremony". Tumpeng is an Indonesian cone-shaped rice dish symbolizing gratitude to Allah and honor of all creatures.

The main session was concluded with the handover of a "token of optimism" from the two sides. The CEO of Centaurus handed over the memorabilia of ongoing optimistic development and expansion of the Islamabad iconic Centaurus complex, while the Indonesian CDA gave plaque of Pancasila as the Indonesian state of ideology which has successfully bolstered unity which subsequently led the Country to political stability and economic prosperity.

"The expo is a fantastic opportunity to learn about Indonesia. The blend of business and culture made it a truly memorable experience for me," said Haseeb from Lahore.

"High appreciation for the Embassy's initiatives. More and more Pakistanis are discovering the beauty and diversity in Indonesia," expressed Tahir Mughal from Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja addressing press conference.

34 gas connections cut off

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has intensified more its ongoing campaign against gas theft, conducting raids across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad. As a result, 34 more illegal connections have been disconnected, and fines totaling Rs 0.67 million have been imposed. In Lahore, the SNGPL team disconnected 9 connections for illegal gas use and imposed fines amounting to Rs 0.05 million. The Bahawalpur team disconnected 8 connections due to the use of compressors. In Mardan, 5 connections were severed for illegal gas use, and fines of Rs 0.16 million were levied. The Faisalabad team disconnected 2 illegal connections and imposed fines of Rs 0.04 million. Meanwhile, in Multan, 10 illegal connections were terminated. In Sheikhupura, fines amounting to Rs 0.42 million were imposed in response to gas theft cases.

Contesting LCCI's polls:

New PIAF Pioneer Progressive Alliance setup

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The biggest alliance of the three strong groups of LCCI has been established first time in the history of Lahore business community to contest Lahore Chamber's election being held in Sept 2024.

PIAF Chief Patron Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman Pioneer Group Ali Hussam Asghar and President Progressive Group Khalid Usman held a press conference with their respective leaders at PIAF Head Office here today.

In a large gathering which was attended by a large number of business representatives from across the city and the members of the PIAF posed their confidence for the Anjum Nisar group, assuring him of full support in the upcoming election of the LCCI. The leaders of the three parties announced that we will work together to end the traditional politics and drawing room culture in the Lahore Chamber, to solve the problems of the business community. They said that Lahore Chamber will be made a strong fortress of the business community. And in the elections to be held on September 23 and 24, the joint best candidates will be fielded by this group, the revealed in the press conference.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (Anjum Nisar group) continued to secure more support as traders and several more associations have announced to back the PPPA in the LCCI upcoming elections of 2024. The PIAF leadership also nominated their more expected candidates for Lahore Chamber Election 2024.

Speaking on the occasion, PIAF patron-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar said that PIAF new Alliance always raised its voice for early solution of various issues being faced by the business community. He said

Alliance would continue its efforts. Various trade bodies newly-elected office-bearers paid rich tributes to the PIAF leadership in general and Mian Anjum Nisar in particular. They said that alliance has honoured the traders by giving representation to their leadership in LCCI polls.

Fahimur Rehman Saigol said that the service of traders from the platform of PIAF has been going on for the past 52 years and the presence of a large number of traders and industrialists in every event is the proof in this regard. It shows that PIAF is not just a show but a name of service to the business community and the voters of Lahore Chamber make the Alliance successful— thanks to the performance of PIAF.

He said that PIAF has an excellent record of 22 years of service to the business community because PIAF brings qualified and working people to Lahore to advocate for the business community.

He advocated for the policy rate to be reduced to a single-digit figure to alleviate the financial burden on the business community and stimulate economic activity.

Anjum Nisar highlighted that the tight monetary policy, combined with the government's significant domestic borrowing, has left minimal room for business growth.

He stressed the urgent need for the government to freeze both domestic and foreign borrowing and to devise a comprehensive strategy to showcase Pakistan's economic potential to international investors.

On this occasion, he condemned the central bank, stating the policy rate should be further reduced. In the budget, relief should be given to exports so that exports can be increased. In the last one month, only 3.5 billion dollars of remittances have come, which can be increased further.

Tractors assembling registered 45.74% growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tractors assembling in the country during the financial year ended on June 30, 2024 witnessed growth of 45.74 percent as compared to the production of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-June 2023-24, about 46,272 tractors were locally produced as compared to the production of 31,752 tractors of the same period of the last financial year, according to the provisional Quantum Index Numbers of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries for June 2024, released by the Pakistan bureau of Statistics.

CEO Hamid M. Ismail announces launch of Ismail Global



KARACHI: Hamid M. Ismail, CEO of Bisconni & Executive Director of Ismail Industries, is proud to announce the launch of Ismail Global, a venture dedicated to transforming lives through innovative products and services in Pakistan and globally.

Reflecting on his family's legacy, Hamid Ismail shares, "Ismail Global

is built on the values and mentorship passed down through generations. Our mission, driven by a culture of excellence and innovation, is to create meaningful solutions that improve lives globally."

After fourteen years of steering Bisconni and Ismail Industries to new heights, Hamid Ismail is now channeling his expertise and vision into Ismail Global. He emphasizes, "I will be guided by the values instilled in me by my family, especially the mentorship and support from Muhammad, Maqsood, and Miftah Ismail. My commitment is to build a business that goes beyond profit, focusing on creating solutions that truly matter - solutions that enrich the lives of those we serve and contribute to a better, brighter future."

As Hamid Ismail steps away from

day-to-day operations at Bisconni and Ismail Industries, he reflects on the significant achievements of the last 14 years. Under his leadership, Bisconni and Ismail Industries saw unmatched financial results, high levels of employee engagement, and unparalleled customer loyalty. "I've had the privilege of working with some of the best professionals in the FMCG industry, overcoming challenges, and celebrating successes," he added. "Most importantly, I am deeply grateful for the bonds we've formed - relationships that transcend work and have become friendships for life."

As Hamid Ismail embarks on this new journey, the future with Ismail Global stands as a testament to his commitment to pushing the boundaries - one that transcends profits and touches lives in meaningful ways.

ZALMI, unveils Zalmi Active 24 'Passion Lift'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Zalmi is thrilled to announce the launch of its highly anticipated activewear collection, Zalmi Active 24 'Passion Lift,' set to redefine performance and style. This Zalmi Active 24 collection is live now and available on www.zalmistore.com and features up to 40 dynamic articles designed to elevate every aspect of your workout.

Zalmi Active 24 'Passion Lift' is tailored with the premium feel, combining comfort, durability, and innovative features to meet the needs of both casual athletes and serious fitness enthusiasts. The collection showcases an array of products, including high-performance trousers, breathable tops, gym wears, Stretchable tees and all crafted to support and enhance your active lifestyle.

We are excited to introduce Zalmi Active 24 'Passion Lift,' a collection that represents our commitment to pushing the boundaries of activewear. Featuring up to 40 distinct articles, each piece is designed to inspire and empower our customers to achieve their best, whether they are hitting the gym, the track, or simply embracing an active lifestyle.

The Zalmi Active 24 'Passion Lift' collection is characterized by its sleek designs and vibrant colors, ensuring that wearers not only perform at their peak but also look great doing it. Advanced moisture-wicking fabrics, and flexible materials are just a few of the standout features that make this collection a game-changer.

FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan announces financial results for half year

F.P. Report

KARACHI: FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited (FCEPL) announced its financial results for the first half of the year, concluding on 30th June, 2024. Despite a challenging economic environment, the Company achieved 17% growth (revenue of PKR 55.0 billion, compared to PKR 47.0 billion in the same period last year) fueled by a favorable portfolio mix, effective market investments and distribution expansion.

The Company also witnessed a gross profit growth of 16% maintaining gross margins despite the inflationary pressures on commodities and energy prices. This performance demonstrates the Company's resilience and ability to adapt to market conditions.

However, profit after tax declined by 6%, (PKR 1.26 billion compared to PKR 1.33 billion in the same period last year) due to a significant increase in interest rates.

Dairy-based products segment

The segment reported revenue of Rs. 48.87 billion, reflecting a growth of 18% vs the same period last year.

Olper's UHT continued to maintain its presence with the 'Happy Subah' campaign across key touchpoints, including TV, digital, and in-store.

These consistent efforts across all relevant consumer touchpoints have strengthened Olper's market and equity leadership in the category.

Value-added brands including Olper's Cream, Olper's Cheese, Dobala and

Tarka continued to gain volume despite competition from established players.

Frozen desserts segment

Despite the challenging start of the year, the segment reported a revenue of 6.16 billion, a 13% growth vs the same period last year.

This was enabled due to continuous investment behind the brand through our newest campaign "Wow Bharay Deserts", creating occasions consumption outside traditional festivities and exemplary in-store execution.

