

Quetta's main roads closed
F.P. Report

QUETTA: All roads leading to red zone area of the provincial capital remained blocked for the sixth consecutive day, creating traffic problems on different roads of Quetta city. Roads, leading to red zone have been blocked with containers and barbed wires. Hockey Chowk, which had been designated as a place for protest demonstration, was also sealed on Thursday.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI No. 188 Regd. No. 241 MUHARRAM 26 1446 -- FRIDAY, AUGUST 02 2024 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

Funeral of Hamas chief offered in Iran

Thousands mourn Haniyeh amid calls for revenge

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran held funeral processions on Thursday amidst calls for revenge after the killing of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in a strike in Tehran blamed on Israel. The Islamic Republic's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei led prayers for Haniyeh ahead of his burial in Qatar, having earlier threatened a "harsh punishment" for his killing.

In Tehran's city centre, thousands

has declined to comment on the Tehran strike.

Iran's state TV showed the coffins of Haniyeh and his bodyguards covered in Palestinian flags during the ceremony attended by senior Iranian officials. President Masoud Pezeshkian and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps chief, General Hossein Salami, were present. Haniyeh had been visiting Tehran

Death to America!" The caskets, with a black-and-white pattern resembling a Palestinian keffiyeh scarf, were borne on a flower-bedecked truck through leafy streets where cooling water mists sprayed the flag-waving crowds.

Khamenei, who has the final say in Iran's political affairs, said after Haniyeh's death that it was "our duty to seek revenge for his blood as he was martyred in the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran". Iran has not yet officially published any information on the exact location of the strike.

Pezeshkian said on Wednesday that "the Zionists (Israel) will soon see the consequences of their cowardly and terrorist act". The international community, however, called for de-escalation and a focus on securing a ceasefire in Gaza — which Haniyeh had, according to a Hamas official previously, accused Israel of obstructing.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the strikes in Tehran and Beirut represented a "dangerous escalation". All efforts, he said, should be "leading to a ceasefire" in Gaza and the release of hostages taken during Hamas' October 7 attack on southern Israel which began nearly 10 months of fighting. The prime minister of key ceasefire broker Qatar said Haniyeh's killing had thrown the whole mediation process into doubt.

"How can mediation succeed when one party assassinates the negotiator on the other side?" Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said in a post on the social media site X. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday called on "all parties" in the Middle East to "stop escalatory actions". Earlier he said a ceasefire in Gaza was still the "imperative", though White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the twin killings of Haniyeh and Shukur "don't help" regional tensions.

Blinken calls on 'all parties' to 'stop actions'

ULAANBAATAR (AFP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday urged "all parties" in the Middle East to stop "escalatory actions" and achieve a ceasefire in Gaza, after Hamas's political leader was killed in a strike in Tehran that Iran blamed on Israel.

The strike that killed Ismail Haniyeh came just hours after Israel said it had killed a top Hezbollah commander in a retaliatory strike on the Lebanese capital Beirut. The killings took place as regional tensions were already inflamed by the war in Gaza, a conflict that has drawn in Iran-backed militant groups in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen.

Israel has declined to comment on the Tehran strike. Speaking in the Mongolian capital, top US diplomat Blinken warned the Middle East was on a path "toward more conflict, more violence, more suffering, more insecurity, and it is crucial that we break this cycle."

"That starts with a ceasefire that we've been working on," Blinken told reporters alongside his local counterpart. "And to get there, it also first requires all parties to talk, to stop taking any escalatory actions, it requires them to find reasons to come to an agreement," he said. As he did on Wednesday in Singapore, Blinken did not comment directly on the death of the leader of the Palestinian Islamist movement. He also declined to speculate on the impact that Haniyeh's killing could have on a potential ceasefire in Gaza, which the United States has been spearheading along with Egypt and Qatar.

Solidarity with Palestinians Nation to observe day of mourning today



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government allied parties on Thursday decided that the nation would observe a day of mourning across the country on August 2 (Friday) in solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters and to condemn the Israeli state-sponsored terrorism in Palestine.

A consultative meeting of the allied parties on the deteriorating situation in Palestine, in a joint declaration, also announced that the funeral prayer in absentia for Ismail Haniyeh, chief of Hamas Political Bureau, who was assassinated in Tehran on Wednesday, would be offered by the nation after Friday prayers.

The meeting, which was presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, also decided to present a resolution in the Parliament to express full solidarity with the people of Palestine. The participants of the meeting strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli brutalities in Palestine for last nine months, and expressed full solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters.

They also expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. They were of the view that the Hamas leader's assassination incident was a conspiracy to sabotage the efforts to get stopped the ongoing Israeli atrocities on the Palestinians and establish peace in the region. Such incidents destroyed the world peace.

The prime minister termed the ongoing Israeli state-sponsored terrorism in Palestine a tragedy for the Muslim Ummah. The meeting demanded to

ensure immediate provision of humanitarian aid to the unarmed Palestinians.

It was decided that Pakistan would continue to provide relief goods, besides taking effective measures for the medical assistance of the oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters. It was further decided that the injured Palestinians would be brought to Pakistan for treatment.

The meeting also decided that Palestinian medical students would be admitted to medical colleges in Pakistan with financial support to continue their education. The participants were of the view that with the ongoing genocide and state-sponsored terrorism in Palestine, Israel was violating the resolutions of the United Nations, the decisions of the International Court of Justice and international laws, while the world community remained a silent spectator.

They asked the international community to adopt a clear stand against the Israeli brutalities, as otherwise it would be a question mark against viability of international laws and institutions for future generations. The meeting also urged the international community, including the United Nations to break their silence and immediately get stopped the ongoing genocide of the oppressed Palestinians by the Zionist forces and bring Israel to justice for war crimes.

Leaders and senior representatives of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Pakistan Muslim League-Q, Pakistan Muslim League Zia and National Party attended the meeting.

Privatization process of DISCOs has begun: Tarar

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said, as part of the present government's reform agenda, the process of privatization of DISCOs has been started after an amendment in the State Owned Enterprises Act.

Addressing a press conference along with Muttahida Qaumi Movement leader Mustafa Kamal here Thursday, the information minister said that he pointed out that inefficiency and corruption of DISCOs span over several decades. Therefore, he said it was decided to bring competent and professional people from the private sector to run the DISCOs free from any political interference. He said a delegation of MQM Pakistan comprising Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Mustafa Kamal met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and matters related to electricity bills and IPP issue were discussed.

The minister appreciated the MQM for always showing responsibility and constructive approach towards resolving national issues and played a positive role

in the reforms agenda. He said that he was grateful to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement for raising its voice on this issue.

Attaullah Tarar said that the matter of electricity tariff was the issue of the entire nation and a collective approach was needed to overcome this issue. "When the PML-N government came to power in 2013, it ended 18-hour load shedding," the minister said, adding at that time Punjab and Federal Governments had installed the cheapest power plants. Through this amendment, he added, the process of privatization of discos has started".

He said that electricity consumers using 200 units were given a Rs 50 billion subsidy for three months and this amount was taken from PSDP budget to provide relief to the electricity consumers in summer, adding that steps were also afoot regarding the cases of over-billing, controlling power theft in collaboration with the provincial governments.

The minister said that the deadline for payment of electricity bills had been extended by 10 days to facilitate the consumers. The minister maintained

that IPPs were not a political issue and discussions were going on over the issue of IPPs.

Everyone wants electricity to be cheap, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said and added that the economic reforms agenda was aimed to create fiscal space to make electricity cheaper, as everyone wanted to reduce power tariff. Thanking the MQM leaders for highlighting this issue of national nature, the minister said that it was the collective duty of all the government allies to give their suggestions and input. Some people wanted to use this issue for political point scoring though they themselves were in power in the past, he expressed.

Replying to the questions of the media, the information minister said that action had been taken against those involved in the wheat import issue. He said that the digitization process of the Federal Bureau of Revenue was going on with the cooperation of Melinda Gates Foundation, for which the government of Pakistan had not spent a single rupee. He said that due to the government's efforts, the number of filers was increasing continuously.

IHC seeks plan to ban protests in D-Chowk

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has issued notices to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad and the Ministry of Interior regarding a petition seeking a ban on protests in D-Chowk and the Red Zone. The court, presided over by Chief Justice Aamir Farooq, has requested a comprehensive plan to address the issue.

The petition was brought forward by the Federal Welfare Association, represented by lawyer Chaudhry Waseem Bahadur. The petitioner's counsel argued that protests in D-Chowk disrupt business activities, leading to closures. The plea sought a prohibition on such gatherings to prevent further disruptions.

In response, the Advocate General Islamabad acknowledged that not all businesses are affected, noting that only certain areas experience closures during protests. Chief Justice Aamir Farooq questioned the measures in place, asking whether D-Chowk falls within the Red Zone. The Advocate General explained that the Red Zone begins at D-Chowk and that Section 144 is enforced in Islamabad to manage such situations.

DC Islamabad informed the court that when protests occur near the Press Club, side roads are closed. However, he emphasized that protests in the Red Zone are prohibited, a statement met with scrutiny by the Chief Justice. He remarked that while citizens have the right to protest, access to the Red Zone should be restricted, citing similar practices in other cities like Lahore, where protests are confined to designated areas like Mall Road.

The court expressed concern over the lack of enforcement, as people often gather in D-Chowk without permission. The Chief Justice questioned the DC on why such protests are not prevented if the area is classified as a Red Zone. The DC clarified that D-Chowk, also known as Parliament Chowk, is a sensitive area, distinguishing it from other protest sites like Expressway Chowk.

24 killed, 17 injured in flash flood due to heavy rain in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A total of 24 people were killed and 17 other injured as result of accident due to recent rains in all across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) reports of loss of life and property due to heavy rains and flash floods in the last three days said.

The PDMA also confirmed the death of 24 people with 17 others injured including 6 men, 6 women and 12 children, while 8 men, 3 women and 6 children are among the injured.

A total of 150 houses were damaged due to wind and rain. In which 77 houses were partially damaged and 73 houses were completely damaged, the spokesman of the PDMA said. Due to heavy rains, life and financial accidents occurred in various districts of Kohat, Bajaur, Chitral Upper and Lower, Dir Upper, Kohistan Upper and Lower, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swat, Charsadda, Swabi, Mohmand, South Waziristan and Hangu.

The spokesman said that relief operations are going on in the affected areas, small and big missionaries are being used to open the closed roads with district administration and relief teams are engaged in relief activities in the affected districts.

The PDMA has also directed the district administration of the affected districts to provide immediate finan-

cial support to the victims. PDMA is in the process of providing relief materials to the victims in the affected areas. As per the directives of the Director General PDMA, concerned agencies and all district administrations are in constant contact and monitoring the situation. Tourists should avoid traveling to tourist spots until the situation is normal, the spokesman said. PDMA's Emergency Operation Center is fully operational and public and tourists can contact 1700 for any untoward incident, weather conditions, road closures and guidance, said spokesperson.

Another new series of monsoon rains is likely to start in most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said the PDMA release issued here on Thursday. The official release of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said that from last night, more monsoon winds from the Arabian Sea entered the upper regions of the province due to which there are possibility of heavy rains with strong winds and thunderstorms in Dir, Chitral, Swat, Kohistan, Malakand, Bajaur, Shangla, Battagram, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Hangu, Kurram, Waziristan, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan.

This new series of rains is likely to continue intermittently till August 6. Due to the rains, there is a risk of landslides in the upper districts of the

province, while there is also a risk of flooding/flash flood/urban flooding in the local rivers, said PDMA release. PDMA has issued an alert to all district administrations in view of the weather situation.

The PDMA has issued instructions to the district administration to pro-emptively deal with any untoward incident due to dusty winds, wind-storm, and thunderstorm. The district administration is also directed to ensure the availability of small and large machinery to deal with any untoward incident in advance.

In case of strong winds, people should stay away from power lines, dilapidated buildings and structures, cyan boards and billboards and farmers arrange their routines keeping in view the weather forecast. Tourists and local population in sensitive highlands are instructed to take precautionary measures to be aware of weather conditions, said the PDMA release. In sensitive districts, the messages to the district administration should be conveyed to the local population in local languages.

In case of any emergency, all concerned agencies should be vigilant in maintaining road links and provide alternative routes for traffic in case of road closure, said PDMA release. Tourists should be informed about the weather situation. PDMA's emergency full operation center is fully operational. People can report any untoward incident to 1700. Spokesperson PDMA said.

Govt negotiators have no answer to our questions: JJ

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Hafiz Naem has said that the government negotiators have no answer to our questions.

Talking to media Hafiz Naem ur Rehman said the government should receive the price of the electricity not additional taxes. "The people are paying price of the contracts made by the government." "We have asked them to show us the agreements with the IPPs", he said.

"We will not lift the burden of the incompetence of the government," JJ leader said. "The rulers should surrender their luxuries, free petrol and free electricity," JJ chief demanded. "If anyone want to drive car, run his own private car. The

nation will not pay for carrying your children to school and shopping of your wife," he said.

Hafiz Naem said, they have hiked their administrative expenses by 25 percent while the salaried class being overburdened, which has already paid billions in taxes. "Taxes not being imposed over the feudal. They don't pay sugarcane price to farmer and mint money by creating sugar crisis," Hafiz Naem said.

He said, these people running governments since 1994. "The IPPs business was also launched in 1994," he said. He demanded to cancel contracts of the local IPPs after forensic audit. "The government people saying that the proposals are good but unac-

ceptable," he said. He alleged of 1,000 billion corruption within the FBR. "The officers should be given cars not above than 1300 CC, it is not a big deal, but they don't prepare to accept it," JJ leader said. "What happen if they will surrender 3000 to 4000 CC cars", he questioned.

"Our sit-in will continue, and we will stage sit-ins across Pakistan. In case of no progress, we will take action, we will sit on highways and stage prolonged protest. We will ask the people to come with their power bills, we don't want to boycott the electricity bills," he said. Hafiz Naem said, "We have informed the government about our demands, they said, they are consulting with technical team.

Janjua sent to jail

ISLAMABAD (INP): The District and Sessions Courts Islamabad have ordered the judicial remand of PTI International Media Coordinator Ahmed Waqas Janjua in a case filed under the PICA Act. During the hearing, Duty Magistrate Abbas Shah was presented with arguments from both sides. FIA Prosecutor Amir Shaikh requested an additional 8-day physical remand for Janjua, citing lack of cooperation from the accused.



KARACHI: Motorists on their way at a road during accumulated rainwater after the heavy monsoon rain.

Deadly rainfall in Lahore cause 3 casualties, 7 injured

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Heavy downpour caused different incidents which took 3 precious lives while 7 got injured. The roof fell off a house in a village near Baba Bulleh Shah Interchange at Gajumata Lahore resulting in one dead and five people of the same house injured.

Another roof fell off at Shaukat Khanum Chowk where two people sustained injuries. One injured was rushed to Jinnah Hospital for treatment. In two different incidents, electric current took lives of two citizens. According to Rescue sources, a 30 year old man, travelling on a motorbike got caught by current released from an electric pole. The dead could not be identified as of yet.

The other incident took place in the premises of Kot Lakhpat Police Station where a citizen upon touching an electricity pole caught a heavy electric shock. He was rushed to the General Hospital but was declared dead upon arrival.