Future outlook

Through the Finance Act, 2024, the Government has imposed an 18% sales tax on the sale of packaged milk. This statutory change has resulted in a significant increase in the prices of packaged milk. As milk is a necessity, this price

increase will add more financial strain on consumers who are already struggling with declining purchasing power.

Furthermore, this change has widened the gap between packaged milk and loose milk, the latter of which remains untaxed and unregulated.

This disparity may drive consumers towards loose milk, which could have implications for public health and safety due to the lack of regulation.

The Company is actively engaging with relevant stakeholders through the Pakistan Dairy Association to communicate its position and inform them of the broader impact by highlighting how this tax will affect various Government priorities, including ensuring nutrition for all and expanding the documented

economy. FCEPL remains committed to maintaining its market position and ensuring the highest quality of products for its consumers.

The Company will continue to respond to consumer needs through in-market initiatives and by offering relevant product propositions while driving efficiencies across the value chain and optimizing investments to enhance the overall financial health of the business, thereby generating greater value for our shareholders.

Leveraging its global expertise and 150 years of heritage, FCEPL remains committed to the highest standards to hygiene, food safety and sustainability and providing safe, affordable, and nourishing dairy products to millions of Pakistanis, every day.

IBA-ADRIC hosts a seminar on 'Pakistan's ADR Renaissance'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Alternative Dispute Resolution International Center (ADRIC), Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, in collaboration with the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), US Department of Commerce successfully hosted a seminar titled 'Pakistan's ADR Renaissance', at the City Campus. The event brought together distinguished legal experts, representatives from International ADR Centers, and key stakeholders to discuss the future of dispute resolution in Pakistan with a focus on mediation.

Director IBA-CEE and SIMI Accredited Mediator, Mr. Kamran Bilgrami, delivered the welcome address, setting the stage for an engaging session. He introduced IBA-ADRIC, and its initiatives, and expressed his gratitude towards Keynote Speakers: Hon'ble Senior Puisne Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Syed Mansoor Ali Shah; Hon'ble Chief

Justice, Sindh High Court, Muhammad Shafi Siddique; Hon'ble Justice, Lahore High Court, Jawad Hassan; and Hon'ble Justice, Islamabad High Court, Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb.

The mediators of the event, Bilgrami; and Head of Program & Partnerships, IBA ADRIC and SIMI Trained Mediator, Syed Bulent Sohail, engaged in a discussion on Mediation Landscape in Singapore: Opportunities and Future Prospects for Pakistan. Attorney Advisors, CLDP, US Department of Commerce, Eric Ives and Raquel Martinez, shared insights into the US government's services and assistance to Pakistan's ADR movement.

This was followed by an enlightening discussion on Mediation by Legal Counsel, SIMC, Sidharth Jha. He conveyed warm regards from the Chairman SIMC, Mr. George Lim.

Executive Director IBA, Dr. S Akbar Zaidi delivered the executive address, offering encouragement and acknowledging the advancements IBA has

made in ADR and its promotion in Pakistan. He emphasized that collaboration remains a central theme for IBA, and the Institute is committed to continuing its involvement in collaborative initiatives.

The second part of the seminar focused on a panel discussion titled 'Bridging Borders: Enhancing International and Regional Connectivity for Economic Growth and Stability'. Mr. Sohail; and Assistant Professor Law, IBA, Ms. Mehreen Nazar moderated the session.

This session was conducted in a bi-panel, which included an engaging panel discussion on the challenges of mediation and the role that technology and digital infrastructure play in strengthening regional connectivity. The first bi-panel featured prominent experts from leading ADR centers in South Asia and Central Asia such as, Attorney Advisor US Department of Commerce, Grishma Pradhan; Managing Director of Case Management Department, AIFC Court &

International Arbitration Centre, Almaty Igenbayev; Partner Allen & Gledhill LLP, Singapore, Afzal Ali; Partner - Tokyo Head of International Arbitration, DLA Piper, Japan, Tony Andriotis; and Director & Secretary General, CCC-ICLP International ADR Center, Sri Lanka, Dhara Wijayatillake.

The second bi-panel featured the panelists, Senior Fellow, Center for Law & Religion, Emory University & Fulbright Specialist, Dr. Jo DeLaGarza-Chitlik; Vice Chairman Maldives International Arbitration Center, Aseel Hassan; Japan Representative, SIMC, Yuko Nitta; Chairperson, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Mian Sheraz Javaid; and Former General Secretary NEPCA, Nepal, Gyanendra Prasad Kayastha. The panel discussed practical ways to adopt and institutionalize mediation in Pakistan so that the law and dispute resolution mechanisms are galvanized to address the burgeoning impact of Alternate dispute resolution

in Pakistan.

Secretary Law and Justice Commission, Pakistan, Ms. Riffat Inam presented a special address where she emphasized the practices that Pakistan is adopting for promotion of ADR in Pakistan. It was discussed that the Supreme Court has formed an active ADR task force the members of which are working diligently in promulgating a legal framework for mediation and ADR in Pakistan.

In his keynote address, Justice Jawad Hassan highlighted that Pakistan is on the right track in adopting ADR practices. During his recent visit to London, a leading jurisdiction in dispute resolution, he observed that Pakistan is making impressive progress in this area. This recognition from such a prominent legal center serves as evidence that Pakistan is advancing in its ADR efforts.

Justice Attique Shah informed the audience about the significance of ADR and its effective impact on reducing the caseload of the judiciary.



He also emphasized the legal provisions of the ADR Act and their significance.

Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui stressed the importance of focusing on all forms of ADR, not just mediation, especially given Pakistan's significant case backlog. To effectively reduce this backlog, it is essential to leverage the full range of ADR techniques. He noted that Karachi has seen a decline in the use of

mediation for dispute resolution between 2019 and 2023. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage parties and individuals to choose the ADR method that best suits their needs, rather than solely promoting mediation.

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah commented on the ADR Renaissance theme and enlightened that various industries can be deduced under ADR for

effective dispute resolution. He expressed that Pakistan should focus on keeping ADR as a desired dispute resolution mechanism.

The seminar concluded with closing remarks that reiterated the importance of ADR in Pakistan's legal landscape. Mementos were distributed, symbolizing the collaborative spirit and shared commitment to advancing ADR practices in the country.



In brief

Clubs shine in sports gala

MIRPURKHAS (APP): The Department of Sports and Youth, Government of Sindh on Sunday hosted a thrilling Judo and cricket competition as part of the Independence Sports Gala at the Benazir Shahid Sport Stadium (Gama Stadium) in Mirpurkhas. Four local clubs participated in the event, with Shah Judo Club and Akmal Judo Club making it to the finals. Akmal Judo Club emerged victorious, securing the top position, while Shah Judo Club took second place. The competition saw intense matches, with Jafar, Sehar, Haider, and Mufti winning their respective fights. District Sports Officer VasDev Malhi, the special guest, praised the players and promised to continue organizing such events. Other notable guests included Anwar Bhai Shahdad Mari, Imam Baloch Nasir Baloch, and International Referee and Judge Malik Muhammad Iqbal. The event was part of the Jashan Azadi Sports Gala, which featured 14 different sports competitions. Trophies and cash prizes were distributed among the players, with a large crowd of sports enthusiasts and officials in attendance.

Hasan to miss first Test

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bangladesh opening batsman Mahmudul Hasan Joy is suffering from a groin strain and will miss the first Test against Pakistan, which gets underway in Rawalpindi on August 21. Bangladesh national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan said: "Joy had complained of pain in the right groin on 14 August while playing for Bangladesh 'A' in the four-day match against Pakistan A. Bangladesh national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan underwent an MRI followed by physical assessment, and it has since been confirmed that he has a Grade 1 adductor strain in the right groin. Bangladesh national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan has begun his rehab. Such injuries usually take about 10 to 14 days to recover from. Bangladesh national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan will not be available for the first Test but we hope to have him fit for the second Test which starts on August 30. "We will continue to monitor his progress on a day to day basis."

Dickwella suspended

COLOMBO (INP): Sri Lanka wicketkeeper-batsman Nirosan 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 Gunatillaka, for breaching the team's COVID-19 bio-secure bubble during Sri Lanka's tour of England.

Karachi Test shifted to Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in consultation with the Bangladesh Cricket Board has decided to move the second ICC World Test Championship fixture to Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

According to a PCB press release, the decision to move the fixture has been taken due to the deployment of heavy construction equipment and the need to adhere to tight redevelopment schedules for the National Bank Stadium, which is being prepared for next year's ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

This decision allows cricket spectators and fans to watch live action of both the Tests, which serve as a preview of a busy and hectic international season for Pakistan cricket. During this period, the national side will play a total of nine Tests, 14 T20Is, and at least 17 ODIs from 21 August to 5 April.

"We have been guided by the construction experts on the time-lines for the

readiness of the venue. They advised that while construction could continue during playing hours, the resulting noise pollution would disturb the cricketers. Additionally, the dust from the construction work could also affect the health and wellbeing of the players, officials, broadcasters, and media.

"Given that construction must continue uninterrupted to ensure the venue is operationally ready for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the PCB, after consulting all stakeholders and reviewing operational and logistical matters, has decided to hold both Tests in Rawalpindi.

"At this stage, we will not like to speculate on the hosting of the second Test in Karachi from 15-19 October and will continue to work closely with the architects and construction experts on the safe and secure hosting of the match, while keeping the England and Wales Cricket

Board updated."

The first Test will begin in Rawalpindi on 21 August, with the second Test starting on 30 August. Meanwhile, in Islamabad, Pakistan Shaheens and Bangladesh 'A' will continue with their series. After a drawn first four-day match, the second four-day match will commence on 20 August at the Islamabad Club, followed by three 50-over matches on 26, 28 and 30 August.

Update on sale of tickets:The following is important information on sale of ticket for both the Test matches at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium:

•Tickets are available online at PCB.tcs.com.pk

•Ticket booth at Aviation Ground, opposite Rescue 1122, Rawal Road, will be operational on 19 August at 11am

•Public car park will be available at Aviation Ground, opposite Rescue 1122, Rawal Road; and Govt. Graduate College Satellite Town, 6th Road

Security, traffic arrangements finalized

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police and city Traffic Police have finalized the best possible security and traffic arrangements for the Pakistan and Bangladesh cricket test match and practice session at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

The City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalaidd Hamdani said that the route of the cricket teams would be monitored through CCTV cameras while snipers would also be deployed on the rooftops at the route and around the stadium.

Elite and Dolphin Force personnel and Rawalpindi district police would be deployed in and around the cricket stadium, he said adding that special teams would patrol in the surrounding areas of the stadium.

A coordinated traffic plan had been prepared for the convenience of the citizens, the CPO said adding, "to ensure foolproof security, the best possible arrangements had been made for the Pakistan-Bangladesh cricket match".

According to a police spokesman, tight security arrangements had been finalized for a three-day practice session at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium while more than 1700 officers and personnel of Rawalpindi Police would perform security duty with over 350 traffic wardens and officers to maintain the flow of traffic.

The CTP spokesman informed that Rawalpindi Traffic Police had issued a comprehensive traffic plan for practice sessions and the first cricket test to be played between Pakistan and Bangladesh at Pindi Cricket Stadium.

He informed that the traffic plan would be followed from August 18 to 25 to facilitate traffic plying with Rawalpindi city and between twin cities.

He said that the traffic plan was approved by Chief Traffic Officer Beenish Fatima.

A total of 367 officers and wardens would perform duties to regulate traffic on city roads, he said and informed that eight DSPs, circles incharges, 40 inspectors, sector incharges and 318 traffic wardens would be on duty, he maintained.

According to the plan, special car parking facilities at five different locations from the shuttle service would be available to take spectators to Pindi stadium.

During arrival and departure of the teams for the match and practice session, the Murree Road from Stadium Road to Faizabad would remain closed for traffic, he added.

He said that the traffic would use 6th Road and Saidpur Road to reach Islamabad. Similarly, traffic coming from 9th Avenue would use the route of Faizabad, IJ P road, Pandora Chungi, Katarian Chungi Carriage Factory and Pirwadhai to enter Rawalpindi.

Moreover, the Stadium Road would remain closed for all kinds of traffic from August 18 to 25, he informed.

Gibson's muscle and Deepti's cool lift London Spirit to maiden Women's Hundred title

LONDON (Monitoring Desk): Two years on from Deepti Sharma sending Charlie Dean into despair by running her out at the non-striker's end, the pair were jumping into each other's arms on the same side of the pitch. Deepti had just struck the winning runs in the 2024 women's Hundred final, a six launched high rather than far, but far enough to send Shabnim Ismail over the sponge with it.

And with that, London Spirit were champions for the first time, and whatever diplomatic chaos that England-India ODI conclusion wrought back in 2022 had well and truly been blown out of the water. Foes were now friends. Spirit now champions.

Heather Knight's charges, having grown into this tournament just in the nick of time, scraped into third place and then turned over the top two in the space of a weekend to secure championship status.

Top End T20 semi-final: Abbas's all-round show in vain as Shaheens fall short



DARWIN (INP): Pakistan Shaheens fell 30 runs short against Adelaide Strikers in the first semi-final of the Top End T20 series as they scored 167 all out in reply to Strikers' 197-5 on Sunday at the DXC Arena in Darwin.

Mohammad Abbas Afridi's quickfire 29-ball 54 went in vain as the Shaheens ran out of batters with 11 balls still left in the bag. Earlier, he also took three wickets.

In pursuit of the 198-run target, Pakistan Shaheens lost a wicket in second, third, fourth and fifth over as they were reduced to 33-4 in 4.1 overs. Mohammad Harris got off to a steady start scoring 19 off 11 balls with the help of three fours before falling to Tim Oakley in the third over.

Mubasir Khan (18, 12b, 2x6s) and Usman Khan (32, 20b, 2x4s, 1x6) stitched a 32-run fifth-

wicket partnership but both fell in the eighth and 11th overs respectively as with the scorecard reading 65-5 and then 91-6.

Abbas, who walked into bat at seven, belted five fours and three sixes during his 29-ball stay on the crease but with no support from other end. Arif Yaqoob (15, 17b, 1x4) and Mohammad Imran Jnr (11, 5b, 1x4, 1x6) chipped in with small contributions but all in vain as the team was banded out for 167 in 18.1 overs.

Liam Scott picked up three wickets while Jordan Buckingham and Lloyd Pope had two each to their names. Oakley, Tim O'Connell and Noah Mcfayden dismissed one batter each.

Earlier, after Shaheens opted to bowl first, Strikers' opening batter Jake Winter smashed a 61-ball 104 hitting six fours

and eight sixes to take the game away. He was joined by Harry Manenti (52, 32b, 9x4s, 1x6) in the ninth over as the duo stitched a 73-run fourth-wicket partnership in 7.4 overs, taking the team score from 57-3 to 130-4 in 15.4 overs when Manenti departed.

Sam Rahaley remained unbeaten on 13 off 10 hitting one four as Winter was finally dismissed in the last over of the innings. For Shaheens, Abbas took three wickets while Faisal Akram chipped in with two.

This semi-final loss brings an end to the Pakistan Shaheens tour of Darwin which began with a two four-day match series against Bangladesh 'A' in July followed by two 50-over matches against Bangladesh 'A' and NT Strike. Pakistan Shaheens played seven matches in the Top End T20 series winning five and losing two.

Exhibition hockey match ends in tie

LONDON (APP): The exhibition hockey match between Indian Gymkhana London and Khawaja Junaid All Stars Hockey Legends ended in a thrilling tie, with both sides scoring five goals each.

The match, organized in collaboration with Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy, Al Mera Foundation and the Noor Project was aimed at promoting hockey and raise funds for orphans and underprivileged children.

The match consisted of four 15-minute halves, showcased the skills of international hockey stars, including Dhanraj Pillay, Stephen Blocher, Juan Escarre, James Tyndall, Pakistan's Olympian Khawaja Junaid and Rana Ghazanfar Ali, Faiz ur Rehman, Akram Raza, Adeel Ahmad,Throughout the match, the spectators were captivated by the legends' skills and techniques.

Although the match en-

ded in a draw, Rana Ghazanfar of Pakistan emerged as the top scorer with two goals, while Dhan Rajpala dominated the game with his exceptional performance.

In his post match comments, Indian hockey legend Dhan Rajpala expressed his willingness to visit Pakistan to promote the sport and back the Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy. "I would be happy to come to Pakistan on a call for the promotion of hockey and to support the children of Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy," he said.

Spanish star Juan Escarre shared his fond memories of Pakistan stating, "Whenever there is a hockey event in Pakistan, I will be the first to reach there."

German hockey legend Stephen Bluscher said he was honoured to participate in the match, held for a noble cause.

Several notables, including British MPs Seema

Malhotra and Ruth Cadbury, Lord Rami Rangers and Hounsloah Deputy Mayor Muhammad Shakeel witnessed the thrilling contest. Seema expressed pleasure to see Indian Gymkhana organizing an event of a very high caliber for the first time.

Seema asked Khawaja Junaid and Indian Gymkhana's top brass to devise a plan to make the event a part of their annual clander.