The Punjab government has declared rain emergency in Lahore. Lahore city experienced the most rainfall in 44 years today (Thursday) which resulted in flooding of low-lying areas. A heavy downpour in several areas of the inundated roads and streets in the provincial capital and motorists faced immense difficulties while trying to carry on with their routines. Rain caused disruption of electricity in parts of Lahore as dozens of feeders of the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) tripped. The Met Office has predicted that the current rain spell in the country will continue till August 6.

Heavy rain in Punjab's capital has partially disrupted flight operations at Lahore airport on Thursday. The planes at the Lahore airport are currently parked in the accumulated rainwater at the airport. However, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) staff is working to clear the runway and adjoining area for take-offs and landings of the aircraft.

Heavy monsoon showers lashed Lahore, drenching the city with 350 millimeters of rain in just three hours, breaking a 44-year-old record. According to the Met Office, strong monsoon currents will likely penetrate from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal in upper parts leading to torrential monsoon rains across the country from August 1 to 6 with occasional gaps.

Rain in several areas inundated roads and streets in the provincial capital. Rain also disrupted electricity supply in Lahore as around 288 feeders of the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) tripped. The LESCO has appealed the consumers to exercise restraint and added that teams are working to restore the supply.

The Punjab government has launched an unprecedented relief operation in response to Lahore's record-breaking rainfall, the highest in 44 years. Following directives from Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Senior Provincial Minister Maryam Aurangzeb and Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar conducted an extensive field visit to affected areas including Cordoba Chowk, Supreme Court Registry, Lakshmi Chowk, Gulberg, Bhati Chowk, and Gaddafi Stadium.

Maryam Aurangzeb reported that rainwater drainage in hospitals has been managed swiftly, with ongoing efforts in other areas. She emphasized that advance preparations for the heavy rains were made, with joint teams from various institutions working around the clock. Equipment such as water pumps and necessary machinery were provided as per the Chief Minister's instructions.

The Minister also assured that essential supplies, including medicines and vaccines for treating insect stings, are being provided to hospitals. Continuous monitoring and relief operations, including the evacuation of low-lying areas, are being carried out. Provincial Information Minister Azma Bukhari stated that despite no formal rain emergency being declared, teams from WASA, LWMC, and the district administration are actively engaged in draining rainwater across Lahore. Key areas including GPO Chowk, Naba Road, Railway Station, Empress Road, and others have been cleared, with reports sent to the Chief Minister.

Bukhari highlighted that drainage operations have been completed in various major locations such as Gaddafi Stadium, Thokar Niaz Baig, Allah Ho Chowk, Johar Town, and more. The relentless rain, persisting for over six hours, has not deterred the dedicated staff from their duties. The government machinery remains fully mobilized, with assurances that remaining water-logged areas will be cleared within the next few hours.

Artists, skills & compromised education system in Sindh

Murtaza Rafiq Bhutto

PROVINCE of Sindh caters the population with different & diverse culture, ethnics, and mindsets. The mindset differs from Karachi to Kashmore according to the demographics. To build up the nation, the first and necessary requirement is to educate the people, and enhance the literacy graph of the province.

Unfortunately, with passage of time opposition's political agenda's set up in the previous governments tenure resulted into controversial education system. The two sides of same coin, two different narratives of ruling party and opposition have been witnessed in the past over tenders of benches or the corruption issues. It is a fact that the education system of the province is compromised to some extent, but on the other side there are some success stories.

I will start it with the description of the artists feeling and how the society see them until or unless they have got the success in the industry, but most of the times they are seen as inferiors in the society. The popular narrative states that "You are financially Poor, if you are an artist" the hypocrisy of the societal systematic accusation and lack of understanding is the reason people leave the path of their dreams. However, most of them struggles & cannot afford a proper meal for their respective families.

Artist is somebody who creates his own little different world in their minds and definitely, they are different from most of the people because of their creative & sensitive nature which is mostly disrespected till they turn around and become the masters of the duniyadari's gamble. This particular section is neglected by the government of Sindh. Sindh's culture department do assist the arts of council of Karachi, Pakistan & to some extent they have helped & contributed in nurturing, and flourishing the industry's artists, but still there is a need to look into it further. Arts council of Pakistan offers the courses with nominal fees but there should be scholarship programs for needy and deserving students, by scholarship means scholarship not zakat, neither charity to promote the artistic education further.

The government of Sindh has several education programs introduced back in 2020, but most of the students were not aware of it. The public-private partnership in schools, colleges and universities must be enhanced. This will not only helps in the austerity but provides quality of education in a nominal fees.

The Schools under Education & literacy department, and Sindh Education Foundation has lots of visible differences. The quality of education, teacher's attendance issues, management, administration. You name it and there will be differences. However, The Sindh Education Foundation has limited network of schools and there's a need to expand it further without compromising the quality education.

The youth development programs have been there which were not advertised & masses are not aware of it, such as Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Youth Development Program (BBSYDP). In this program they are giving stipend to students and teaching them in the various fields. The program also helps the students for the placement in different private sector companies. There is a need for integration between all the programs and enhancing the budget accordingly. Let's just be honest and admit that we have failed in schooling of our upcoming generation. It is up to the government whether they shut their eyes and do not take further actions to revamp the education system.

The opposition also needs to understand not to play the politics over education matters, sometimes over quota, and sometimes over the jobs. The technology has enhanced and there is a requirement of changing the syllabus, teaching methods, and get rid of the old methods. Just like the UNDP, There is a lot of private business owner's that spent some of their respective incomes share on education networks. There are welfare organization's that run their own schools, but the government does not invite them to join hands with government and allot them their respective schools so they could run it under public-private partnership.

By doing so, not only the education system enhances but this will also helps the middle class to afford the fees of their kids in these economic crisis. The Chief Minister of the province have studied in the government college and university, I guess most of the political ruling class have studied in the government universities. The time has changed and I know that CM also knows government education system is undermined.

The universities are getting better, but the schools & colleges are in deteriorating conditions and the students or education graph is decreasing day by day.

Integrating the education programs will help government in development of our countries youth, the data will help them in realizing the jobs ratio that is required in the market, and developing the schemes/programs to help them establishing a business.

Majority of our population belongs to age group 15-40, which means they are either getting ready to seek a job in the market, or either they are already working towards the enhancement of their skills to earn more. I would also like to request the Chief Minister, and Education Minister that the google has established their respective learning centers in other provinces, that not only train the teacher's related to Information Technology, but they also teaches the students. Why our ministry is not inviting them to establish their centers in the major cities of our province?

Recently, the news circulated that Senior Minister of Transport, Information, and Excise "The statement said that during the meeting, Yutong announced the plan to set up the plant in Karachi in response to the invitation extended by Memon in July 2022. The minister announced that the installation of the Yutong plant in the city would commence within three months" which reflects the promises made in PPP's manifesto "Choose the new mindset".

The youthful chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, need to understand that creating the vacancies in government sector does not fulfill the requirement of the market, and needs to create jobs in the commercial sector to cater the vote bank of same age.

RIO visits Takht Nusrati Press Club

F.P. Report

KARAK: Regional Information Officer Kohat Irshad Afridi along with Ansar Bangash and others visited Tehsil Press Club Takht Nusrati, meeting with journalists, taking measures for the welfare of journalists and ensuring the solution of problems.

According to the details, Regional Information Officer Kohat Irshad Afridi along with his team made a special visit to Tehsil Press Club Takht Nusrati, Ansar Bangash and others were also present with them. Manoor Khan, Habibullah, Umar Hayat, Ahmadullah, Umeedul Islam, Abdullah, Lal Siddique journalist, Toaif Ahmed, Amir Syab, Qaiser Haleem Bukhari, Riyazur Rahman were present.

RIO praised the official work, documentation and management, and said that the Information Department is working for the welfare of journalists, the present government is actively working for the welfare of journalists, will solve the problems of journalists. On this occasion, the journalists expressed determination to highlight the positive image of the Information Department and the Government and assured all kinds of cooperation.

Fida Muhammad defends Ph. D thesis: Fida Muhammad Khan successfully defended his thesis on the day of PhD Scholar at Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad Studies Pakistan. Fida Muhammad Khan attributed the success of his PhD journey to the full support and guidance of his supervisors.

Speaking on the occasion, the Head of Pakistan Studies Department said that the department has completed dozens of PhDs in a short span of time, he reiterated the commitment of the department for further achievements in the field of education. He congratulated Fida Mohammad Khan for successfully defending his PhD thesis. The event was attended by a large number of faculty and students.

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Passengers hold protest

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Passengers protested against overcharging, overloading and use of LPG in public transport on Hafizabad-Sukheki Road. District Road Transport Authority fixed Rs. 110 per passenger fare from Hafizabad to Sukheki but conductors and drivers of buses and wagons are not only extorting Rs.170 per passenger but also on board 22 to 23 Passengers in wagons.

Drivers of wagons are using LPG in wagons despite ban imposed to use PLG in public transport. Owners of wagons indulge precious lives of people endanger. Passengers belongs to Hafizabad-Sukheki Road protested against drivers and demanded the Secretary Road Transport and Deputy Commissioner to take notice of violation of fare table, overloading and use of LPG in wagons. They wagon drivers are also charging Rs. 100 from Hafizabad to Kaleki 15 km distance and Rs. 150 from Hafizabad to Kot Sarwar 20 km distance.

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Sindh CM orders education dept to distribute textbooks

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah chaired a meeting of the Education Department and instructed the department to ensure the distribution of 4,453,686 textbooks by Aug 14 and enhance education standards. The school education department must enhance enrolment by bringing out-of-school children to school and introduce a school inspection system by checking teaching and learning methods, it was stated in the meeting.

According to a CM House statement issued on Thursday, the meeting was attended by Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah, MPA Seema Khurram, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Education Zahid Abbasi, Secretary Colleges Asif Ikram, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Chairman Textbook Board Aleem Lashari, MD Education Foundation Kazi Kabir and other concerned officers. The Chief Minister said that schools would reopen on August 15. Therefore, the school education department made necessary preparations to ensure the proper functioning of the schools, distribution of textbooks, and running of classes.

The CM emphasized the need for a complete plan for the academic year, including a work plan and preliminary/mock examinations. During a presentation to the CM, Education Minister Sardar Shah mentioned that there were 40,991 schools in the province, including 36,203 primary schools, 15,575 middle schools, 1,051 elementary schools, 1,670 secondary schools, and 492 higher secondary schools. He also stated that the province had 160,473 teachers, out of

which 107,550 were male and 53,051 were female. The total enrollment in schools was reported as 5,236,307, comprising 3,081,696 boys and 2,154,611 girls.

The CM noted that the teacher-student ratio stood at 1:32 and emphasized the need for quality teaching and engagement of students in curriculum activities. An issue was discussed regarding the lack of communication and teaching skills among most of the teachers. It was proposed that teachers should be required to pass a teaching test every five years in order to continue their teaching careers. Furthermore, CM Murad Shah directed the education department to take measures to improve the education standard by introducing an inspection system. He stressed the importance of officials visiting schools, checking the teaching and learning procedures, and submitting inspection reports to address any shortcomings. Highlighting the government's investment in good salary packages for teachers, the CM urged for a focus on the quality of teaching and the teachers' dedication to shaping the future of students. He emphasized the need for adaptability and continuous evaluation of teaching methods for the benefit of the students.

To a question, the CM was told that this year (2024-25) 4,453,686 sets of textbooks have been printed. The CM directed the Education dept to start the distribution of the books and complete the process by August 14 so that the students can have their book sets by the start of their academic session. The CM was told that 19808 schools needed to be rehabilitated. At this, the CM said that rehabilitation of 4206 school buildings has been taken up in the ADP and has worked out a three-year plan to overhaul the remaining damaged school buildings.

Coffins delivered: Unleashing chilling terror on citizens

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In an alarming and sinister turn of events, Peshawar's extortionists have taken their terror tactics to a terrifying new level. After a series of threatening letters and menacing phone calls, these criminals have now resorted to sending coffins directly to their victims' homes, leaving the entire city gripped in fear.

The latest victim of this horrifying campaign is Ghulam Qadir, the owner of a prominent housing society in Peshawar's Faqirabad area. After enduring weeks of relentless intimidation through threatening letters and anonymous calls, Qadir's nightmare escalated when two coffins were delivered to his doorstep. The message was clear and chilling:

comply with the extortionists' demands or face deadly consequences. According to police reports, the extortionists had been harassing Qadir for over a month, demanding a staggering PKR 10 million. The lead extortionist issued a series of threats, demanding immediate payment. The situation intensified when the businessman's office was targeted in a brazen shooting just days before the coffins arrived, signaling the criminals' willingness to use violence.

The police, now investigating the matter with heightened urgency, have seized the rickshaws used to deliver the coffins and registered a case at the Faqirabad police station. The authorities are treating this as a high-priority case, recognizing the gravity of the situation and the potential for further escalation.

marks a disturbing new tactic in Peshawar's ongoing struggle with organized crime. The criminals' brazen approach has not only shocked the local business community but has also sent waves of fear throughout the entire city. Residents, already on edge from the rising crime rate, are now demanding swift and decisive action from law enforcement to put an end to this reign of terror.

As the investigation unfolds, Peshawar's citizens are left to grapple with the frightening reality that extortionists are willing to go to unimaginable lengths to enforce their demands. The coffins serve as a grim reminder of the high stakes at play and the chilling message that non-compliance could mean a death sentence.

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<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Abdur Razaq with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Hakim citizen number 1430120394415 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1. Shehla Naz (Daughter) 2. Iram Shehzadi (Daughter) 3. Merwish Shehzadi (Daughter) 4. Nadeem Ahmad Shehzada (Son) 5. Zulfi Rehman Shehzada (Son) 6. Ahmad Shehzada (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KOHAT-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Abdur Razaq with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Hakim citizen number 1430120394415 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1. Daraz Bibi (Daughter) 2. Aqal Bibi (Daughter) 3. Balqis Bibi (Daughter) 4. Abdur Razaq (Daughter) 5. Nooran Gul (Son) 6. Ismail Khan (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA BANNU-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Shoukat Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Ishaq citizen number 1310108310521 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1. Rashida Begum (Daughter) 2. Gul Bibi (Daughter) 3. Maher Zaccoon (Daughter) 4. Bibi Zaitoon (Spouse) 5. Shoukat Khan (Son) 6. Adnan (Son) 7. Noman (Son) 8. Haq Nawaz (Son) 9. Muhammad Sheraz (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA ABBOTABAD-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Tabassum Naheed Kausar with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Bahrullah Khan citizen number 1730173895489 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1. Tabassum Naheed Kausar (Daughter) 2. Sana Tanweer Khattak (Daughter) 3. Sana Ullah Khan (Son) 4. Abrar Ullah Khan (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MEGA CENTER PESHAWAR-SFU</p>
<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Ziarat Gul with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Habib Gul citizen number 1560257147905 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1. Nasrin (Daughter) 2. Noor Jaleel Bibi (Daughter) 3. Huma Ara (Daughter) 4. Nargis Bibi (Daughter) 5. Muhammad Gul (Son) 6. Rahmani Gul (Son) 7. Ziarat Gul (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWAT-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Sher Ahmed with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Sher (Son) 4. Jehangir Khan (Son) 5. Shadab Nawaz (Son) 6. Sher Khan (Son) 7. Muhammad Ahmed (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KOHAT-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Ahmed (Son) 4. Jehangir Khan (Son) 5. Shadab Nawaz (Son) 6. Sher Khan (Son) 7. Muhammad Ahmed (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Gohar Aman with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Rashid citizen number 1350319490879 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1. Nabila Bibi (Spouse) 2. Gohar Aman (Father)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</p>

PHC halts third consecutive inquiry in LHWs recruitment

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Fazal Subhan halted the inquiry into the class-IV appointments case against Medical Superintendent Qachkol Khan initiated by the Provincial Inspection Team while issued notices to the respondents for submission of reply, on Thursday.