Rajpala commended Khawaja Junaid for organizing the event and expressed his willingness to participate in future events in Pakistan. He emphasized the importance of strategic planning and funding for hockey, encouraging Pakistan to follow India's approach to the sport.

The event highlighted the strong bonds of sportsmanship between the players and underscored the importance of promoting hockey globally.

Arshad showered with huge cash prize: Report

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Arshad Nadeem, the javelin throw gold medalist in the recently-concluded Paris Games, said Pakistani women athletes should be given modern facilities so that they can

perform at the highest level. Since returning home with Pakistan's first gold in the Olympics since 1984, Nadeem has been showered with cash prizes worth around 280 million, cars and other gifts. In the latest instance, the Governor Punjab on Saturday gave him a cash prize of two million rupees and a car.

But beyond such personal gifts, Nadeem wanted the government to fulfil his request for a modernised track and field stadium and a university for women in his hometown – Mian Channu.

"We badly need facilities for our women and even men to acquire higher education in our area and nowadays young athletes need to be given the best facilities," Nadeem said on the ARY news channel.

Nadeem, who appeared on the show with his wife Rashida, was also asked about the buffalo gifted to

him by his father-in-law for winning the Olympic gold medal.

The 27-year-old replied in half-jest. "I was a bit surprised with the announcement and I wondered since my father-in-law is a very rich person and has a lot of land...if only he had given me 4-5 acres of farm land instead of the buffalo," he said with a smile.

Rashida said she knew about Nadeem's injury problems before the Olympics but kept it away from other family members.

"When he went for the Games, I couldn't sleep for three days and I just kept on praying that he would remain fit and return with a gold medal," she said.

Nadeem's long-time coach Salman Butt said the ace javelin thrower will return to training in a month's time as he faces the hard task of living up to people's expectations.

MCG to host Australia v England 150th anniversary Test

LONDON (BBC News): Australia plan to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first-ever Test match by playing England in a one-off match at the same venue in March 2027.

The Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) played host to a single-innings match from 15 to 19 March 1877, with Australia winning by 45 runs, before England

won the second match at the same venue to tie the series 1-1.

The 100-year anniversary of the inaugural Test was also marked with a Test between Australia and England at the MCG in 1977, with Australia again winning by 45 runs.

Cricketer Australia (CA) also revealed the MCG will continue to host the tradi-

tional Boxing Day Test while the New Year's Test will remain at the Sydney Cricket Ground - both through to 2030-31.

CA confirmed that the Adelaide Oval will host the December 'Christmas Test' in either day-night or day format and the 'West Test' in Perth, Western Australia, will be Australia's opener for the next three years.

That means the next men's Ashes in 2025-26 will begin at a venue other than the Gabba in Brisbane for the first time since 1982-83, and it will be the first Ashes Test played at Perth's Optus Stadium.

Later in the series, Brisbane is set to host a day-nighter rather than Adelaide, which has hosted seven of the 12 pink-ball

Tests in Australia.

"The 150th anniversary Test match at the MCG in March 2027 will be a wonderful celebration of the pinnacle format of the game at one of the world's great sporting arenas and we can't wait to host England on that occasion," said CA's chief executive Nick Hockley.

It could be the latest date



In brief

Ayaz expresses grief over losses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Sunday, expressed deep sorrow and regret over the loss of lives and property caused by the recent rains across the country. In a message, he extended his heartfelt condolences to the affected families, assuring them that the Parliament and the entire nation stand with them during this difficult time. The Speaker urged the relevant authorities to collaborate with provincial governments to ensure the immediate provision of relief to the affected people and to expedite recovery efforts. Ayaz Sadiq also offered prayers for those who lost their lives in various accidents during the rains and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

MoE announces PTMs schedule

ISLAMABAD (APP): In collaboration with Taleemabad, the Ministry of Education has announced the schedule for Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) in schools and colleges on August 19 and 20. The meetings are aimed at promoting parental involvement in education and enhancing student performance. Parents in rural areas are requested to visit schools or colleges from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., while those in urban areas are asked to arrive from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Officers from the Ministry of Education and Heads of Departments (HODs) have been assigned to visit various institutions as per the directions of the Secretary. This initiative ensures that the Ministry is actively engaged with educational institutions and is committed to improving the quality of education.

Girl reunite with family

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) reunited a 10-year-old girl with her family here on Sunday. According to NHMP North Zone spokesman Muhammad Saqib, while patrolling, the motorway police found a girl near the Chakdara interchange in distress who had lost her way. After getting information from the nearby areas, the NH&MP handed over the girl to her mother, who belonged to the nearby village of Lower Dir area. The girl's family thanked and hailed the performance of the NHMP for the recovery of their child.

427,600 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 427,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 456,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1549.30 feet and was 151.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 291,400 cusecs and 282,200 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1213.35 feet, which was 165.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 29,300 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 348,600, 353,800, 390,200 and 372,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 65,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 46,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Shaza refutes reports of internet slowdowns

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja Saturday, refuted reports that the government had slowed down or closed the internet nationwide.

Addressing a press conference, she said, "The news circulating on social media that the government is throttling the internet is completely baseless and has no reality."

She further clarified that issues with certain apps were causing difficulties in downloading, leading to an increase in VPN usage, which contributed to the slowdown in internet speeds.

However, she said, "These issues have been resolved due to the government's efforts."

Technical experts and internet service providers were also consulted to address the situation, she added.

Shaza Fatima said, "Internet providers, telecom companies, and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)

have been invited to a meeting next week to ensure that consumers do not face similar issues in the future."

She urged people to discuss Pakistan responsibly, as a positive perception would attract investment to the country.

"The government remains committed to supporting the information technology sector."

Highlighting the government's achievements, Shaza Fatima said that ICT export remittances surged to \$3.223 billion during the financial year 2023-24, compared to \$2.596 billion in the previous fiscal year. She credited this increase to the steps taken by the government to boost IT exports.

With robust support from the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Ministry of IT, the Pakistan Software Export Board, and the IT industry, Shaza Fatima expressed commitment to further enhancing the country's IT exports.

She highlighted Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's

focus on advancing Pakistan's IT sector and attracting more investment into the industry. She mentioned that the Prime Minister has prioritized national digitalization, formed an interim committee, and prepared a draft bill. The bill has been dispatched to the law ministry, and the government plans to soon establish a National Digitization Commission, which the Prime Minister will personally chair to advance the digitalization of the economy, governance, and society.

"The Digital Pakistan Policy is paving the way for the next phase of digital transformation. Digital inclusion is a government priority, with a strong commitment to bridging the digital divide between rural and urban areas," she said.

"Digital technologies are essential for the country's progress, and initiatives are being taken for digital innovation and infrastructure development."

Shaza Fatima also stressed the importance of digital payments, noting that the digitization of

financial transactions was crucial."

"Efforts are underway to make the federal government paperless as soon as possible," she informed.

She said, "Federal budget allocated Rs 60 billion to the IT sector."

"Rs. 4 billion had been allocated to equip children with essential coding skills, supported by certificates from global tech giants like Google and Meta."

"Due to efforts of the Prime Minister's efforts, Huawei will train approximately 300,000 children."

Shaza Fatima said, "The government is planning to build IT parks in Islamabad and Karachi. The Islamabad IT Park would be completed by March 2025, is expected to create 10,000 jobs".

She also highlighted the expansion of e-employment centers across the country, with 250 new centers set to open, initiative that started in Punjab under Shahbaz Sharif's leadership in 2011, aimed to provide widespread access to digital employment opportunities.

"Currently, 43 special

technology parks are operational, with plans to add 20 more in the coming days."

"Further initiatives include the establishment of an IT City in Islamabad, designed to house all IT-related facilities in one place," she told.

She said, "Three new incubation centers are planned, one of which will be exclusively for women, reflecting a commitment to gender inclusion in the tech industry."

Shaza Fatima also shared inspiring stories of young Pakistani innovators."

"These stories exemplify the potential of Pakistan's youth in the tech sector," she hailed.

"To support startups, a Pakistan Startup Fund will be created, along with the launch of the "Bridge Start" program, backed by Rs. 1 billion."

She also highlighted the gaming industry, stating that Pakistan has gaming experts and that this industry is generating significant revenue for the country.

"The government is committed to promoting the

gaming industry by establishing Centers of Excellence in Gaming and Animation (CEGA) in Karachi and Lahore."

"We hope that through CEGA, Pakistan will be able to increase its share," she added.

"Pakistan is making significant strides in advancing its digital infrastructure, with the establishment of the country's first virtual production studio. This initiative aims to provide young men and women with state-of-the-art facilities."

"The government is also focused on attracting international companies to set up offices in Pakistan," she told.

"Digital transformation is expected to be a game-changer, with a \$78 million project already underway in collaboration with the World Bank," shaza said.

"Efforts are being made to integrate large data sets to create a unified digital identity for every citizen, streamlining processes and reducing the need for long queues."

"Payments and other

government services are expected to become more transparent and accessible via mobile phones."

"The government is encouraging the use of digital payments, with a target to install QR codes at over a million locations this year. This move is expected to increase tax revenues and bring Pakistan closer to the payment systems used in developed countries."

"Pakistan's first AI policy is also in the works, with input from local and international AI experts."

"A national cybersecurity policy and a fiberization policy are being developed to ensure widespread and secure internet access across the country."

"Next year, Pakistan plans to auction the 5G spectrum in the first and second quarter."

"The government is also introducing four new internet cables—SMW6, 2Africa, 2Africa One, and Makran Gulf Gateway—to improve internet connectivity and access to high-speed, reliable internet across the country," shaza informed.

Mashhood urges youth to take lead in shaping Pakistan's destiny

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Sunday emphasized the crucial role of Pakistan's talented young generation in driving the country towards development, stressing that their energy, creativity, and innovative ideas were essential for propelling the nation forward.

Khan highlighted the significance of empowering and engaging the youth in the development process, as they possess the potential to bring about transformative change and shape a brighter future for Pakistan.

The Chairman also highlighted the need for youth to adopt a positive mindset, focusing on hope, resilience, and optimism.

He believed that by spreading positivity, the youth could create a ripple effect, inspiring others to work towards a brighter future for Pakistan.

Mashhood also emphasized that the PM's women initiatives are a testament to his dedication to creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

He noted, "Government is working tirelessly to address the challenges faced by women and to provide them with the resources and support they need to succeed."

The Chairman also highlighted the importance of women's participation in the country's development, stating that empowering women is essential for achieving sustainable growth and prosperity.

He urged women to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the government and to play an active role in shaping their own futures.

"By supporting women's empowerment, the government aims to create a brighter future for all Pakistanis," Mashhood added.

He expressed his optimism that the PM's initiatives would bring about positive change and pave the way for a more gender-inclusive society.

The Chairman also highlighted the importance of international collaborations and partnerships in empowering young talent.

He suggested that partnerships with foreign universities, organizations, and governments could provide

opportunities for knowledge sharing, skill development, and cultural exchange.

By motivating and empowering young talent at the international level, Mashhood believed that Pakistan could become a hub for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

He envisioned a future where Pakistani youth would be recognized as leaders and change-makers on the global stage.

Mashhood encouraged young Pakistanis to become active citizens, take ownership of their country's problems, and work towards finding solutions.

He stressed the importance of volunteering, community service, and social entrepreneurship in creating a positive impact.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy repairing Bari Imam Road during repairing and development work in Federal Capital.

AC visits Sunday Bazaar

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to protect consumers, Assistant Commissioner City Farhan Ahmad on Sunday conducted a surprise visit to the bustling G-6 Sunday Bazaar, scrutinizing price lists and enforcing the plastic bag ban.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, Assistant Commissioner City, Farhan Ahmad, led a team to the G-6 Sunday Market to ensure compliance with price regulations. The officials inspected price lists at various stalls, taking action against two shopkeepers for overcharging customers.

The visit aimed to enforce the government's directive on price control and plastic bag usage. On the occasion, he emphasized the ongoing efforts to implement the plastic bag ban, promoting eco-friendly alternatives.

During the visit, citizens refused to purchase from vendors without displayed price lists, supporting the administration's initiatives. Ahmad urged consumers to report shopkeepers demanding higher prices than listed, promising swift action.

The surprise inspection demonstrates the authorities' commitment to safeguarding consumers' rights and maintaining fair market practices.

By monitoring prices and promoting sustainable practices, the administration seeks to create a fair and responsible marketplace.

Secretary, PIO express grief over demise of DSP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary for the Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan and Principal Information Officer (PIO) Mubashir Hasan on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of the Deputy Superintendent Police (Traffic) Rawalpindi Chaudhry Musarat Abbas.

Chaudhry Musarat Abbas is the brother of the Director General Information Department Regional Office Lahore Shafiqat Abbas.

In a joint news statement, both the officers of the Ministry of Information sympathized with the

bereaved family and prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace. They hailed the services of Chaudhry Musarat Abbas who was a hardworking and honest officer and dedicated most of his life to the service of the country.

The deceased performed his duties well and always obeyed the law, said the federal secretary.

According to the PIO, the late DSP Musarat Abbas was not only an able officer but also a remarkable human being. The services of DSP Musarat to the nation would always be remembered, he added.

ANF recovers drugs in operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 78 kg drugs and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman.

He informed that 2.8 kg ice was recovered from two passengers going to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain at Islamabad Airport.

40.8 kg hashish and 2.4 kg opium were recovered in two different operations conducted near M-1 Islamabad while two accused were rounded up. 14.4 kg hashish was

recovered from the possession of two suspects netted near Shahrah Wali, Karachi and 8.4 kg hashish was recovered from a motorcyclist intercepted in Sato Katla village near Lahore.

Six kg hashish and 1.2 kg opium were recovered from an accused held in Sector G-15, Islamabad.

2.2 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested in Sialkot. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against all arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Tree plantation - solution to Pheatwaves, ecosystem health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan, one of the most affected countries by climate change, faces severe challenges due to escalating heatwaves and widespread deforestation. Although numerous tree planting campaigns are active across the country, these efforts are insufficient to address the scale of the crisis.

Tree planting is not just a strategy but a crucial tool in managing climate challenges, improving public health, and protecting agriculture and the environment. As highlighted by the Global Climate Risk Index, Pakistan's vulnerability to climate threats underscores the urgent need for intensified and consistent tree plantation initiatives.

According to the Global Forest Watch, Pakistan had 648,000 hectares of tree cover in 2010, accounting for 0.74% of its land area. However, by 2023, the country lost 148 hectares of tree cover, releasing 60.2 kilotons of CO₂. Since 2001, Pakistan has lost 9,940 hectares of tree cover, representing a 1% decrease since 2000, and emitted 2.88 million tons of CO₂ equivalent.

Deforestation, driven largely by human activities, has been a major issue, with 4.1% of tree cover loss occurring in areas affected by such activities.

In 2024, Pakistan has reported 1,534 high-confidence VIIRS fire alerts, a significant increase com-

pared to previous years. The highest number of fire alerts recorded in a year was 1,869 in 2018. From July 5, 2021, to July 1, 2024, there have been 59,835 VIIRS fire alerts. Forest fires, primarily caused by human negligence, are the leading driver of deforestation in Pakistan.

Recent fire incidents in June, particularly in Margalla Hills National Park—which spans 12,605 hectares and is managed by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB)—highlight the severity of the situation. These fires, often exacerbated by heatwaves, have

become increasingly frequent and intense due to climate change and human negligence.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts. Public awareness campaigns and more educational seminars are essential to emphasize the importance of tree planting and the need to avoid practices that could trigger fires, such as cooking and smoking in forested areas.

Naseer Memon, a renowned climate change and natural disaster expert, stresses that sustainable plantation involves choosing the right species. Ecologically harmful and invasive species should be avoided, and post-plantation care must not be over-

looked in the pursuit of high planting targets.

Dr. Ghulam Raza Bhatti, a botanist at the Botanical Garden, Biodiversity & Conservation, notes that Pakistan's diverse terrain—from the coast to the K2 Mountains—supports a variety of ecological zones and forest types. This diversity necessitates a variety of vegetation suited to different ecological zones.

In Islamabad, the city's undulating landscape offers several areas suitable for tree planting, including avenues, major and emerging arteries, parks, green belts, residential areas, educational institutions, and government offices. Urban tree cover is crucial for enhancing the city's envi-

ronmental quality.

Dr. Ghulam Raza highlighted the need to seek expert advice before planting saplings, as not all trees are suited to every region or ecosystem. Choosing the appropriate species for the specific environmental conditions is essential for ensuring successful growth and maximizing the environmental benefits.

Additionally, Pakistan is grappling with a severe energy crisis, with rising power consumption putting immense pressure on the national grid. To address this, promoting extensive tree plantation—especially of fast-growing species suitable for biomass energy—can serve as a pivotal strategy.

By diversifying its energy sources and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, Pakistan can move towards a more sustainable energy future.

To sum up, prioritizing large-scale tree plantation is more than just a conservation initiative; it's a holistic approach to tackling Pakistan's environmental, social, and economic issues.

This strategy not only helps in disaster resilience and public health improvement but also contributes to energy conservation and sustainable development. By adopting this approach, Pakistan can forge a path towards a greener, healthier, and more prosperous future for all its citizens.