The applicant's lawyer Daniyal Khan Chamkani advocate argued that the Dr. Qachkol Khan was serving as Deputy District Health Officer (Grade 19) at the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Takht Bhai, Mardan, then he was transferred to the post of District Health Officer (Grade 20) Mardan on December 17, 2020.

The lawyer claimed that a baseless and false post was shared on social media, alleging that the applicant had made illegal appointments

to Lady Health Workers (LHWs) posts. Consequently, the Provincial Coordinator LHW Program, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, wrote a letter on November 10, 2022, regarding illegal appointments to LHW posts, leading to an inquiry by the Secretary Health.

The counsel further argued that without waiting for the inquiry report, the Secretary Health issued a notification on November 21, 2022, transferring the applicant from his post as District Health Officer, Mardan, to report at Director General Health office.

Later, on December 28, 2023, the applicant was issued a fact-finding committee report, recommending a one-year increment stoppage. The lawyer stated that on June 16, 2023, the applicant's promotion case was sent to the Provincial Selection Board, and he was promoted to the post of Chief Medical Officer (Grade 20) and posted to DHQ Hospital, Charsadda.

However, another inquiry was initiated against him in the same case, and on June 14, 2024, the Provincial Inspection Team sought records of class-IV appointments from the District Health Officer, Mardan. The lawyer argued that three consecutive inquiries were initiated against the applicant, despite him already being punished in the first inquiry.

The lawyer alleged that these actions were aimed at harassing and mentally torturing the applicant and were influenced by a member of the Provincial Assembly Abdul Salam. He requested the court to halt the ongoing inquiry and restrain the MPA from interfering in the matter.

PHC issued notices to the parties and halted the inquiry after initial arguments. The respondents in the case include the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Health, Director General Health Services, Chairman Provincial Inspection Team, and Member Provincial Assembly Abdul Salam.



PESHAWAR: Senator Rubina Khalid Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), talking to women during his visit to Peshawar Tehsil office.

Robia vows to protect rights of women beneficiaries

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senator Rubina Khalid Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), has made a strong commitment during her visit to the Peshawar Tehsil Office, emphasizing that there will be zero tolerance for any misbehavior or complaints against women beneficiaries.

The purpose of the visit was to monitor the arrangements at the office and review the facilities provided for the deserving women receiving Kafaalat and educational stipends.

Rubina Khalid engaged with the beneficiaries, listened to their issues, and provided guidance, particularly to the needy and elderly women in the program.

In her conversation with the media, Senator Rubina Khalid reflected on the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for the welfare of poor women in Pakistan, which led to the establishment of BISP. "The program was founded by Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto while she was in exile in Dubai and was implemented by President Asif Ali Zardari in 2008," she

recounted.

Highlighting the transparency measures in place, she noted that BISP payment centers were set up following instructions from President Asif Ali Zardari. Rubina Khalid also announced that President Asif Ali Zardari directed the opening of bank accounts for deserving women to streamline their access to stipends.

Stressing the importance of skill development and technical education, she stated, "Empowering women with skills and technical education is crucial for their economic independence and the

overall development of our society." She called upon the media to play a proactive role in creating awareness among beneficiaries about the program's benefits and guidelines.

Rubina Khalid issued a stern warning to beneficiaries to ignore any communication from numbers other than the official 8171 and cautioned against handing over their National Identity Cards to anyone to prevent fraud. She reaffirmed BISP's dedication to protecting the rights of women and ensuring they receive their due support with dignity.

Carium Innovation to establish unit at Gadoon Economic Zone

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Carium Innovation company has expressed interest to set up a unit for the production of the oil used as raw material in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical, cosmetics and several other products in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Carium Innovation is a Pakistani company, which also has Chinese share holders planned to establish industrial unit at Gadoon Economic Zone and in first phase an investment of US\$ 1.6 million is expected in the project. For this purpose eucalyptus, tobacco and other herbs would be used as raw material of the product.

In this connection, a meeting was held at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BoIT) with Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Khan Tordher in the chair



here on Thursday.

Besides, Managing Director (MD) Carium Innovation Dr Sami Iqbal, Director Business Facilitation KP-BoIT Iqbal Sarwar, other authorities of the board and the representatives of the University of Swabi and concerned departments also attended the meeting.

During the meeting MD Carium Dr Sami Iqbal gave a detailed presentation regarding the proposed project of extracting oil through using modern technology and informed the participants about its importance and potential in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He told that through the proposed project, oil used

in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical, cosmetics and other products would be extracted. He further told that for the production of the required herbs and its development, the local farmers could be imparted training. The locally produced herbs produced by the farmers would be procured by the company as a raw material.

The MD Carium requested for the issuance of the required no objective certificate (NoC) and facilitation required in other phases of the project.

Speaking on the occasion, Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Khan Tordher termed the

initiative a unique project of its kind and said that in this connection KP-BoIT would provide assistance to the investors from all aspects.

He also proposed facilitation to the investment group to extract oil from the maximum level available resources olive in the province while the utilization of suitable and specious land at the University of Swabi and Pehur High Level Canal for the production of the medicinal plants required for the production of the oil.

For this purpose, matters relating to the activation of lab established at the University of Swabi and joint efforts with the company also come under discussion.

The Special Assistant said that various species of medicinal plants are found across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, no industries for their utilization are available at local level.

Provincial boxing event held in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the leadership of Muhammad Shehzad Chaudhry, Chairman of the Shehzad Sports Federation, a provincial boxing event was organized at Yousafabad Ground, Peshawar, to promote sports and encourage athletes.

The event was attended by several notable guests, including the KP Vice President of the Federation, Sophia Javed, Erat Nazir, Haji Abdul Khaliq, Hafiz Faheem, and others. Prizes were awarded to the top performers, funded by the federation.

The Islamabad team, securing first place,

received a cash prize of 50,000 rupees, while the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team, finishing in second place, was awarded 25,000 rupees.

Federation officials expressed their commitment to organizing similar events in the future to further promote boxing and motivate athletes.



No tolerance against adulteration mafia: Toru

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru has said that the provincial government believe on zero-tolerance policy against adulteration mafia.

He declared that those selling poison in the guise of milk would be dealt with an iron hand, and all food items would be tested in the laboratory to determine their quality and any adulteration. He expressed these views during a surprise visit to the KP Food Authority's food testing laboratory in Hayatabad.

On this occasion, Director General of the Food Authority Wasif Saeed provided the minister a detailed briefing on the Milko Scan machine. Director Technical Dr.

Abdul Sattar Shah and other relevant officials were also present during the visit.

During the briefing, Wasif Saeed explained that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the first province to have the Milko Scan equipment, a modern and high-tech machine capable of conducting a comprehensive and detailed analysis of milk composition.

He added that the KP Food Authority has commenced milk testing, using this advanced machine. The Director General further mentioned that for the first time, a ten-day milk sample collection and testing was conducted across the province.

The milk samples were tested in the laboratory in sterilized bottles and ice boxes, adhering to all

SOPs. For the first time, 583 milk samples from across the province were examined using the Milko Scan in the food testing lab.

Minister Zahir Shah Toru, on this occasion, commended the Food Authority's milk sampling campaign, stating that the KP government is making efforts to provide more high-tech machines to increase the testing capacity of the food testing laboratory. The minister directed the relevant authorities to ensure the testing of oil, ghee, spices, chips, and other food items in the laboratory across the province.

The Food Minister further stated that providing quality and healthy food items in the markets is a top priority of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government.



Extortionists delivering coffins to spread fear

F.P. Report

PEAHAWAR: In a disturbing trend, criminals in Peshawar have adopted a new method to intimidate citizens who refuse to pay extortion.

After issuing threatening letters and phone calls, they are now sending coffins to the homes of citizens.

According to the police, suspects recently sent coffins to the residence of a housing society owner to coerce him into paying the demanded money.

The police have registered a case at Faqirabad police station and have taken the rickshaw that delivered the coffins into custody.

In an FIR lodged by the affected citizen, reported that the criminals are demanding one crore rupees. He stated that he has been receiving threatening calls continuously for the past month. Additionally, there was a shooting at his office a few days ago, for which a separate case has already been registered.

In his statement to the police, he mentioned that the caller claimed to be an officer of a government institution. He expressed concern for his and his family's safety.

Fazal chairs meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai has said that livestock are of utmost importance. Development of livestock and fisheries is among the priorities of the provincial government. The Tehreek-e-Insaf government is taking solid steps for the development of livestock. Steps should be taken to prevent fishing in rivers and dams in brutal ways. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting regarding the ongoing and new projects of the Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives department.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative Muhammad Fakhri Alam, Director General Livestock Extension Muhammad Asad Khan, Director General Research Dr. Ejaz Ali, Director General Fisheries Shafi Marwat and other relevant officials of department attended the meeting.

Journalists relish mango party by PPC



PESHAWAR (APP): A lively mango party arranged by Peshawar Press Club (PPC) served as a source of delight and elation for duty pressed journalist community by bringing smiles on their faces and jollity for the family members especially children.

Majority of the journalists gathered at Peshawar Press Club on Wednesday evening to enjoy mango party organized by the club's cabinet.

The event received warm response as large number of journalists along with their families arrived at the club in afternoon, bracing sultry weather.

"The decision taken by Peshawar Press Club of holding mango festival was aimed at providing a source of recreation to newsmen and their families at this time of mental stress due to nature of their job and financial stress caused by price hike and loss of jobs for news

task of focusing on welfare of journalist community, its capacity building on modern trends of journalism and protection of their rights, the PPC's office bearers also concentrate on refreshment of its members and their families by arranging different recreational events, Arshad told APP.

Different activities were arranged at mango festival for entertainment of children including jumping castle and music. A number of PPC's members and their families appreciated the idea and thanked Arshad Aziz Malik along with other organizers for providing a source of entertainment to them.

Asmat Shah, a young journalist, termed the event as historic which provided a source of joy to journalist community working in strict working environment.

In prevailing circumstance when the journalist community of KP in particular and Peshawar in general are mostly covering gruesome incidents of suicide bomb attacks and armed attacks on security forces, holding of such event for providing them some relaxation is very timely and need of the hour, Asmat observed.

Children attending the event also expressed their happiness and enjoyment over attending the mango festival.

Female family members also hailed the decision of PPC's and said such event should be held on regular basis for providing a source of entertainment and amusement to family members, especially children, of journalist community.

The mango party continued till late evening and ended with a note of thanks from participants beside requests to organizers to arrange such gatherings on quarterly basis.

"Apart from its main

World Breastfeeding month to be observed in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Nutrition Cell of the Health Department, in collaboration with UNICEF, organised a ceremony to celebrate

World Breastfeeding month in all districts of the province. The ceremony was attended by Director Nutrition Dr. Fazal Majid, Additional Director General Dr. Shahid younis, Dr. Basit Saleem, Dr. Ikramullah, Dr. Shaheen Afridi, UNICEF officials, and representatives of the Pakistan Paediatric Association.

Director Nutrition Dr. Fazal Majid said in his address that the purpose of celebrating this month is to raise awareness about the importance of breastfeeding for children. World Breastfeeding month is celebrated every year in August.

Speakers at the ceremony said that formula milk is not a substitute for breast milk. This year, formula milk worth Rs. 114 billion was sold in Pakistan. Only one in two children gets breast milk within the first hour of birth. Breastfeeding can save the lives of over 800,000 children under the age of five worldwide, 87% of whom are under six months old.

According to the speakers, the mortality rate from diarrhoea after two months of birth is 25% higher in children who drink bottle milk compared to those who drink breast milk. Excessive use of formula milk is causing various diseases in children, including allergies, skin diseases, ear pain, and respiratory diseases.

"Breastfeeding can control 88% of deaths from infections in children under three months old. Similarly, breastfeeding can reduce the incidence of diarrhoea in children by 54%" speakers stressed.



In brief

MNA visits Civil Hospital F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Mutasim Billah Shah along with the former federal interior minister and PTI senior leader MNA Shehryar Afridi and Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram visited Civil Hospital Darra Adam Khel where they inspected various wards including emergency ward and reviewed other arrangements including medicine stock, staff attendance and sanitation situation. Commissioner Mutasim Billah and Shehryar Afridi expressed their concerns over the absence of medical staff and directed legal action against them. Commissioner Kohat on this occasion issued instructions to the authorities concerned to ensure best medical facilities to the patients and presence of medical staff in the hospital round the clock. He directed them to treat the patients politely and provide them due respect. The Commissioner said, if the patients do not have better medical facilities and treatments, then huge buildings of hospitals are useless. He declared that there should be no compromise on the interest of patients.

Facilities directed F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Acting Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Malik Abbas Zulqarnain Awan paid a surprise visit to Old Age Home and reviewed the facilities provided to the elderly residents, on Thursday. The Acting Deputy Commissioner interacted with the resident senior citizens and inquired about the behavior of the old age home staff. On this occasion, he asked the in-charge old-age home to take care of the needs of the elderly residents and provide them with a home-like environment so that they are not sad at any moment and can live as they wish. In-charge Old Age Home Informed about the facilities provided to the elderly. Acting Deputy Commissioner Malik Abbas Zulqarnain Awan said that taking care of the elderly is our religious and social responsibility, all resources should be utilized in this regard. On this Occasion, Deputy Director Social Welfare Rai Abdul Shakur was also present.

Woman kills children F.P. Report

KARAK: A woman in the remote village of Monakhel in Karak tragically took the lives of her children before turning the gun on herself. According to police spokesperson, the incident is believed to be the result of a domestic dispute. However, the deceased woman's brothers have accused her in-laws of murder, claiming that their sister and nephews were killed. The FIR names the woman's father-in-law and brother-in-law as suspects. Her husband was not at home at the time of the incident and is not named in the FIR. Following the registration of the FIR, the deceased woman's father-in-law and brother-in-law have fled the scene. Police are conducting raids to apprehend them.

Three of a family injured

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Three members of a family were injured when roof of a house collapsed due to torrential rain here on Thursday. Heavy rain lashed different areas due to which dilapidated roof of a house located in Dera Mastwala Pindidas road of Sheikhupura came down.

Students and elders protest against delay in building reconstruction



F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: On the very first day of reopening of schools after one month summer vacation, dozens of area elders, youth and students staged a protest demonstration against the delay in reconstruction of government higher secondary school Rabat here on Thursday.

The protesting elders and students gathered outside the underconstruction school building and chanted slogans against the government and concerned contractor. Speaking on the occasion the elders complained the school building was dismantled and reconstruction work started on it two years ago but the contractor stopped work due to unknown reason.

They said that more than 400 students of different classes were forced to read under the open sky in this sizzling summer. The elders said the former deputy commissioner Wasil Khan had promised them to arrange a rented building but to no avail. The protesters demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and provincial authorities of education department to take notice of the matter and release funds to the concerned contractor to complete the project soon.