Observing hijab not violation

KABUL (TOLOnews): The acting Minister of Virtue and Vice, during a visit to Badakhshan, dismissed UNAMA's recent report on humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, stating that women's rights are upheld under IEA. In a meeting with local officials and some residents in the city of Faizabad, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi emphasized that women in the country are entitled to inheritance and the right to choose their husbands, according to the commands of the leader of IEA.

Two people killed last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Last week, two people were killed and eleven others were injured in separate incidents of violence in Afghanistan. One civilian was killed and nearly a dozen more were injured when a landmine blast ripped through a passenger van in Dasht Barchi area of Kabul city last week. Daesh or ISIS has claimed responsibility for the blast. Also, last week, a security official was arrested after he shot and killed a young man named Hamid Jalal Pashtun in Karte Naw area.

IEA marks 105th anniversary of independence against Britain

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan (IEA) on Sunday marked the 105th anniversary of independence against the British and



said the mujahid successfully drove the colonialists out of the country. According to a statement, the IEA said: "The tireless jihadi struggle of our mujahid ancestors against British colonialism not only caused the defeat of the invaders in Afghanistan; Rather, it saved the colonized countries from the grip of occupation to the region and the whole world." The IEA also noted that Afghans, still "have the spirit" of their forefathers in terms of ending occupation and that they had again – in 2021 – "saved Afghanistan from another occupation." This was in reference to the US and NATO withdrawal of troops three years ago – an anniversary that was marked just four days ago. "Afghans are blessed with strong faith, courage and new jihad to defeat the western occupation under the leadership of the United States, like the British and Soviet occupations, with the help of Allah Almighty, and that the zealous and mujahid Afghans, like a century ago, will once again restore the flag." Meanwhile, Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqub Mujahid, Acting Minister of National Defense, said Sunday at an event to mark the anniversary of independence against Britain that Afghanistan's independence is the "precious heritage of our ancestors, and considered our national duty to preserve." He stated that today, Afghanistan is wholly independent. Qari Fasihuddin Fitrat, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's chief of army staff said at the ceremony that the country is free in the true sense of the word. He said: "Before the IEA, there were governments that celebrated this day, despite being an occupied government that took orders from others." "Today, our country is completely independent and no one's order is accepted." Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the economic deputy prime minister, said at the event that the defeat of the British showed the sense of freedom runs in the veins of Afghans.

He said Independence Day was an historic and unforgettable day in the country's history. Baradar added that currently the people of Afghanistan live in a safe environment and have control over their land. "Celebrating this day teaches us that our ancestors fought the colonialists with their bare hands and defeated the British, won the country's independence; now it is the religious and national duty of all Afghans to protect this freedom," Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar said.

Iran cuts electricity: 60% of Herat residents without power

HERAT (TOLOnews): Officials from the Herat branch of Breshna Company stated that with the cut in imported electricity from Iran, 60% of the residents of this province are now without power. Khair Mohammad Meraj, the head of Herat's electricity department, said: "We receive 60 megawatts of electricity from Turkmenistan, but currently only 40 megawatts are being supplied due to hot weather and issues in that country. We had an agreement with Iran for 100 to 110 megawatts, but now it has been reduced to 20 megawatts, and sometimes even this is completely cut off, dropping to zero." Residents of Herat say that the power outages have disrupted their daily lives in the hot weather. They are urging the officials of the Islamic Emirate to address this challenge. Abdul Zahir Ahadi, a resident of Herat, said: "The electricity comes and goes. I'm a worker, and when I go home at noon, there is no electricity. We have many complaints about power issues. At night, the electricity cuts off, and we have air coolers and fans, but they are off. Our children have fallen ill." Wakil Ahmad Mohammadi, another resident of Herat, said: "It's summer, the weather is hot, and the electricity is often cut off, causing damage to people's electrical appliances. The weather is very hot, even in the evenings, and without electricity, children fall ill and have to be taken to the hospital." According to officials, in addition to the imported electricity from Iran and Turkmenistan, 23 megawatts from the Salma Dam are also added to Herat's power grid. However, due to the increase in electricity consumption caused by the hot weather, this amount of energy is deemed insufficient.

IE denies US claims of Zawahiri's death in Kabul

KABUL (TOLOnews): The spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate has stated in an interview with Al Arabiya Persian that there is no evidence of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda, being killed in Afghanistan. Zabihullah Mujahid, in this interview, said that the Islamic Emirate does not confirm the US claim regarding Ayman al-Zawahiri's death in Kabul. Mujahid said: "Investigations are ongoing, but we have not yet reached a point that would verify the alleged claim. The presence of al-Zawahiri here has not been established, his body has not been seen, and we do not confirm the claim made by the United States." In part of his remarks, the spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate discussed the issue of prisoner exchange with the United States and said that the US must release Afghan prisoners in exchange for the release of its citizens. According to Mujahid, they are in talks with American officials on this matter. Zabihullah Mujahid added: "Just as the US wants to free its citizens, it must also release Afghans. Unfortunately, one Afghan remains in Guantanamo, and there are Afghans imprisoned in the US who must be freed." Sayed Akbar Sial Wardak, a political analyst, said: "When problems between the two countries are resolved in any area, whether it is the release of prisoners or the lifting of sanctions, it has a positive effect on the relations between the two countries." The United States claimed that on August 2, 2022, it targeted and killed Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda, in the Sherpur area of Kabul.

Afghanistan, Uzbekistan 35 sign agreements



KABUL (TOLOnews): The Economic Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office announced in a press release the signing of 35 investment and trade agreements worth \$2.5 billion between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. According to the Economic Deputy, 12 agreements worth \$1.4 billion were signed in the investment sector, and 23 agreements worth \$1.1 billion were signed in the trade sector in the presence of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Economic Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office, and Uzbekistan's prime minister, Abdulla Nigmatovich Arpov. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Economic Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office, stated, "Today is a very good opportunity to discuss the relations between the two countries and economic issues, especially railways, electricity, trade, transit, and visas." Similarly, the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan trade meeting and the exhibition of Uzbekistan's products in Kabul were held with the participation of the Ministers of Industry and Commerce and the private sectors of both countries. The Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, the Economic Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office of the Islamic Emirate, the Ministers of Industry and Commerce, and delegations from both sides, including representatives of the private sectors from both countries, visited the production of Uzbekistan at the exhibition. Nooruddin Azizi, acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, at the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan trade meeting, highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation between these two countries in the areas of trade, transit, and joint investments for the growth and development of the economies of both countries. Azizi also urged Uzbekistan investors to invest in various sectors in Afghanistan. The acting Minister of Industry and Commerce said, "We assure our friend and brother country, Uzbekistan, that work on the implementation of the agreed points in the meetings has begun by both countries, and good progress and achievements have been made." The Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade of Uzbekistan added, "Initially, in order to increase the volume of trade between our countries to three billion dollars, major plans have been set in motion. In this regard, from October 1 of this year, trade agreements with various benefits between the two countries will practically commence." Meanwhile, Afghanistan's private sector expressed satisfaction with the expansion of bilateral cooperation between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, stating that these two countries have great potential for developing trade. At the end of this meeting, trade agreements were signed between Afghan traders and the Uzbekistan side to strengthen cooperation and expand trade between these two countries.

Afghanistan-Uzbekistan trade fair opens in Kabul



KABUL (Ariana News): A three-day expo showcasing products from Uzbekistan officially opened in Kabul on Sunday during a high-level visit of Uzbek officials to Afghanistan. The event, which is being held at the Afghanistan International Exhibition Center, was inaugurated by the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of Afghanistan Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Abdullah Aripov. The expo features a diverse array of Uzbek products, including vehicles, fire trucks, tractors, buses, and a variety of industrial goods. This comes after signing of 35 MoUs between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan totalling \$2.5 billion. These agreements encompass 12 investment deals valued at \$1.4 billion and 23 commercial agreements worth \$1.1 billion, indicating a significant boost in bilateral cooperation and economic ties. Similarly, the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan trade meeting and the exhibition of Uzbekistan's products in Kabul were held with the participation of the Ministers of Industry and Commerce and the private sectors of both countries.

Key achievements of caretaker govt over 3 years

KABUL (TOLOnews): The spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate has released a statement highlighting the significant achievements of the Islamic Emirate over the past three years, stating that the Islamic Emirate has made important strides in political, economic, social, and other areas during this period. Zabihullah Mujahid, in the statement, mentioned general amnesty, nationwide security, the fight against drugs, political relations with other countries, the participation of the caretaker government's delegation in the third Doha meeting, and several other accomplishments as the most significant achievements of the Islamic Emirate over the last three years. Javid Momand, a political affairs expert, told TOLOnews: "In these three years, we have seen progress in security, and in the economic sector, large projects have been initiated and there have been advancements." Meanwhile, a number of political analysts, while expressing satisfaction with these achievements, emphasized that the caretaker government must also address the continued closure of girls' schools above the sixth grade and universities. Moeen Gul Samkani, a political analyst, said: "The doors of schools and universities are still closed to girls, and there is no job opportunity for them. We do not have a constitution. All these factors are hindering progress. The hope is that in the fourth year, the Islamic Emirate will address these issues with great seriousness." Janat Faheem Chakari, another political affairs expert, said: "This is something that people are heavily criticizing domestically, and the world is also against it. Schools and universities should be open, and job opportunities should be provided for women."

IE needs to overcome economic crisis, expand foreign relations

KABUL (Pajhwok): Renowned Politician Mohammad Amin Karim has called improved nationwide security a huge achievement in the past three years of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan rule but termed the absence of government legitimacy, constitution and economic problems massive existing challenges. He said partial issues of insecurity existed in the country, but there is overall peace and stability which is considered to be a massive achievement because it was for the first time that after 45 years every individual could travel to every part of the country they wish. Pajhwok Afghan News Reporter Abdullah Azizi sat with Mohammad Amin Karim and asked some questions about the past three years of the IEA government's performance. These topics included how IEA played on domestic and foreign policy, what opportunities and challenges existed as well as the issue of government legitimacy and the future of Afghanistan. He said: "The end of the occupation, conflict, eradication of islands of power were all the achievements this government could be credited for, but the absence of domestic and international legitimacy and economic crisis were some of the challenges this government was faced with." He claimed if the international community and the US support stopped, the situation in Afghanistan would be catastrophic. Mohammad Amin Karim said that internal and external factors engulfed the issue of the IEA government's non-recognition. He said there were four clauses in the Doha Agreement, one of the clauses was aimed at creating a new Islamic system through intra-Afghan negotiations, this clause of the contract has remained suspended until now, which was one of the conditions for establishing a government after the republic, another reason is the internal situation of the country. Curbs on women's rights and the restrictions placed on women, not giving girls the right to study and work, and strict policies regarding freedom of expression, although there is still relative freedom in expressing opinions compared to neighboring countries, but the perception of the world community is that these freedoms are getting narrower and more limited every day. He said: "As far as I know, the majority of the elders of IEA, who are present in Kabul, not only agree with the education and work of women and the restoration of women's rights based on Islamic Sharia, but they are strong in favor of it, but a powerful but small group use Islam as a political tool either based on their jurisprudential understandings or to bargain with the international community." Referring to the reopening of girls' schools and universities he said: "It was a suppression the victims of which are half of the society." Referring to the formula of inclusive government, he said the definition of inclusive government remained ambiguous, if the definition of inclusive government is that the figures of the previous system join again, neither the nation will accept this, nor is there an example in contemporary history, but if the meaning of inclusive government is that the nation considers itself included in the system then this was a reasonable demand not only from the world but also from all the people of Afghanistan. One of the most important and fundamental things was that Afghanistan would have a constitution written by the people and representatives elected by the people of Afghanistan. He added: "It is not understandable that a caretaker system lasted for three years, caretaker systems are tasked for one, two weeks, and finally three months are common in the world, but it is not logical that a caretaker government run for three years and on and this was one of the reasons we faced internal and external problems." At the same time, he said, one of the obstacles that the foreign countries, especially the private sector, have not made necessary investments in the country until now was that they consider the current system lacked legal authority because it is a caretaker system, this is a big problem for which the Islamic Emirate can find a solution. Referring to the importance of political parties in the country, he said: "Allah (SWT) created human free, freedom of speech is one of our religious beliefs. There is no reluctance or coercion in religion. A person is free to have an opinion and express it. At the beginning of Islam, there were intellectual and ideological parties, but there was never any opposition to political ideas and communities." He emphasized that the freedom of parties, the difference of thoughts and views, is the richness of Islam and the condition for the cultural and economic development of societies. He said the current system fought with most of the terrorist groups. "The main problem is with Daesh against which the current system is fighting with full force even that the US expressed satisfaction over the current government fight against Daesh, the second issue is with TTP and the current government also strived to find solution for this issue." Referring to the opportunities through which the IEA help improve situation in the country, he said in the trilateral accord between the Afghan nation, the international community and the Tehreek-e-Taliban, there is no conflict of interests and demands, the international community has three specific and main demands; Fighting against what they call terrorism, creating an inclusive system and restoring women's rights, the Taliban have three or four main demands; Recognition, removal from blacklists, release of Afghanistan's financial resources and increase in economic aid. Mohammad Amin Karim said: "Our nation has a request which is the identification of individual's status, duty and responsibility in a constitutional framework and this should be done under the supervision of the UN, the Taliban and international community in the ongoing Doha process meetings, the people of Afghanistan should write the constitution and include human rights, women's rights and international demands, the world will recognize the current system, Afghanistan's frozen money should be freed, and the blacklist should be removed, this is what the people of Afghanistan want, the current system and the world will come together and we will reach a logical and fair solution." At the end of the interview, he hoped that the current regime would pay attention to the economic problems faced by the people and IEA would expand its relationship with the world.

CM Murad wants to see all govt machinery in rain effected areas

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a high-level rain emergency meeting on Sunday morning said that Sukkur, Dadu, Jacobabad, and Naushehroferoze have received heavy rains ranging from 227 mm to 101 mm, which has inundated the roads and streets, therefore, effective measures must be taken to protect the life and property of the people, and then dewatering efforts may be made.

"I want to see the entire government machinery, including district administration, local bodies, particularly in the rain-affected areas working on the roads, helping people and the Irrigation department patrolling on the embankments of the canals and distributaries to avoid breaches."

The meeting was held at CM House on Sunday and was attended by Sharjeel Memon, Saeed Ghani, Advisor Najmi Alam, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, DG Rangers Major Gen Azhar Waqas, SMBR Baqaullah Unar, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, DG PDMA Salman Shah, Corps Headquarter and KOMKAR representatives, Director Weather Ameer Hyder, and other concerned.

On Video link Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Mayor Sukkur Arshlan Shaikh, Commissioner of Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Shaheed Benazirabad and Mirpurkhas and Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting through video link.

The CM said, as per the report sent to him by the commissioners, Sukkur has received 227mm, Dadu 181mm, Jacobabad 104mm, Khairpur 101mm, and Naushehroferoze 69mm, which was

the highest.

Minister of Local Government, Saeed Ghani, informed the CM that he has activated the local bodies all over Sindh and provided them with necessary facilities to work properly in the rain-affected areas.

Commissioner Sukkur Fayaz Abbasi told the CM that the four spells of heavy rains within 25 hours in District Sukkur have downpoured 263 mm, followed by 106 mm in Khairpur district. He added that three spells were dealt with and cleared the roads and low-lying areas within three to four hours while the water of the fourth spell was being dealt with.

In Khairpur district, Khairpur City recorded 106mm of rain, and Kingri Taluka recorded 105mm. Rainwater was drained out from Khairpur City.

The PDMA has provided 35 Diesel Engines, eight Dewatering machines, and 12 Tractor-mounted machines, in addition to two Mirage Trucks for dewatering Mud Pumps. Regarding losses, the CM was informed that 21 persons sustained injuries, five buffaloes perished, and 48 houses were damaged.

Commissioner Larkana Mustafa Phul told the CM that Jacobabad received 104 mm, Thul 74, Kambhar 59, Shikarpur 41, and another division area ranging from 17 to 56. Commissioner Hyderabad Bilal Memon said that K.N. Shah and Johi of Dadu districts have received 181 mm and 116 mm of rain, respectively. Thano Bola Khan of Jamshoro 33, Matiari 16, Tando Allahyar 24, Hussain Bux Mari, and Mirpurkhas 54, respectively. DG PDMA Salman Shah informed the CM that 26,150 tents, 80750 mosquito nets, 25,650 'chatai', 12,300 cotton mattresses, 12,900 synthetic sleeping mats, 7,700 hygiene kits, and 25,750 jerry cans have been sent to the rain-

affected areas for the relief of the people.

Senior Minister Shrajeel Memon informed the CM that he was in close coordination with the Hyderabad administration and has activated all the concerned departments to address any rain emergency. Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad informed the meeting that Naushehroferoze received 69 mm, Sanghar 58, while Daur of Shaheed Benazirabad received 25 mm.

All the divisional commissioners complained against HESCO and SEPCO for power outage at the pumping station feeders; therefore, water disposal was being affected badly. At this, the CM directed Minister of Energy, Nasir Shah, to communicate with the power distribution companies and instruct them to free the pumping stations from load shedding and other interruptions. Flood on Khairthar Range; Secretary of Irrigation Zarif Khero briefed the CM about the flood situation, specifically focusing on the floods of the Kirthar ranges, whose catchments are located in Baluchistan province. In Baluchistan, these catchments are ungauged, complicating the flood forecast for the right bank of the Indus in Sindh during yearly monsoons.