Health facilities: The additional deputy commissioner Muhammad Arif Bashir Khan on Thursday chaired a meeting of the District Steering Committee (Health) at Timergara.

Divisional Monitoring Officer (Health), Abdul Waheed gave a detailed briefing to the forum regarding various health indicators, availability of medicines and equipment, cleanliness and other facilities in hospitals and presented the progress report of the previous meeting. The ADC said that inquiries should be made about recently dispensed over-the-counter medicines in hospitals and action should be taken against the staff involved.

He said that legal action should be taken against doctors who were absent for a long period of time. Instructions were issued to the DHO that the complete details, recruitment order and all other

information of the recently recruited health department employees in various categories be shared with him. List of all employees working in HO office should be provided to IMU and district administration.

Legal action should be taken against absent doctors, paramedics without departmental permission. The monthly salary should be deducted according to the period of absence, he said. DHO Dr. Irshad Roghani, Dr. Jahanzeb, (DMO Health) Mr. Shahab Khan, MS district headquarters hospital Timergara Dr. Ali Azghar, Mr. Riaz Ahmed and representative of District Accounts Office attended.

DC Visits Koto Hydro Power Project: Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Mohammad Arif Khan Thursday visited Koto Hydro Power Project wherein project director Sultan Rome gave a detailed briefing. During his briefing, he informed the Deputy Commissioner that so far 14 billion rupees have been spent on the Koto Hydro power project.

The three turbines at Koto Hydroelectric Power will generate 41 MW of electricity. Koto Hydro Power will generate more than one billion rupees. Project Director Sultan Rum during his briefing said that on the project 98% of the work of Koto hydro power has been completed. Mechanical missionary installation is in progress, he added.

The tunnel work has already been completed. He said that 13998.89 million has been spent on the project. Three turbines have been installed in Koto Hydro Power which will generate 41 megawatts of electricity that would generate 1707 million in annual revenue. The project will be fully functional next month on September 30, 2024. The Deputy Commissioner directed the Project Director to complete the work in all the units as soon as possible and assured all support from the district administration. Later, Deputy Commissioner along with Project Director and Assistant Director (Electrical) Sajjad Khan inspected various units of Koto Hydro Power Projects.

Tehsil Council Katlang approves surplus budget

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Tehsil Council Katlang unanimously approved surplus budget for next fiscal year. Convener Imdad Ali presented the total budget of 17 crore plus for the year 2024 and 2025, on Thursday.

According to details, Tehsil Municipal Officer along with other staff was present in the meeting. Chairman Muhammad Riaz and male and female members of the council participated in large numbers in the meeting. Opposition leaders Siraj Khan, Hussain Ali, Siraj Sikandar Khan, Malik Murad Ali, Syed Khadham Shah Bachah discussed the budget, the development funds for various projects in the budget are 9 crore 67 lakhs while more than 7 crore funds for non-development expenses were unanimously agreed by all the members.

Addressing the budget

meeting, Tehsil Katlang Chairman Riaz Khan said that we are determined to make Tehsil Katlang a model. All the members will give priority to the problems of their region without any discrimination. People have trusted us and will try to fulfill their trust. He further said that they do not do vindictive politics that is why they will forget the past and work for the development of Katlang Tehsil.

When our period is completed, then they will put their hands on Holy Quran and reassure themselves that they have not committed a single penny of corruption. Eliminate unnecessary expenses and until the next budget, there is a promise to the people that more budgets will be presented by strengthening the Katlang TMA. Thanking all the members for approving the budget, Tehsil Convener adjourned the meeting indefinitely.

Youngster swept away by rainwater F.P. Report

SWABI: A youngster was swept away by gushing waves of a rain-water nullah near Dagai, Khado Khel area of district Swabi.

According to rescue workers, a youngster was swept away by waves of a nullah that was soared by the rains that lashed most of the district. His body was recovered from another rain-water fed stream of village Salim Khan.

Meanwhile, series of rain continued in the district on Thursday disrupting traffic in various areas. Rain water inundated shops, houses and roads in various low lying localities. District Emergency Officer 1122, Awais Babar has directed rescue workers to remain alert during rains.

KP PA Dy Speaker visits flood-hit areas in Chitral F.P. Report

TCHITRAL: Deputy Speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Suraya Bibi Thursday made an emergency visit to the flood-affected area of Upper Chitral district, where the flood has wiped out houses, crops, gardens and roads.

Before the visit, the Deputy Speaker met with the officials of the district administration, rescue and security agencies and issued instructions to take concrete steps to deal with the current situation and provide immediate relief to the people.

She personally supervised the departure of machinery and medical teams towards the flood-affected areas. She was told that the roads have been restored up to Breep, while work is going on to restore Yarkhun Road, which will be opened by Friday.

She issued instructions to the administration to ensure water supply in the affected areas and speed up the power restoration work. She visited Bonni Medical Center on this occasion and visited a citizen belonging to different areas who was swept away in the flood yesterday. She issued instructions to the hospital administration to stay alert and provide the best medical facilities to the patients in view of the current situation.

Rain damages communication network F.P. Report

WANA: The recent heavy rainfall in South Waziristan has left the road from Makeen to Tank in shambles, causing significant disruptions to traffic movement. The deluge has created massive obstacles on the road, making it challenging for vehicles to travel between the two destinations.

In areas such as Dwa Toi, Aryan Khulla, Piyazha, Saray Khaware, and Zaghbirg Wam, landslides have deposited rocks and dirt on the road, damaging the lower parts of vehicles and resulting in substantial financial losses for owners.

Irfan Mehsud, President of the Transport Union, alleged that the provincial government's mismanagement of funds meant for road repairs has exacerbated the issue. He claimed that millions of rupees allocated annually from the M&R fund are embezzled by the Provincial Highway Authority and contractors through bogus bills.

The tribesman demanded that the provincial government initiate immediate road restoration work and take actions against those responsible for misappropriating funds. The situation has left commuters and vehicle owners stranded, and a swift resolution is essential to restore normalcy to the region.

TAD policy implemented at Torkham border to facilitate transporters

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Temporary Admission Documents (TAD) policy for transporters implemented at both sides of Torkham border on Thursday aimed to streamline and regulate the movement of cargo vehicles carrying bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan, a custom official said.

It is to be mentioned here that in 2019 when Covid 19 was broken across the world, due to health hazards, the Pak officials restricted exit and entry of conductors in trucks and only drivers were permitted to carry on the trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

However, last month, the TAD treaty signed between Pakistan and Afghanistan allowed crossing in or out the border along its crew members after its registration. A custom official in

Torkham said that as per Pak-Afghan agreement, signed last month TAD had been made compulsory for export and import carriers' trucks. Two times extension had been made in the deadline to facilitate the transport community but unfortunately, the transporter gave least importance to it, he maintained.

As per direction of the highup, without TAD not a single vehicle will be not permitted to cross either side of the border, however transit goods carriers' vehicles are exempted from the policy, the official said.

With the imposing of TAD policy at the border, multiplied miseries of the transport community, besides clearing process and export, import of merchandise commodities via Torkham came to halt transporters and clearing agents said. President Transport Union, Torkham Haji Azeemullah said that

hundreds of drivers of the both countries had submitted their applications for the TAD although slow pace of issuing of TAD by Pak and Afghan Embassies and conciliates deprived them of the document, transporters regretted.

As per the official announcement, application for the TAD for Afghanistan -registered vehicles will be collected on all working days of Pakistan Embassy, Kabul and Pakistan Consulate, Kandahar while application for TAD from Pakistan registered trucks will be collected on all working days at Afghanistan Consulate Generals, Quetta and Peshawar.

Due to introduction of the new policy, long queues of export and import loaded trucks could be witnessed, parked on both sides of the border due to lack of TAD that disturbed routine local traffic, residents' complaint.

Civil society presents list of deprivation to DC



F.P. Report

BUNER: A delegation of Chagharzai Democratic Movement (CDM) led by Chairman Arshad Khan Buner discussed longstanding problems being faced by the residents with deputy commissioner, on Thursday.

The Chairman on the behalf of people of Chaghorzai has invited the DC to Chaghorzai. The Chairman has expressed hope that the DC will see and understand the problems faced by the residents of Chaghorzai. I will get a lot of help and hope that DC Buner will take practical steps to solve these problems and reduce the difficulties, the Chairman said.

The Chairman CDM on behalf of the delegation, has explained the problems of Chaghorzai region before the DC Buner and also handed over it in writing too. Among these problems, the villages in the mountain ranges are said to have no roads and are rough and damaged. The chairman has further said that there is a lack of clean drinking water in Chaghorzai.

Many areas are deprived of electricity facilities and there is excessive load

shedding of electricity. The chairman has complained about the lack of health facilities in Chaghorzai, the lack of qualified doctors, the lack of equipment and medicines, even the lack of anti rabies vaccine and the non-availability of solar refrigerators to store vaccines. He has mentioned the number of teachers is very less and there is no school facility in some areas and there are no bridges over rivers and roads and dirt roads to reach the available schools.

The Chairman also informed DC Buner about the over speeding and overloading of vehicles and therefore the accidents and the loss of precious lives and precious vehicles. He also informed about the concern caused by the lack of communication. He expressed his concern about the increase in poverty, unemployment and the scourge of addiction in Chaghorzai.

The Chairman added due to lack of attention and lack of playgrounds, the anxiety among the youth has been brought to the fore. He also expressed his regret for not paying any attention to the beautiful tourist spots of

Shaheedah Sar, Bar Tiraj, Dag Sar and Dargah Chinnia in Chaghorzai.

The chairman has demanded of the deputy commissioner to take interest in solving the longstanding problems faced by the people of Chaghorzai tehsel and reducing the difficulties they are facing and for the sake of development of the area and the prosperity of the people. The Chairman, on behalf of delegation and people of Chaghorzai, has assured all possible support from the platform of Chaghorzai Democratic Moment in this regard.

Deputy Commissioner Kshif Qayum has carefully listened to the problems presented by the CDM delegation in detail and has assured that he will make every possible effort and take steps to reduce the problems and difficulties of the people of Chaghorzai and for this purpose he will visit Chaghorzai in the next two weeks and will listen to the people of Chaghorzai from the platform of CDM and will also take immediate action on the solvable problems and also write recommendations to the government.

Kondal dam draws tourists after heavy rains

SWABI (APP): The Kondal dam in Swabi district on Thursday experienced a surge of visitors following recent heavy rains that have transformed the area into serenity. On a cloudy day marked by cooler temperatures following last night's heavy downpour, Jalaal Khan and his family enjoyed a daylong excursion to the dam, rejoicing in the refreshing weather in Kondal dam along with other tourists who arrived in droves.

Khan, a resident of Nowshera district expressed his delight at finally making the trip he had eagerly anticipated to celebrate his son's birthday amid great fun and laughter. "We waited for a day like this to escape the scorching heat and bask in the natural beauty of Kondal Dam to make my son's birthday memorable," he told APP. Dressed in Salwar Kameez, Jalaal's family savored traditional Peshawari dishes, including Rich Poho and Chappli Kabab, while their children played nearby.

Kondal Dam, standing 48 meters high and boasting a water reservoir capacity of 11,755 acre-feet, has become a popular destination for both tourists and adventure sports enthusiasts and if properly developed can become a great centre for ecotourists. The tourists also

enjoyed horse riding and boating amid a cold breeze that elevated its appeal, filling the area with visitors eager to experience its scenic allure. "The weather here is enchanting," remarked Nabeel Khan, Jalaal's son, as he danced to the famous national song "Dil Dil Pakistan." He praised Pakistan's natural beauty and emphasized the potential for small dams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to attract more tourists if developed with modern amenities.

Khan said Tanda dam in Kohat, Kondal of Swabi, Jaloza dam in Nowshera carried huge potential of promoting ecotourism in KP subject to develop tourism related infrastructure. Covering an area of 405 hectares, Tanda dam in Kohat is another most suitable dam for promotion of ecotourism and water sports having a big lake with water storage capacity of 65,000 acres feet.

Tourists and residents of Kohat, Hangu, Kurram and Peshawar districts besides nearby towns and villages of Jurna and Shahpur would largely benefit. Tanda dam is a protected site for conservation and utilisation of wetlands and a home to migratory birds including Siberian cranes and ducks. Pakistan has more than 24 big

and small rivers including five in Punjab, four in Sindh, eight in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and seven in Balochistan with numerous suitable natural sites for construction of small, medium and big dams to promote tourism besides fulfilling the growing water needs of the people.

Chanab, Jhelum, Ravi, Sutlej and Beas in Punjab, Kabul, Swat, Pankjora, Kunhar, Bara, Kurram, Haroo, Gomal, Chitral in KP, Nari, Bolan, Pishin, Lara, Mula, Hub, Zhob, Porali, Hangol, Rakshan, Dasht in Balochistan and four rivers in Sindh province are most suited for dams. Despite tourism, these dams' sites were also useful to fulfill the country's water and agriculture needs. In spite of having enormous water potential, Pakistan is gradually moving towards water-scarce country where most of living creatures including humans, animals, plants, wildlife, mammals and reptiles are facing the looming threats of water scarcity.

The National Water Policy (NWP) 2018 has revealed that Pakistan was heading towards a situation of water shortage due to lack of water reservoirs, which may lead to food insecurity for all living creatures in next few years if dams were not constructed. The policy dis-

closed that per capita surface water availability has significantly declined from 5,260 cubic meters per year in 1951 to around 1,000 cubic meters in 2016. This quantity is likely to further drop to 860 cubic meters by 2025, marking Pakistan's transition from a water stressed country to a water scarce country.

The groundwater situation is expected to further drop in the country mostly in Punjab and Sindh where one million tube wells are currently pumping about 55 million acres feet (MAF) of underground water for irrigation, which is 20pc more than that available from canals. Dr Zilakat Malik, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar told APP that water resources were inextricably linked with climate and the impending climate change scenario has posed serious implications for the country's water resources.

The changing and unpredictable precipitation patterns caused by climate change have serious consequences, including flash floods in north and increasingly prolonged droughts in the south if dams were not constructed on priority basis, he added. With glaciers retreat, he

said more glacial lakes will form, increasing the risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) that is already becoming increasingly common and hazardous in northern parts of the country.

"The small dams are only remedy to store flood and rainy water mostly in arid areas like Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Kohat, DI Khan, DG Khan, Bhakkar, Bahawalpur, Multan, Tharparkar besides merged areas of erstwhile Fata to bring maximum dry land under cultivation and minimize impact of natural disasters," he said. He said Pakistan receives around 142MAF water annually through western rivers of which 104MAF is used for irrigation purposes. Similarly, approximately 40MAF water is obtained from normal rainfall and 40pc through underground water per year.

Dr Malik said that Pakistan was the only country with diversity in weather, rainfalls, landscape, forests, climate, and mountains with capacity to construct 1000 small dams. Terming small dams as a backbone of agriculture in developing countries like Pakistan, he said that we can achieve self-sufficiency in food through establishing a network of small dams.

He said that small dams were being preferred mostly in developing countries like SAARC for irrigation of agriculture and drinking water because it is cost & time efficient and do not require foreign investment compared to big dams, adding small dams can easily be constructed in two to three years while big dams mostly require 10 to 15 years. The Directorate of Small Dams KP told APP that 56 small dams at a cost of Rs26.7 billion having a storage capacity of 281,410 acre feet were completed in KP, adding that 30 more small dams would be completed soon at a cost of Rs43.6 billion.