However, referring to the historic gauges and predicted rainfall, Zarif Khero said that the existing infrastructure could hold the forecasted floods. At this, the CM directed the Irrigation department to shift the HQs of the right bank Sukkur Chief Engineer and the Chief Engineer drainage to the vulnerable areas and personally monitor the flood situations. Minister of Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro said that he personally monitors the situation.

At least 23 injured as fire breaks out on a Ferris wheel in Germany

BERLIN (AP): At least 23 people were injured when two gondolas of a Ferris wheel caught fire at a music festival near Leipzig in eastern Germany, news agency dpa reported Sunday.

The fire started in one gondola and then spread to a second one on Saturday night, police said.

Four people suffered burn injuries and one suffered injuries from a fall.

Others, including first responders and at least four police officers, were to be examined in the hospital for possible smoke inhalation, dpa reported.

The accident took place at the Highfield Festival at Stoermthaler Lake near Leipzig. Police are still investigating what caused the fire.

On Sunday morning, police were still unable to provide any concrete information about the condition of those injured.

The exact number of casualties had also not been determined, dpa reported.

US, Japan, South Korea vow ‘collective security’

SEOUL (Agencies): The leaders of the US, Japan, and South Korea have renewed their resolve to maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, recognising efforts to disrupt North Korea's "funding of weapons of mass destruction programs."

US President Joe Biden, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida issued a joint statement on Sunday, celebrating the progress in a three-way cooperation since their Camp David summit a year ago, Seoul-based Yonhap News reported.



KYIV: A woman walks with a dog past a residential building damaged during a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, outside of Kyiv, Ukraine on Sunday.

Russia launches third ballistic missile attack on Kyiv this month

KYIV (Reuters): Russia on Sunday carried out its third ballistic missile attack on Kyiv this month but preliminary data indicated most of the projectiles were shot down on approach, the military administration of the Ukrainian capital said.

"This is already the third ballistic strike on the capital in August, with exact intervals of six days between each attack," Serhiy Popko, the head of the Kyiv military administration, said on the Telegram messaging app.

Popko said the Russians had most likely used North Korean-made ballistic missiles.

Reuters could not independently verify the type of

missiles launched.

Separately, the commander of Ukraine's air force, Mykola Oleschchuk, said it had destroyed eight Russian attack drones and five out of eight missiles launched overnight across the country, including Kyiv.

Oleshchuk said anti-aircraft combat, anti-aircraft missile troops, mobile firing groups and electronic warfare units had downed 13 air targets in the Kyiv, Sumy and Poltava regions.

He said Russia launched eight missiles on Sunday morning, including three ballistic, three cruise and two guided aircraft missiles. Ukraine shot down five of them, he said, and the three missiles it missed

had failed to reach their targets.

Kyiv officials said there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage in the capital. However, Kyiv region governor Ruslan Kravchenko said two private houses were destroyed and 16 others were damaged by falling debris.

"Russia always knows where it is hitting with its missiles and bombs, and this is deliberate and targeted Russian terror," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Telegram.

He said Russia had launched more than 40 missiles, 750 guided aerial bombs and 200 attack drones this week against

Ukrainian villages and cities.

Reuters could not independently verify the scale of damage in the Kyiv region. A Reuters witness heard blasts that sounded like air defence systems early on Sunday.

About two hours after the initial attack, Kyiv, its surrounding region and most of central and north-east Ukraine were under fresh raid alerts, with threats of more missiles heading towards the city, Ukraine's air force said.

Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine two-and-a-half years ago and now holds about 18 percent of its territory in the east and south.

‘Faiz-Niazi nexus’ embodied ‘worst example’ of hostility towards state: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National

Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Sunday said the anti-state decisions made by the "Faiz-Niazi nexus" had been emerged as the "worst example" of the hostility towards the country.

The minister, in a news statement, strongly condemned the "unholy alliance" of the Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and ex-spy chief Faiz Hameed, PTI's alleged links with anti-Pakistan journalists from across the eastern border and its decision to resettle the Fitna-ul-Khawarij from western border in the country. He said PTI spokesperson Rauf Hassan's "provocative and terrible" conversation with an Indian journalist, that surfaced earlier in the day,

had fully exposed the PTI's anti-state agenda.

The minister branded the PTI as a "foreign-funded party" which has been committed to anti-national agenda, resorting to seek support of its foreign masters to undermine the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country after harming its foreign policy with the cipher conspiracy. Tarar said Rauf Hassan's conversation with the Indian journalists, who holds anti-Pakistan sentiments, was a true reflection of the ideology of the PTI which has been harboring conspiracies against the country including the May 9 arson.

He alleged that the PTI social media cell in Islamabad, which was in constant contact with the enemies of the country, was involved in running a smear campaign against

the Pakistan Army and the Army Chief.

Their clamor for a "bloody revolution" in the country proved that the PTI had received foreign funding from India for the purpose, he said, adding it was also revealed by the investigation into the prohibited funding case of the PTI. "Now, the PTI leader's contact with Indian journalist proves that he is running anti-Pakistan campaign at the behest of anti-national forces," he said, regretting that the "foreign funded group" had crossed all limits of anti-nationalism.

"There is no doubt that their main goal is to harm Pakistan's national interests and the army," he stressed.

"These people are pursuing Indian agenda while sitting in Pakistan," he said, while accusing the

PTI of resettling the terrorists in the country at the behest of Indians.

Faiz Hameed also became a stooge to the PTI founder and resorted to create instability in the country on his behest, the minister noted.

He said the nation fully knew that it was Faiz Hameed who was the agent of the wife of the PTI Founder Bushra Bibi, a central figure in all these conspiracies.

"Faiz-Niazi-Bushra nexus" had harmed the country to achieve their ulterior motives, he said alleging that the alliance was involved in inciting revolt in the state institution, he said adding, the Faiz-Niazi nexus also tried to create an impression that there was some kind of confusion or division in rank and file of the Pakistan Army.

Protests spread over Indian doctor’s rape and murder



KOLKATA (Reuters): Some Indian junior doctors remained off the job on Sunday as they demanded swift justice for a colleague who was raped and murdered, despite the end of a strike called by a big doctors' association, while some other people held street protests.

Doctors across the country have held protests, candlelight marches and refused to see non-emergency patients in the past week after the killing of the 31-year-old postgraduate student of chest medicine in the early hours of Aug. 9 in the eastern city of Kolkata. In solidarity with the doctors, thousands of people marched in the streets of Kolkata on Sunday evening chanting "we want justice", as authorities in West Bengal

state struggle to contain demonstrations against the horrific crime.

Women activists say the incident at the British colonial-era R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has highlighted how women in India continue to suffer despite tougher laws following the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in Delhi in 2012. "My daughter is gone but millions of sons and daughters are now with me," the father of the victim, who cannot be identified under Indian law, told reporters late on Saturday, referring to the protesting doctors. "This has given me a lot of strength and I feel we will gain something out of it."

India introduced sweeping changes to the criminal

justice system, including tougher sentences, after the 2012 attack, but campaigners say little has changed and not enough has been done to deter violence against women.

A police volunteer, designated to help police personnel and their families with hospital admissions when needed, has been arrested and charged with the crime.

His mother told Reuters she was in remorse but would extend whatever support her son needs.

"I should not have given birth to my son ... it's a huge mistake," she said at her home.

The Indian Medical Association, whose 24-hour strike ended at 6 a.m. (0030 GMT) on Sunday, told Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a letter

that, as 60% of India's doctors are women, he needed to intervene to ensure hospital staff were protected by security protocols akin to those at airports.

The R.G. Kar hospital has been rocked by agitation and rallies for more than a week. Police banned the assembly of five or more people around the hospital for a week from Sunday, which was defied by the protesters late in the day before they dispersed.

The government has urged doctors to return to duty to treat rising cases of dengue and malaria while it sets up a committee to suggest measures to improve protection for healthcare professionals.

Most doctors had resumed their usual activities, IMA officials said.

"The doctors are back to their routine," said Dr. Madan Mohan Paliwal, the IMA head in the most populous state, Uttar Pradesh. "The next course of action will be decided if the government does not take any strict steps to protect doctors... and this time we could stop emergency services too." But the All India Residents and Junior Doctors' Joint Action Forum said on Saturday it would continue a "nation-wide cease-work" with a 72-hour deadline for authorities to conduct a thorough inquiry and make arrests.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the matters related to Power Division, Ministry of Energy.