As many as 18 dam projects were settled and 12 for tribal districts besides 14 small dam projects were in final stages that would be completed in the current year. These include Khattak Banda Dam in Kohat, Makh Banda and Latambar dams in Karak, Jaroba Dam in Nowshera and Pezu Dam in Lakki Marwat. Similarly, 14 small dams could store 46,400 acres feet of water and would irrigate 34,000 acres of land. The experts said that Pakistan's economy was mainly based on agriculture requiring water and construction of small dams was inevitable to meet the growing food requirements of its people.



Sudan’s military leader survives drone strikes



KHARTOUM (BBC): Sudan’s military leader Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has survived an assassination attempt, the army spokesman has told the BBC. Nabil Abdallah blamed the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which the army has been battling for the last 16 months for control of the country.

He said two drones had struck an army graduation ceremony killing five people at a base in Jabait in the east - territory under the control of the military. But the RSF’s legal adviser told the Reuters news agency that the group, which has agreed to go to US-mediated talks next month, was not responsible. Speaking after being evacuated to safety following the attack, Gen Burhan vowed to crush his opponents and ruled out negotiations.

"We will not retreat, we will not surrender, and we will not negotiate," the AFP news agency quotes him as saying. His government had agreed to conditionally join the mediation in Geneva on 14 August. Previous talks to end the conflict, which has created the world's largest humanitarian crisis, have failed as both sides have refused to honour their commitments.

More than 10 million people have fled their homes since the former allies fell out over an internationally backed political plan to move towards civilian rule. The Jabait army base is about 100km (62 miles) from Port Sudan, the military’s de facto capital and where Gen Burhan is based. Video footage being shared from those attending the ceremony shows military graduates marching in ceremonial dress before the sound of a strike.

"The only party that is hostile to the Sudanese people and targeting the Sudanese people is the rebel Rapid Support Forces," Gen Abdallah told the BBC. He thanked God that Gen Burhan and "all the commanders present are fine"

and that there were not many major injuries. However, Mohamed al-Mukhtar, legal adviser to the RSF, blamed the drone strikes on infighting within the military.

"The RSF has nothing to do with the drones that targeted Jabait today... they are the result of internal disagreements, between Islamists," he told Reuters. There have been allegations in the last few months that different factions in the army are at odds. Some analysts point to an incident during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in April when some commanders from a military brigade known as Abaraa Iban Malik were killed by drone strikes in the north-eastern town of Atbara.

This brigade may have been targeted by more moderate elements within the military itself as it is considered be made up of more hard-line Islamists opposed to peace talks, the analysts say. However, others suggest that the RSF has increasingly been using drones to target army-controlled areas.

Only the army and RSF have access to drones, which have been widely used by both sides. The Beja people, who live in this area between the mountains and the Red Sea coast, have tended to have a fractious relationship with those in power over the last few decades - often feeling ignored and marginalised. These communities often fall out with each other too, but are generally supportive of Gen Burhan - despite resentment about living costs rising in Port Sudan because of the arrival of so many people fleeing the capital, Khartoum.

According to Reuters, the RSF has control of eight of Sudan's 18 state capitals, including Khartoum, and is expanding further into the south-east of the country. The group, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemedti, accepted the US invitation to attend peace talks soon after they were proposed last week.

French citizen in Russia denied bail

MOSCOW (AP): A Russian court ordered a French citizen arrested in Russia to remain in custody ahead of his trial on charges of unlawfully collecting information on military issues. Laurent Vinatier was arrested in the Russian capital in June as tensions flared between Moscow and Paris following French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about the possibility of deploying French troops in Ukraine.

Russian authorities accused Vinatier of failing to register as a "foreign agent" while collecting information about Russia's "military and military-technical activities" which could be used to the detriment of the country's security. Under Russian law, the offense is punishable by up to five years in prison. Moscow's Zamoskvoretsky District Court ordered Vinatier to remain in custody until Sept. 5 pending the probe into his action, rejecting his plea to be released on bail or placed under house arrest.

Vinatier is an adviser with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, a Geneva-based nongovernmental organization. The NGO said in June it was doing "everything possible to assist" him. The charges against Vinatier stem from a recently adopted law that requires anyone who collects information on military issues to register with authorities as a foreign agent.

Human rights activists have criticized the law and other recent legislation as part of a multi-pronged Kremlin crackdown on independent media and political activists intended to stifle criticism of its actions in Ukraine. Arrests on charges of spying and collecting sensitive data have become increasingly frequent in Russia since it sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

Extended drought parches Sicily

ROME (AP): On a scorching July afternoon, a municipal water truck rolls up in a cloud of dust on Liborio Mangiapane's farm in southern Sicily. Some of the precious liquid gets transferred to a smaller cistern on a tractor that Mangiapane's son will use to fill troughs for 250 cattle and sheep, but by tomorrow, all 10,000 liters from the truck will be gone.

Crippling drought from a nearly rainless year, coupled with record-high temperatures, has burned out much of the region's hay and is pushing farmers to the limit. For Mangiapane, every day is a struggle to find water, with frantic phone calls, long trips to faraway wells and long waits for municipal tankers. If rain doesn't come by the end of August, he's afraid he'll have to sell off his livestock.

"We are in a moment of extreme heat and therefore animals need a lot of water," Mangiapane said. "It's a constant anxiety to keep the animals from suffering, but also just to have a chance to wash ourselves." The worst year for rainfall in more than 20 years has sent fodder production down 70% across Sicily, according to Coldiretti, Italy's primary farmers association. The main water basins are almost empty and authorities are strictly rationing water.

The region is one of Italy's breadbaskets, producing 20% of the country's durum wheat that goes into pasta. Coldiretti estimated that the drought could reduce production on the island by as much as 70%, leading to greater reliance on imports. In coming months, the dry year may hit olive oil and peach production. Hot weather has caused the grape harvest to start nearly four weeks early, though that crop is so far undamaged. In May, the national government declared a state of emergency in Sicily and allocated 20 million euros (\$21.7 million) to buy water tankers, dig new wells and fix leaky aqueducts. Coldiretti has donated 1.5 million tons of fodder and the regional government allocated subsidies for farmers forced to buy hay from third parties.

The bill, which still requires approval by lawmakers, foresees punishment ranging up to a two-year prison sentence for people who intentionally intrude on airspace areas of airports such as taxiways or runways, endanger civil aviation, or enable someone else to. Currently such intrusions only draw a fine.

Balkan nations battle wildfires in a heat wave

ZAGREB (AP): Balkan countries battled wildfires stoked by high temperatures, winds and a weekslong drought, as firefighters in Croatia cited their toughest day so far this season and North Macedonia suggested it might seek help from NATO.

Croatia's Firefighters' Association said the demanding 24-hour period included responding to more than 100 fires with over 1,000 firefighters and 20 firefighting planes. In North Macedonia, some 66 wildfires erupted over the past 24 hours. The most serious incident in Croatia overnight was near the southern coastal town of Tucepi, where one firefighter was injured. A strong wind blowing through the night made it difficult to combat the raging blaze, stretching for several kilometers.

Police detained a 65-year-old man who is suspected of accidentally starting the fire while working on his beehives, police said in a statement. He is facing charges of endangering public safety. Many residents spent a sleepless night and some evacuated their homes, Croatian state broadcaster HRT said. Power supplies were cut and several explosions could be heard, apparently from gas canisters, HRT said. Photos showed a blazing skyline with firefighting planes flying overhead.

The fire was under control before it reignited, spreading to a remote area in the nearby Biokovo nature

park. Local official Ante Cobanic said he tried to help extinguish a small fire before it suddenly spread in the space of five minutes. "The speed was incredible," Cobanic said.

Further north, near the town of Sibenik, firefighters struggled to prevent a blaze from reaching Krka National Park, known for its stunning waterfalls. The park remained open for visitors and thanked firefighters and residents for helping defend it. "There is a constant danger of wind and reactivation," said Josko Grancic, a senior firefighter for the coastal area.

Successive heat waves have helped trigger fires across the Balkan region and elsewhere in southern Europe at the height of the summer tourism season. Countries like North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania have all sought help from abroad. North Macedonia asked for European Union assistance, and the country's emergency center chief Stojanche Angelov said that if the situation worsens the government should also ask NATO for help. "At this moment there is no need, but the assistance might be needed later today," Angelov said.

Large wildfires in parts of North Macedonia this week destroyed and damaged homes, forced evacuations and claimed the life of an elderly resident in a village some 60 kilometers (40 miles) east of the capital Skopje. One blaze crossed into Greece where two air tankers and a helicopter

helped the firefighters hold back the flames from reaching a forest on the Greek banks of Lake Doiran, which is shared by the two countries.

Meanwhile, Greek firefighters scrambled to reach a blaze on the island of Evia, northeast of Athens, the second to hit the island this week. Authorities said 11 air tankers and three water-dropping helicopters were assisting 120 firefighters in the Pissona region in central Evia, where strong winds were hampering efforts to contain the wildfire. The fire in Evia triggered the evacuation of four villages and sent a huge cloud of black smoke over Athens.

Neighboring Bulgaria's border with Greece was also affected, with one of the country's two biggest fires active there. The other blaze was raging on Maleshevska Mountain on the border with North Macedonia. Tens of thousands of acres of forests and agricultural land were affected, the fire service said. In Albania, hundreds of firefighters, military personnel and volunteers managed to get under control a major fire in the coastal town of Shengjin after it burned a house roof and two beach bars, sending visitors fleeing in panic.

Planes provided by the EU Civil Protection Mechanism have joined firefighting efforts in both Bulgaria and Albania. Experts say human-induced climate change has brought wild weather swings, increasingly unpredictable storms and heat waves.

Hundreds protest across Nigeria over soaring cost of living

ABUJA: Nigerian troops and police have tightened security in Lagos and the capital, Abuja, as nationwide protests over the rising cost of living kicked off and are expected to continue for 10 days. Africa's most populous country is struggling with soaring inflation and a sharply devalued naira currency after President Bola Ahmed Tinubu introduced reforms a year ago aimed at reviving the economy.

Tagged Endbad Governancein Nigeria, the protest movement has won support with an online campaign among Nigerians who are battling with food inflation at 40 percent and fuel prices that have tripled since Tinubu introduced his reforms. On Thursday, police fired tear gas to disperse demonstrators in Abuja, the Reuters news agency reported. In the northern city of Kano, protesters tried to light bonfires outside the governor's office and police responded with tear gas, the AFP news

agency said.

Security forces blocked roads leading to Abuja's Eagle Square - one of the planned demonstration sites - while in Lagos, police and soldiers were placed at strategic points, including at the Lekki toll gate, where protests in 2020 against police brutality ended in bloodshed. "Duty is very clear: to ensure that the protest is peaceful, devoid of violence, devoid of the horrific things that happened during the rising in 2020," Adegoke Fayoadé, the state police commissioner in Lagos, told Al Jazeera.

To ease the economic pain, the government announced some measures including delivering grain to states across the country and aid to the most needy. But in markets across Nigeria, residents stocked up on food and essentials amid concerns over the likelihood of growing violence during the demonstrations. "The police are brutalising the Nigerian people

and people want that to stop," activist Ismail Olushola Oladare, who participated in the 2020 protests, told Al Jazeera. "Today, this particular protest and bad governance protest is about the standard of living of people," he said. Protest leaders, a loose coalition of civil society groups, promised to press on with rallies despite what they said were legal challenges trying to limit their rallies to public parks instead of marches.

Omolola Pedro, a protest organiser, told Al Jazeera that the idea of the rallies was to let the government know that Nigerians have had enough of the government's "abuse of human rights, unstable economic situation [resulting from] the policies that they have made". The organisers have presented a list of 19 demands. At the core of their grievances is the removal of a state subsidy on petroleum products, which they blame for the crisis.

The demonstrations come after weeks of unrest and antigovernment protests that turned violent in Kenya, where President William Ruto was forced to repeal planned tax hikes. In Uganda, police detained dozens of people as they took part in banned anti-corruption protests organised online by young activists inspired by Kenya's rallies.

"Some groups of people, self-appointed crusaders and influencers, have been strategising and mobilising potential protesters to unleash terror in the land under the guise of replicating the recent Kenya protests," said Kayode Egbetokun, Nigeria's inspector general of police. "We will, therefore, not sit back and fold our arms to watch violent activities unleash violence on our peaceful communities or destroy any of our national critical infrastructure and assets again," Egbetokun said after meeting senior officers in Abuja. — Aljazeera

Italy opens controversial migrant centre in Albania

TIRANA (BBC): Italy, which receives the most migrant arrivals in the European Union, is partially outsourcing the challenge from today, as it opens the first of two planned camps in neighbouring Albania. The centres will be used to house up to 3000 migrants per month rescued en route to Italy as part of Europe's first "offshoring" scheme, while the continent grapples with how to respond to the challenge of irregular migration. The camp that opens today is located in the northern Albanian port of Shengjin. The opening of a second centre, on a former air force base in nearby Gjader, has been delayed.

The structures will be entirely managed by the Italian government, which paid for their construction. They will be used for migrants picked up in international waters - though not women, children, or those deemed vulnerable. Once there, they will be allowed to request asylum in Italy. If refused, they will be sent back to countries deemed safe to return.

"Italian and European legislation will be applied in these centres," Fabrizio Bucci, Italy's ambassador in Albania, told me. "It's like having a centre in Italy - but in Albania." The agreement signed by the Italian and Albanian Prime Ministers will remain in place for five years - with the option to extend if it proves successful in reducing the migrant burden on Italy and deterring some from attempting to come. Arrivals in Italy by sea this year - around 31,000 so far - are down by more than half from the same period in 2023.

Giorgia Meloni, the Italian Prime Minister, ran for office promising to clamp down hard on migration - and the Albanian plan has become a key tenet of that. The hefty price tag, estimated at upwards of 650m (£547), is one of the criticisms levelled by Italian opposition politicians and human rights groups. "It's an excessive cost to detain a limited number of migrants", said Riccardo Magi, an MP with the left-wing +Europa party.

When Ms Meloni recently visited the site in Albania, he approached her car to protest - and was grabbed by Albanian security officials. As she intervened, telling them to ease off, he shouted: "If they treat an elected MP like

this, imagine how they'll treat the migrants". Speaking to the BBC, he compared the structures to a penal colony. He also doubted the ability of night-time rescuers to properly screen those picked up to ensure that no vulnerable individuals are sent to Albania.

"They won't be able to delve deep into whether somebody has suffered torture or sexual violence or discrimination due to their sexuality back in Africa", Mr Magi said. "It's all an attempt at dissuasion and a PR show to tell Italians this is the first time a government can keep migrants out. But nobody who has risked their life to cross to Italy will be discouraged."

Fabrizio Bucci, the Italian ambassador in Tirana, disagrees. "It's one of the elements that migrants and smugglers will have to factor in," he said. "What do we have to lose? We've been trying to redistribute migrants throughout the EU and it hasn't worked. So why not try to chart a new way?" He refers to it as an experiment that, if successful, could be replicated. Indeed, 15 EU members, led by Denmark, recently wrote an open letter to the European

Commission backing the outsourcing of migration. Sir Keir Starmer praised the Italy-Albania deal after meeting both Prime Ministers.

It has drawn comparison with the plan of the previous Conservative government to deport failed asylum seekers from the United Kingdom to Rwanda - ditched by Mr Starmer. But the agreements are significantly different.

While Rwanda would have managed the asylum requests and centres under its deal, giving successful claimants asylum there and deporting failed ones to third countries deemed safe by the Rwandan government, the Albania deal will be under Italian jurisdiction. "We made sure the Albanian legislation was already in full compliance with EU and international laws", said Ambassador Bucci. For Albania, the reward is a boost to its image as it negotiates European Union membership.

But Vladimir Karaj, a Tirana-based journalist with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, said it was a "complete surprise" when it was announced by the Prime Minister Edi Rama.

Leopard attacks men at South Africa air force base

CAPE TOWN (BBC): A leopard attacked two men at a South African air force base that borders the world-famous Kruger National Park. One of the men, a uniformed air force member, was attacked while out for a run. The other, a civilian working at the base, encountered the leopard while on a walk, an air force spokesman said.

The two individuals were admitted to hospital with scratches but no major injuries, Brig Gen Donovan Chetty told the BBC. One has since been discharged and the other is due to leave on Thursday. The leopard was captured and relocated to a sanctuary around 100km (62 miles) from the Hoedspruit air force base, following last week's

attacks.

Gen Chetty said that encounters with leopards are common, but not usually dangerous, for those living and working near the park. The park, a tourist magnet famed for its rich wildlife, is largely fenced off. However, Gen Chetty said it was impossible to contain leopards, which are known for their agility, with fences.

"[The leopards] are basically in and amongst the human population," he said, adding that around 150 of them are known to be living in the area. Leopards are nocturnal animals that hunt a variety of prey, including wildebeest, antelope and fish, the Kruger National Park website says. In 2017, three lions were killed after escaping from the park.

Hopes for survivors fade in deadly India landslides

NEW DELHI (BBC): Hopes of finding more survivors are fading as rescue operations continue in Kerala, where massive landslides have killed 182 people, according to officials. Nearly 200 people are still missing after Mundakkai and Chooralmala areas in Wayanad district were flattened by thick torrents of mud and water.

Rescue operations have been hampered by heavy rains in the region all week. The army is constructing a temporary bridge to Mundakkai, which is across a swollen river, to help stranded residents and search for more survivors. Health officials reported 256 autopsies, but that included a number of body parts.

On Thursday, Wayanad remained on high alert for more rains as schools and colleges were closed for the day. The hilly district is known for its cardamom plantations and tea estates and has several popular tourist spots. Officials said nearly 1,600 people had been rescued from the affected villages and tea estates. But migrant work-

ers from the estates were among those still missing.

More than 8,000 people have been moved to 82 relief camps set up in the district, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said. The army is now building a temporary metal bridge to Mundakkai village, which is among the worst affected by the landslides. Earlier, rescuers had constructed a temporary pedestrian bridge and used ropes to rappel across the river to reach stranded people there and move the injured to hospitals. But heavy rains and strong river current had made it difficult to carry out full-fledged rescue work.

The temporary metal bridge is expected to be complete by Thursday evening. It will allow ambulances and heavy machinery to move rubble and search for survivors, Major General Vinod Mathew told reporters. Meanwhile, the air force is conducting sorties to identify areas with survivors and distribute relief material. Three army sniffer dogs were expected to reach the disaster zone to help detect people still trapped under

the rubble.

"Still large areas are to be explored and searched to find out whether live people are there or not," senior police officer MR Ajith Kumar told AFP news agency. TV footage showed harrowing scenes at relief camps and hospitals as survivors searched for their loved ones or waited for news of them.

One man listed out names of those who had still not been found as he told Manorama News. "My house was spared but I have lost many children who were like my own." At a community centre that had bodies displayed for identification, a young man told The NewsMinute that he had identified two of his uncles, but was still searching for seven other relatives.

"I am in touch with people at all other centres where bodies are placed and they are sending me pictures, but I am yet to identify any of my other missing relatives," he told the news site. With more heavy rainfall forecast for the district, the government has warned residents to be prepared for flash floods.

Protest by climate activists halts cargo flights

BERLIN (AP): An overnight protest by climate activists at Leipzig/Halle Airport in eastern Germany forced a three-hour halt to cargo flights, officials said Thursday. The protest by the Last Generation group followed demonstrations last week at Cologne-Bonn Airport and then at Frankfurt Airport, Germany's busiest, which significantly disrupted passenger flights.

Federal police said five activists attached themselves to the ground inside the airport perimeter shortly after midnight, and another two were prevented from doing so, German news agency dpa reported.

They were removed at about 5 a.m. Last Generation said they didn't set foot on the runways. Leipzig/Halle is an important air freight hub. Airport spokesperson Uwe Schuhart said air cargo movements had to be suspended for about three hours starting at 12:30 a.m.

There didn't appear to be a significant impact on passenger flights, which don't arrive and depart during the night. The airport's website showed the first plane leaving at 5:41 a.m., about 15 minutes late. Police said the activists, who had cut a hole in the perimeter fence, were detained.

Last Generation is

demanding that the German government negotiate and sign an agreement on a global exit from the use of oil, gas and coal by 2030. Last month, the German Cabinet approved legislation that would impose tougher penalties on people who break through airport perimeters.

The bill, which still requires approval by lawmakers, foresees punishment ranging up to a two-year prison sentence for people who intentionally intrude on airspace areas of airports such as taxiways or runways, endanger civil aviation, or enable someone else to. Currently such intrusions only draw a fine.

The Frontier Post

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

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Worries that situation in ME is getting out of control

CHINA is among those countries that have expressed their concern at the latest turn of events in the Middle East.

In a routine news conference, responding to a question about the killing of Hamas' top political leader Ismail Haniyeh in a targeted missile strike on Wednesday in Teheran, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "We are greatly concerned about the incident, firmly oppose and condemn the assassination, and are deeply worried that this incident may lead to further instability in the region."

While falling short of admitting culpability for Haniyeh's execution, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country "will exact a very heavy price from any aggression against us on any front" after Iran accused Israel of carrying out the strike and vowed "a harsh and painful response".

Iran naming Israel as the perpetrator is not surprising given that Netanyahu has repeatedly stated Israel's objective is to completely eliminate Hamas, that Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders were on Israel's most wanted list after the group waged surprise attacks on southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza, and that Tel Aviv and its ally Washington have orchestrated previous extraterritorial hits on leaders of Hamas and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in recent years.

With Israel's onslaught against the Palestinians continuing in Gaza, Haniyeh's assassination will, no doubt, fuel more hatred between Hamas and Israel and trigger more anti-Israel sentiment among Hamas sympathizers, thus giving greater momentum to the vicious circle of violence that has convulsed the region.

With Haniyeh's killing triggering fears that it presages a dangerous escalation of the animosities in the Middle East, a region already deeply mired in the months' long Israel-Hamas conflict, it is only natural that members of the international community are urging that there be no further reckless moves that could ignite a broader conflict in the region.

Saying that China is deeply worried the incident may lead to further instability in the region and beyond, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman called for a comprehensive and permanent cease-fire in Gaza as soon as possible to avoid any further escalation of conflict and confrontation.

The Israel-Hamas conflict has already spilled over to other parts of the region, involving more regional actors, including the Houthi group in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon. If Iran steps in to avenge the death on its soil, it could also drag the United States directly into the conflict, which has already killed more than 39,445 Palestinians in Gaza and displaced approximately 2 million people.

Yet for the warmongering Israeli leader, dragging the US into a direct conflict with Iran may seem attractive as a way to help him out of the current quagmire of the prolonged war with Hamas and the rising opposition to it both at home and abroad.

With the backing of the US, Israel is already striking out in all directions, creating more obstacles to international efforts to broker peace.

A day before Haniyeh's assassination, Israel claimed a strike in the Lebanese capital of Beirut that killed Fouad Shokor, Hezbollah's top military commander. As such, if Washington continues to give tacit consent to Israel and allow it to attack whoever and wherever it wants, it is tantamount to handing it a match to light the fuse of an all-out regional war.

Further instability in the Middle East serves no country's interest, including Israel and the US. Key players in the region should exercise the utmost restraint to stop the vicious circle of tit-for-tat retaliations, so as to prevent the situation from spiraling out of control.

The chaos in the Middle East and the worsening humanitarian crisis should spur the international community to make even greater efforts to resolve the regional animosities through negotiations and dialogue and push for a comprehensive and permanent cease-fire in Gaza as soon as possible so as to avoid further escalation of the hostilities.

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The US presidential election and the Ukraine war

Dr. Diana Galeeva

THERE are just over three months left until the 2024 presidential election is held in the US. Following the surprise withdrawal of incumbent President Joe Biden from the race, Vice President Kamala Harris has now cemented her status as the front-runner for the Democratic nomination. Observers might note the interesting coincidence and wonder whether Donald Trump will again beat a woman, as happened when he faced Hillary Clinton in 2016. However, for those who follow the geopolitical outcomes and scenarios of such casting, especially its impact on the Ukraine war, it changes nothing, as Harris has always backed Biden's position of offering support to Ukraine.

During the recent Summit on Peace in Ukraine in Switzerland, Harris announced American support of \$1.5 billion through the US Agency for International Development and the Department of State, intended to boost Ukraine's energy sector. It seems likely that, if she were to win the election, the Ukraine war would continue and that America's relations with Russia would remain at the same low level. The Kremlin's position on Harris' candidacy was cautious, stating that she "had made no discernible contribution to relations with Moscow beyond some unfriendly rhetoric."

By contrast, Trump's position is to "end the war," as stated during his recent phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Some European media outlets have expressed concern, such as France 24 stating that Trump's "frequent praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin, reluctance to directly

criticize the Russian invasion and suggestions to back away from NATO deeply concern Ukraine's allies."

In this, his policies resemble those of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who is known as the Kremlin's closest ally in the EU. Orban has frequently blocked or delayed EU attempts to increase its help for Ukraine and has sought to avoid sanctions on Moscow. Orban met Zelensky on July 2 in his official first visit to the country since the outbreak of war in February 2022. Three days later, he met Putin, in a rare case of a European leader seeking to discuss the prospects for a peaceful settlement in Ukraine.

Another seven days later, Orban met Trump. After the meeting, he stated: "It was an honor to visit President Trump today. We discussed ways to make peace. The good news of the day: he's going to solve it." Trump commented: "There must be peace, and quickly. Too many people have died in a war that should have never started."

It does not really matter whether Harris or Biden is the Democratic nominee, due to their similar views on Ukraine. However, a victory for Trump, who is aligned with the European leader that is closest to the Kremlin, would clearly lean toward the end of the legacy of the Democrats. Fox News reported that a Trump victory would mean an isolationist "America First" foreign policy approach, which might damage relations with its main allies.

Another crucial matter is the difference over NATO. Reuters last week described Harris' foreign policy objectives as "tougher tone

on Israel, steady on NATO." At the Munich Security Conference in 2022, Harris stressed that the US had "an unwavering commitment to NATO." In reference to the mutual defense clause in the NATO Treaty, she stated that "America's commitment to Article 5 is ironclad."

Prior to the Ukraine crisis, Harris met with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. Stoltenberg echoed Harris' position on the enlargement of NATO during the crisis, stating that "the reality is that North America and Europe are doing more together now than we have done for many years."

Trump's dissatisfaction with America's NATO allies failing to meet their defense spending commitments is well known. However, at this stage, his campaign's national security team has not openly embraced a new agenda toward the alliance. Politico, reporting the views of anonymous security experts, suggested that the US would maintain its nuclear umbrella over Europe during a second Trump term by keeping its airbases in the UK, Germany and Türkiye, in addition to its naval forces.

Nonetheless, the responsibility to field armor and artillery would pass from the US to European hands. One dimension would be a shift toward significantly downsizing America's security role. Another would be the emerging Trump game plan of a two-tier NATO system, meaning that member countries that have not met the criteria of spending 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense "would not enjoy the defense largesse and security guarantee of the US."

The US election is crucial to the international community because, whether other countries like or not — and despite this transitional period from a unipolar American-dominated world toward a more multipolar one — the US remains the main global power on which future geopolitical events hinge. One such event is the Ukraine war, while the potential enlargement of NATO will be similarly affected.

On the one side are Biden and Harris' evidently similar views on both matters: full support for Ukraine and backing for a strong NATO. Meanwhile, Trump follows another route: he wants to end the war, focus on internal matters and maintain dialogues with European leaders who are close to the Kremlin. He may not normalize relations with Putin, but he will promote less harsh rhetoric toward the Russian leader. As for NATO, Trump offers alternatives, if not to leave the bloc, then to at least reform it. Above all, he needs to create a legacy in terms of his security and geopolitical stance that will distinguish him from the Democrats.

As stated at the outset, within the context of the Ukraine war, the Democrats' nomination of Harris or Biden does not matter; the only material differences will come if Trump wins the Nov. 5 election. This would clearly help the Russian cause, perhaps allowing it to end the war on Moscow's terms and, following the historic situation with Finland, possibly making Ukraine a neutral state. Meanwhile, a victory for Harris would mean the US supporting the Ukrainian cause, the possible enlargement of NATO and an increasing amount of rhetoric over nuclear war.

Israelis need to listen to Ron Lauder

Faisal J. Abbas

AGAINST a backdrop of continuous bombing, political assassinations and endless civilian casualties, it is hard for voices of reason and moderation in this region to break through the clutter and rhetoric of mutual incitement. Sadly, with the way the current Israeli government continues to wage its war, there will be more of the latter and less of the former.

I have repeatedly warned in this column that the indiscriminate killing of civilians will lead only to renewed violence and is the perfect fertilizer for Hamas 2.0, no matter how many of its leaders the Israeli army manages to kill. It should go without saying that civilians on both sides need to be spared killing and kidnapping, and kept out of harm's way.

Interestingly, the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday, the drone strike in south Beirut on Tuesday that killed senior Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukur, and the attack in south Lebanon early in July that killed Hezbollah unit commander Mohammed Nasser, all illustrate clearly that Israel has the intelligence, advanced technology and military capability to avoid mass civilian casualties. One therefore has to wonder why it has felt the need to reduce most of Gaza to rubble, to kill nearly 40,000 Palestinians there (most of them women and children) and to displace about 1.7 million, several of them numerous times.

Israelis may say that none of this would have happened if not for the atrocious events of Oct. 7, or if Hamas chose to surrender, return the Israeli hostages they hold, and prioritize the safety of their own people. That is an understandable argument. However, it ignores outrageous statements made not by the average Israeli on the street, but by elected and serving Israeli officials. For example, two days after the war began last October, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant called for Palestinians in Gaza to be denied electricity, food, water and fuel: "We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly." For his part, Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu, asked a month later if he proposed dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza, replied: "That's one way ... they're not scared of death." And in December, military spokesman Daniel Hagari explained why Israel had already dropped thousands of tonnes of munitions on Gaza: "Right now we're focused on what causes maximum damage."

Such statements are outrageous since they come from people in positions of power and authority in Israel, which repeatedly says that it has the most ethical army in the world. Sadly, during times of war such rhetoric is commended, not criticized, by an emotional public.

It is also understandable, given what happened on Oct. 7, that many ordinary Israelis are in no mood for peace either. A decade ago, more than 60 percent supported a two-state solution: the most recent Gallup survey in December suggested that this has been reversed, and 65 percent of Israelis now oppose the existence of an independent Palestinian state.

However, as Arabs and Muslims, we should also remember that not all Jews are aligned with the views of extremist Israeli ministers such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, just as not all Arabs were aligned with the views of Osama bin Laden, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi and other terrorists.

The proof of the pudding, they say, is in the eating, and there is no better example than the column published in Arab News on Monday by Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress. Lauder wrote that he firmly believed empowering those who advocate peace was crucial, that we must establish a clear path forward, and that the two-state solution was the only viable long-term option.

Such a conciliatory tone may be out of tune with the warmongering and hate speech that gains more traction on social media, but that is exactly what leadership is about: leaders should rise above the divisions and the seduction of populism, and say what needs to be said.

I doubt that anyone could accuse the president of the World Jewish Congress of being antisemitic. And when Lauder wrote: "Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve the chance to live and dream of a peaceful and prosperous future for their children. We cannot let terrorism and the threat to a nation's existence dictate our future," it was exactly what the world needed to hear.

Fortunately, Lauder is not alone: Haaretz columnist Gideon Levy, Arab News columnist and academic Yossi Mekelberg, and the multiple Pulitzer prizewinning New York Times writer Thomas Friedman — all proud Jews — share his views. Friedman in particular has long warned Benjamin Netanyahu about the dangers of climbing a tree from which he won't be able to come down. His column in April entitled "Israel has a choice to make: Riyadh or Rafah" was a masterpiece, the epitome of political wisdom and strategic advice.

Of course, the Israeli prime minister may still feel comfortable up that tree, especially after the series of standing ovations that greeted his address this month to a joint session of the US Congress — albeit, for context, during a highly charged and politicized election year. But he ought to remember that he would have had the whole world applauding him had he chosen Riyadh, not Rafah.

Global South upholds peaceful coexistence instead of lecturing

Harald Brüning

THE third plenum of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee, held from July 15 to 18, emphasized the CPC's commitment to pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace and devotion to fostering a global community with a shared future, advocating for a fair and structured multipolar world and a universal beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

After attending a conference to mark the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in late June, I am convinced that they are needed more than ever to make international relations fairer and more equitable.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are the result of China's initiative launched in conjunction with India and Myanmar in 1954, a year after my birth in Germany.

However, I only became aware of the five principles during a junior high school civics class when I was about 15 years old, and what I remember is that I was quite astonished that three "Third World" countries — that's how the developing world was then pejoratively called, although even then it accounted for the

majority of humanity — were able to develop such a globally important concept without any involvement of the West, which then dominated international relations. At that time, scores of countries were still under colonial rule or had only recently declared independence, often after painful liberation struggles.

Only as a university student in the 1970s was I finally able to deepen my understanding of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which I still regard as one of the most important and fundamental principles of global governance, because they are much broader than the 17th century Westphalian system limited to state sovereignty.

Today, the five principles are more topical than ever, considering the tumultuous predicament the world is going through. They are also the Asian value system's important contribution to the ongoing construction of a global community with a shared future for mankind.

For the Global South, in particular, the five principles continue to be the foundation for building a fairer and more equitable international governance system. Moreover, they should

now be seen within the context of China's three global initiatives, launched with the aim of promoting human progress: the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative.

I regard China's three global initiatives as a direct follow-up to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, for example, by promoting inclusiveness and mutual benefit, instead of zero-sum games, and respect for the diversity of civilizations, which includes respect for different value systems.

All these aims are, within the ambit of the five principles, the Global South's response to some Western countries' attempt to impose their supposedly "universally valid" socio-political values on countries that have, for centuries or even millennia, developed their own value systems, which should always be interpreted in relation to their respective national, regional, social, cultural and religious context — for instance, the West's emphasis on individualism versus, generally speaking, the Global South's stress on the collective

whole. That's why there are, obviously, Asian values, Western values, African values, Latin American values.

On the global security front, one of the most important requirements is to always take into consideration the legitimate security interests of every country. We know what happens if this vital requisite is willfully or carelessly ignored: peaceful coexistence will be at stake.

The armed conflicts currently afflicting Eastern Europe and the Middle East are painful examples of the breakdown of peaceful coexistence caused by perilously ignoring national security interests and neglecting historical grievances.

China has been working hard on solving both disputes through political means and bringing the conflicting parties to the negotiating table such as by hosting various Palestinian factions in Beijing and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba in Guangzhou earlier this month. Both meetings involved Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, one of the world's most seasoned diplomats.

I also believe that the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the establishment

of BRICS are both direct consequences of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence for tackling global issues.

The five principles "have no expiry date" — they are here to continue the ongoing development efforts by the Global South, home to about three-quarters of our battered planet's population.

One can only hope that the G7 club — supposedly the seven "richest countries" — will finally come around and respect the politico-economic interests of the Global South given the emerging economies including China, India and Indonesia's growing influence.

Obviously, for peaceful coexistence to be maintained, economic development and security concerns need to strike the right balance. Lack of equitable development imperils both national and international security.

That's why the time-honoured concept of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence is a work in progress that needs to be cherished and nourished by the international community for the benefit of all — but always by pursuing a realistic and pragmatic approach.

No Olympic truce

A week ago, the Paris Olympics opened to subversion and showers. While 850,000 people were affected by the disruption of French trains travelling from north, east, and west into the capita, rain fell on the specular opening ceremonies, polluting the Seine and preventing swimmers from training in the river.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) rejected Palestine's call for the exclusion of Israel over the Gaza war and brutal West Bank crack down and anti-war, anti-Israel protests erupted in the streets of Paris. Ignoring the ancient practice of an Olympic Truce, Israel has continued its offensives in Gaza and the West Bank, compelling the French police to mount 24-hour protection for Israel's team. Undaunted, the games have gone on.

Trouble is nothing new. Since the first modern era Games in 1896, the Olympics have survived wars, attacks, political contestation, doping, and covid.

The original Olympic Games, which date to 700 BC, were held every four years in honour of the chief god Zeus at the sanctuary of Olympia in the Peloponnese. Competitors came from Greek city states observing an Olympic truce which enabled athletes and visitors to travel safely to Olympia. The Games continued when Greece fell under Roman rule in the 2nd century BC and ended in 393 AD. The all-male events included foot, horse and chariot races, boxing, discus throwing, and wrestling. Although based on religion, the Games provided ambitious Greek rulers with occasions to cement military and political alliances. France played a key role in the revival of the games. French historian and teacher Pierre de Coubertin founded the IOC in 1894 with the aim of promoting global understanding through sports. The first

Olympiad was held in Athens in 1896 in the world's largest stadium. There were just 245 competitors, nearly all Greeks, but there were sportsmen from 14 other countries, including the US. More than 100,000 attended the opening.

The second Games took place in Paris in 1900 and attracted 1,000 athletes, including 20 women. The Games merged with the Paris World's Fair and went on for five months. A dis-

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tion was made between amateur and professional competitors.

The venue of the third Olympics was set for Chicago, Illinois, but organisers of a rival exhibition in St. Louis, Missouri, threatened to stage its own sporting events to compete with the Olympics. De Coubertin capitulated to St. Louis. While athletes from a dozen countries attended these Games, the first held outside Europe, only about 79 from outside North America took part due to St. Louis location and tensions arising from the Russo-Japanese war. France did not send a competitor but a French athlete resident in the US took part, claiming to represent France.

The 1908 Games were in London and the 1912 Games in Stockholm, and the 1916 Olympics were in

Michael Jansen

Berlin in the run-up to World War I. The well attended 1920 Games were in war-wounded Antwerp in Belgium and the historic 1924 Games in Paris. They inspired the 1981 film "Chariots of Fire" depicting the gold medal foot races of Britons Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddel. The 1928 Games were held in Amsterdam and the 1932 Games in Los Angeles during the Great Depression.

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Adolf Hitler's Nazi party, which had risen to power in Germany in 1933, filmed the 1936 Games to promote White racial superiority and antisemitism. Nevertheless, Hitler congratulated US sprinter and long jumper Jesse Owens – the Black grandson of a slave – after he won four gold medals, the most of any athlete. Owens later complained that US President Franklin Roosevelt "snubbed" him and "didn't even send [him] a telegram" of congratulations.

Suspended for 12 years during World II, the Games did not resume until 1948 in London which was struggling to recover from German blitz bombing. Post-war Olympics were skewed by the Cold War and neo-colonialism and subjected to boycotts, ban-

ning, bullets and bombs. France, Britain, Greece, Switzerland and Australia have been the only countries to be represented at all the Games since their resumption in 1896.

The 1956 Melbourne Games, the first to be staged in southern hemisphere, were boycotted by Egypt, Iraq, Cambodia, and Lebanon after Egypt was invaded by Israel, France, and Britain. The Netherlands, Spain, Liechtenstein, and

Lufthansa airliner flying from Beirut via Damascus and Damascus to Frankfurt. In 1976, 29 countries, mostly African, boycotted the Montreal Games when the IOC refused to exclude New Zealand after its rugby team toured South Africa, violating UN calls for sports ban due to apartheid.

In 1980, the Moscow Olympics – the first in a communist country – were boycotted by 66 countries led by the US following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Fourteen Soviet bloc states followed up by staying away from the 1984 games in Los Angeles.

A pipe bomb killed two and injured 111 in 1996 at the Atlanta Olympics which was criticised for excessive commercialisation. So far, during this century the Games have not involved major boycotts or attracted serious violence despite West-East tensions, wars in Palestine, Ukraine, conflicts in Africa, uprisings in this region, and a gradual shift to the right in some Western countries.

The 2000, Millennium Games, in Sydney, Australia, were attended by 199 countries, with Afghanistan excluded for the Taliban's treatment of women. In 2004 the Games returned to Athens while the 2008 Olympics were held in Beijing, with China becoming the second communist country to stage the Games. In 2012, the Games were in London and in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics were postponed until 2021 by the covid pandemic.

While the Taliban has been banned from this year's Olympics over its treatment of women, Afghanistan has been represented by the pre-Taliban Islamic Republic. Armed with their usual double standards, the West has excluded Russia and Belarus over the Ukraine war but not Israel for the far more deadly and devastating Gaza onslaught.

Low emission zones could tackle urban pollution woes

GRAPPLING with severe air pollution issues, New Delhi has environmental charges in place for heavy vehicles entering the city. There are also tourist-focused Low Emissions Zones (LEZs) around major monuments like the Taj Mahal and the Statue of Unity. Recently, to combat air pollution and set a benchmark for urban areas across India, it was announced that three cities in Maharashtra will establish LEZs by 2026, marking a first for the country, according to a report in the Hindustan Times.

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Hindustan Times.

The Centre for Science and Environment in India defines LEZs as areas demarcated within cities or regions where access is restricted either through physical restrictions or through differential pricing based on emission levels of vehicles. The Centre says in a report that Globally, area based approach to regulating mobility and vehicle movement in targeted zones in cities is gaining credence and popularity to combat air pollution and decarbonize transport climate change. These initiatives are designed to meet a broad set of objectives: — mitigate emissions and carbon intensity of transport; accelerate carbon neutral mobility, clean vehicles and zero emission battery operated electric vehicles (ZEV); combat traffic congestion; promote accessibility, safe movement of all and improve living standards and equity. All these together are expected to reduce healthcare costs and increase productivity.

A recent guideline published by the Indian Roads Congress, a professional body of highway engineers

Meena Janardhan

in India, and highlighted by the International Council on Clean Transportation in a recent workshop held in India, recommended that road-owning agencies implement a few interventions to improve the safety of children in "school zones." It defines a "school zone" as an area around a school where the movement of a higher number of children is expected, especially during school opening and closing times. While the purpose of this guideline is to improve the road safety of children, it establishes a premise that can help designate school zones as LEZs. A low-emission school zone would restrict the operation of highly polluting internal combustion engine vehicles around schools, especially during school hours. For maximum effectiveness, such restrictions must be applied to both commercial and private vehicles.

In an earlier World Resources Institute (WRI) India blog, it had been pointed out that as Delhi grapples with the annual phenomenon of deteriorating air quality at the onset

of winter, the imposition of a series of measures was set in motion. These included the implementation of Green Zones or LEZs, with restrictions on internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, which the WRI blog states, is an effective way to improve the air quality in Indian cities. Electric vehicle (EV) policies of states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have proposed the implementation of such zones.

The WRI blog adds that such zones are city areas that either restrict or ban the movement of ICE vehicles. The primary goal of LEZs is to reduce the pollution caused by tailpipe emissions. This can be done by incentivizing EV usage and disincentivizing the movement of polluting diesel/petrol vehicles through measures such as entry restrictions and emission fines. LEZs also need to be supported with improvements in public transit systems and dedicated infrastructure for non-motorized transport that encourages walking and cycling. Well-planned LEZs offer multiple benefits, including improved

A shot across the enemy's bows in a culture war

THE brouhaha over the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Paris has struck many Francophiles as a case of much ado about nothing, considering French culture's long history of quirky irreverence and gaudy melodrama. Defenders of a particularly controversial tableau have offered all kinds of explanations, with the Paris Olympics 2024 spokesperson denying any intention to show disrespect to any religious group and apologizing for any offense taken.

But people who have closely followed developments in Western culture, academia, society and politics over the past decade have had no difficulty reading (the subliminal message) between the lines or, in this particular event, between the segments. Unsurprisingly, they are not convinced that the opening ceremony was in the tradition of, say, the Grand Guignol, a Parisian theater that, between 1897 and

1962, staged plays that specialized in violence and horror.

In the same way, Western conservatives seem to think there was much more to the ceremony than just one controversial scene that appeared to evoke Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper." Their outrage was perhaps best encapsulated by the Italian bishops' conference, which said that what should have been a celebration of French culture took an "unexpectedly negative turn, becoming a parade of banal errors, accompanied by trite and predictable ideologies."

Such misgivings were scarcely put to rest by comments from supporters of the tableau, who praised what they called its message of inclusivity and tolerance, terms synonymous with the "woke" movement, the mobilization of "politically progressive" ideas about gender, race and immigration that went mainstream after a police officer killed an African American teenager,

Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014.

Thomas Jolly, the artistic director of the Olympic opening ceremony, was even more direct — or disingenuous (depending on one's point of view) — when he put it this way: "We wanted to talk about diversity. Diversity means being together. We wanted to include everyone, as simple as that."

For all we know, Jolly merely implemented at the opening ceremony the vision that powerful European cultural and academic institutions have laid out with their adoption of policies and courses that they say promote diversity, equity and inclusion and what the French call "le wokisme."

As recently as June, Politico's Nicholas Vinocur reported that "in its fight against 'le wokisme,' France's populist right and its intellectual allies are deploying their own, rival ideas stemming from the rather paranoid view that

Western civilization is under siege by migrants and their left-wing allies."

His article also noted that, ahead of France's national election, the National Rally party hosted a workshop that featured "a series of right-wing intellectuals who railed against what they called an 'imported neurosis' that 'aims to subvert our idea of gender' and 'make us feel guilty' about France's history as a colonial power."

Was the Olympics opening ceremony, then, a coded message from a section of the French left to supporters of the National Rally, reminding them of who is in control after all? Whatever the truth, there is no denying the strong influence of "woke" ideology, which purports to champion social justice, inclusivity and the rectification of historical injustices, in both academic and popular culture in France and much of Europe.

In popular culture, the ideology, defined by some

critics as cultural Marxism, has had a palpable impact. European media, including film, television and literature, increasingly reflect themes of social justice and representation. There is a growing presence of what proponents of the phenomenon call diverse characters and narratives that they say challenge traditional stereotypes and offer more inclusive portrayals.

In academia, "woke" ideology has led to major curricular and institutional changes. Like their American counterparts, many elite European universities have steadily adopted policies and courses ostensibly aimed at promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, reflecting a continuation in some ways of the power struggle between leftist and conservative values during the Cold War.

For instance, there has been a marked increase in the incorporation of post-colonial studies, gender studies and critical race theory into European university curricula. These fields examine power relationships and challenge what left-wing academics call traditional Eurocentric and patriarchal narratives. Furthermore, universities have implemented affirmative action policies that they say ensure a more diverse student body and faculty and reflect a broader commitment to inclusivity.

In Britain, the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge have been in a race of sorts to incorporate elements of this novel ideology into their academic and institutional framework. They have introduced courses on colonial history, gender studies and critical race theory as part of a policy of making their curricular offerings, policies and campus culture more "progressive."

The Netherlands' University of Amsterdam, Germany's Humboldt University and Austria's Central European University have been simi-

lary vigorous in adding politically progressive principles into their academic offerings and campus culture, with a strong focus on gender and sexuality studies, critical race theory and social justice.

In France, Sciences Po, a leading social sciences university, has altered its academic programs and institutional policies so that it can offer courses on gender studies, postcolonial studies and social justice. The movers and shakers of the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure are believed to favor the study of the Global South, which is regarded by French critics of the trend as a concept "imported from America."

As Vinocur noted in his report, many French scholars say that "le wokisme" is not really American, since its origins can be traced, in part, to French intellectuals such as Jacques Derrida, Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault, who analyzed and "deconstructed" the language and symbolism of power in 1960s Paris, fuel-

ing anti-Vietnam War protests in campuses from Berkeley in California to Calcutta (now Kolkata) in India. Geographically speaking, the wheel of political fashion has taken more than half a century to turn full circle.

In the age of social media, however, all politics is global. Reacting to last week's Paris Olympics opening ceremony, Viktor Orban, Hungary's conservative prime minister, said it showed "there is no morality" in the West. "Westerners ... deny that there is a common culture and a public morality based on it," he said. An equally angry Matteo Salvini, the leader of a party in Giorgia Meloni's Italian coalition government, described the contentious segment as "squalid."

With hindsight, if the ceremony's organizers intended to use the Olympic platform to fire a shot in the ongoing culture wars so loud as to be heard round the world, they undoubtedly achieved their objective.

Germany acts on Iranian influence but is it enough?

I could not help but notice that the step taken last week by Germany to ban the Islamic Center Hamburg, an association that had been under investigation for several months, over its links to Iran's supreme leader and militant groups across the Middle East such as Hezbollah, received relatively limited coverage in the Western press.

Maybe that important bit of news got buried by Kamala Harris' likely nomination for the US presidency or by the spectacular opening of the Olympic Games in Paris. Only some Middle Eastern outlets and Israeli media gave the prominence it deserved, since Iran has been accused of meddling in the affairs of various countries in the region for decades. Gradually, most Western powers now seem to be waking up to Iran's direct or indirect criminal activities, which have been creeping into their cities.

Many in the Arab and Islamic worlds have long been warning about the emergence of new forms of extremism, this time born and bred in European nations, especially among migrant groups. This has resulted in lone wolf or organized militants incubating among others involved with similar organizations spread across the length and breadth of most European countries.

Equally obvious for decades has been the role and great influence such organizations have had in acting as a rallying forum, as well as being indoctrination hubs, for various residents and new migrant arrivals in Germany and other European countries. They have promoted among minorities a narrative close to that of the Iranian regime's view of the world, sowing the seeds of an Islamist political identity and set of values that promotes resistance, militancy and, in some cases, violence.

These are not only at odds with migrants' new host country's democratic and liberal values, but also in many cases go as far as propagating a sense of undermining, opposing and even calling for the overthrow of such countries' systems, which ensure freedom of worship, freedom of expression, democracy and liberty for all.

The German government accused the Iran-linked center in Hamburg of having a political agenda, not a purely religious one, and it was found to be an "Islamist extremist organization pursuing anti-constitutional objectives." The German Interior Ministry also said that its investigations revealed that the center is a "direct representative of Iran's supreme leader" and spreads the Tehran regime's ideology "in an aggressive and militant manner." It seeks to "establish authoritarian, theocratic rule" in place of a democracy, the ministry said, accusing the center of backing the "military and political dimension" of organizations like Hezbollah.

Tehran, as expected, reacted with fury, summoning Germany's ambassador to Iran to condemn a "hostile action" it branded as a "clear example of

Mohamed Chebaro

Islamophobia." It claimed that such actions are contrary to all teachings of the "Abrahamic faiths," violate freedom of expression and promote violence and extremism.

If anything, the German action seems to be a measured and reserved one, even quite limited in its scope. The authorities searched only 55 addresses across the country allegedly related to the banned center, seizing a "high number of IT devices" along with cash and documents with links to Hezbollah and Hamas. The ban has also been extended to cover several organizations related to the Hamburg center, including four Shiite mosques.

Germany, like many Western nations, has been exceptionally tolerant and in some cases too lenient vis-a-vis hubs of extremist

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ism sprouting on its soil. Such countries have given persecuted refugees sanctuary, only for these organizations to evolve and become hubs of toxic thought and teachings that spread among exiles and minorities from every part of the world. Some of these people become the foot soldiers for ideologies, organizations, movements and regimes that were the reason many of them fled their home countries in the first place.

One cannot deny that the latest Gaza war has helped expose some facets of these religious centers that were, until recently, classified purely as places of worship, despite all the warnings from Arab and Muslim countries to the contrary. European nations have suddenly discovered that these were always centers propagating anti-Western and, above all, antisemitic beliefs. Founded by Iranian immigrants in 1953, the Islamic Center Hamburg had been under surveillance by German domestic intelligence for some time. In November last year, investigators conducted raids on its premises and other related sites across seven of Germany's 16 states, with "extensive evidence" found that confirmed suspicions and were sufficient to order its closure.

Unlike the US, which proscribed Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard

Corps in 2019, most Western nations, including Germany, have so far refused to ban the group. Instead, they have preferred to proscribe or sanction Hamas and Hezbollah elements, despite the fact that Germany and many other EU nations have been grappling with Iranian threats that have recently galvanized new actors due to the Israel-Hamas war.

According to an investigation by The Wall Street Journal that was published in March, Europe's terror threat no longer emanates just from traditional affiliates and actors on behalf of the extreme right or Daesh, but also from Iran and Iran-linked organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Until recently, those militant organizations had used Europe as a business and fundraising hub and as a safe place for their operatives. However, the ongoing

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ing Gaza war has shown that such groups and Iran have pivoted to plotting assassinations and sabotage in Europe, in addition to organizing protests that help them win new recruits to their cause.

Many residents hailing from the Middle East and Muslim-majority nations in Europe have long been suspicious and surprised about how tolerant the authorities in Western nations have been to the multiplication of mosques that are run by unscrupulous organizations, which are often linked to questionable donor groups.

Few of these organizations have ever hidden their toxic narrative or ideological tenets that sit on the opposite end of the spectrum to the Western values of tolerance, liberty and democracy. Western nations have for many years chosen to tolerate such groups' business, fundraising and shady activities that have often bordered on criminality. No doubt that the closure of this "outpost of the Iranian inhumane regime is a real blow against Islamist extremism," as the regional government of Hamburg claimed. But one fears that this action by Germany is a case of too little, too late, since the influence of such religious centers' teaching has spread and taken root within many communities across Europe.



PESHAWAR: Businessman Forum leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour addressing during a meeting with a high level delegation of Honey Beekeepers Association at Chamber's House.

PSX stays bearish, loses 146 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Thursday, losing 146.68 points, a negative change of 0.19 percent, closing at 77,740.31 points against 77,886.99 points on the last working day.

A total of 278,986,985 shares were traded during the day as compared to 382,597,400 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 13.094 billion against Rs 14.638 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 433 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 172 of them recorded gains and 198 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 63 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 26,705,549

shares at Rs 6.45 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 21,817,890 shares at Rs 1.25 per share and Waves home Applications with 13,525,876 shares at Rs 8.04 per share.

Sapphire Fibres Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 98.14 per share price, closing at Rs 1,598.06, whereas the runner-up was The Premier Sugar Mills with a Rs 46.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 506.00.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs65.50 per share closing at Rs6,900.00 followed by Mehmood Textile Mills Limited with a Rs60.95 decline to close at Rs605.00.

Rupee gains 08 paise against dollar: Pakistani rupee on Thursday appreciated by 08 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs

278.66 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.74.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.3 and Rs 280.5 respectively.

The price of Euro came down by 41 paise to close at Rs 301.02 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.43, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.85, whereas a decrease of Rs1.29 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs356.48 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs357.77.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paise each to close at Rs75.86 and Rs74.27 respectively.

Pak exports to China increase

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 33.67 percent during the twelve months of the fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to China were recorded at US \$2.707 billion during July-June (2023-24) against exports of US \$2.025 billion during July-June (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to China also surged by 12.59 percent from \$136.546 million in June 2023, against the exports of \$153.745 million in June 2024.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to China decreased by 27.61 percent during June 2024 as compared to the exports of \$212.392 million in May 2024, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 11.53 percent in FY 2023-24, from US \$27.875 billion to US \$31.090 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from China into the country during the period under review were recorded at US \$13.506 billion against US \$9.662 billion last year, showing an increase of 39.78 percent in July-June (2023-24).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports for China witnessed an increase of 117.54 percent from US \$623.832 million in June 2023, against the imports of US \$1357.098 million in June 2024.

Pak's liquid foreign reserves position

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at US\$ 14,391.7 million as of 26-July-2024. The break-up of the foreign reserves position is as under:

Foreign reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan: US\$ 9,102.2 million.

Net foreign reserves held by commercial banks: US\$ 5,289.5 million.

Total liquid foreign reserves: US\$ 14,391.7 million.

During the week ended on 26-July-2024, SBP reserves increased by US\$ 75 million to US\$ 9,102.2 million.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior Office bearers of Honey Beekeepers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expressed full trust on Businessman Forum Leadership former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, other leaders and members and announced support in upcoming Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections.

The announcement was made during the association's delegation headed by its founder and president Naeem Qasmi during a meeting held here at chamber house. The meeting was chaired by Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq.

Leader of Businessmen Forum Senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, Vice President SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi, former president FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, former presidents of the chamber Zahidullah Shinwari, Faiz Mohammad Faizi, former SVP Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, executive committee member Affat Ali Khan, Javed Akhtar, Qurat Ul Ain and

Honey Beekeepers Association General Secretary Nouroz Khan, Vice President Mukhtiar Khan, Joint Secretary Nadeem Alam, Deputy Secretaries Akbar Khan, Bashir Bacha, Finance Secretary Dilawar Shah, Patron General Haji Hukam Khan, members Haji Mateenullah, Muhammad Khan, Asadullah, Secretary General of Border Chamber Muqtasad Ahsan, Secretary Sohail Anjum and other officials were present in large numbers were present during the meeting.

The association office bearers expressed full confidence in the leadership of Businessman Forum former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and said BF has always served the business community without any discrimination. They hoped BF will make a clean sweep in the SCCI elections. The Association assured all possible cooperation and support for the success of the businessman forum in the border chamber elections.

Office bearers appreciated SCCI for taking prag-

matic steps for resolution of the problems attached with honey business and improvement and development of this important sector.

Fuad Ishaq while addressing the meeting said the chamber has worked on number of clusters, and four feasibility studies have been released so far, including Mines and Minerals, Marble, Horticulture and Fisheries and among the clusters that are being worked on, in which Honey is at the top, besides Forrest, Gemstone and others.

The SCCI chief said that efforts are being made for the development of the honey sector and the certification of honey and increase in exports.

In this regard, he informed they during meeting with US CG in Peshawar Shante Moore and the US Deputy Head of Mission had requested to them for provision support in the establishment of a modern laboratory for the certification of honey and in this regard, SCCI is ready to provide space so that the modern laboratory can be

set up and exports can be increased by bringing the quality of honey up to international standards.

Fuad Ishaq said that under the leadership of Ilyas Ahmed Bilour of Businessmen's, the forum the selfless service has been continuing for 24 years and he has given full assurance to use all resources to solve the problems of Honey Bee Keepers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The SCCI president said that the chamber's doors are always open to the business community and will remain open. He vowed no stone will be left unturned to solve the problems of the business community.

Ilyas Bilour speaking on this occasion, said that the trust and support from the Honey Beekeepers Association demonstrated today is strong evidence and testimony that the BF is the only representative platform of the business community which has always played an important role in solving their problems and raised voices of them at every forum.

World Hepatitis Day observed at SIUT

F.P. Report

KARACHI: World Hepatitis Day was observed today at SIUT amid growing concern regarding alarmingly high Viral Hepatitis rates in Pakistan.

Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) successfully observed World Hepatitis Day with a comprehensive program aimed at raising awareness about the escalating threat of viral hepatitis in Pakistan. This year's theme, "It's time for action," underscored the urgent need for concerted efforts to eradicate hepatitis C by 2030.

A large turnout of the public gathered at SIUT to avail of free hepatitis screening and treatment facilities. The day-long event

emphasized the importance of early detection, vaccination, and adopting preventive measures.

To prevent the spread of hepatitis, they strongly emphasized practicing good hygiene, including boiling water for consumption, washing hands, especially after using the restroom, changing diapers, and avoiding sharing personal items. The importance of using new syringes at clinics, fresh razor blades at barber shops, and sterilized equipment for dental, surgical, and cosmetic procedures was highlighted. Hospitals were urged to exclusively use blood products screened and issued by authorized blood banks registered under the Safe Blood Transfusion program.

The SIUT provides free treatment with dignity, and compassion to all patients, irrespective of caste, color, creed, or religious beliefs. A pioneer in addressing Pakistan's critical organ shortage crisis, SIUT highlights the urgent need for liver transplants to save lives as end-stage liver disease patients depend on organ donors for survival. At SIUT, there is a dedicated OPD, every Thursday, from 2 p.m. onwards for such patients who need liver transplants.

The experts who spoke on the occasion included Dr. Abbas Ali Tasnim, Dr. Mudassir Laeeq, Dr. Zain Majid, Dr. Nadir Sattar, Dr. Nida Rasool Maher, and Dietician Ms. Kehkashan Zehra.

IMARAT celebrates launch of MEGA DOWNTOWN EVENTS

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest real estate and technology company IMARAT Group has successfully kicked off its MEGA DOWNTOWN EVENTS series at its flagship project, IMARAT Downtown. The inaugural event drew the attention of a large crowd of clients and marked the grand opening of the Mall of IMARAT head office.

Chairman IMARAT Group Shafiq Akbar speaking to the event highlighted the strategic importance of IMARAT Downtown, poised to be Pakistan's most prestigious square kilometre, and its potential for growth and development. The chairman concluded by emphasizing IMARAT Group's commitment to its clients: "IMARAT Group has always prioritized our clients' best interests, and we take pride in delivering what we promise, or even better. Over the last 8 years, the IMARAT Group has



served Pakistan with a vision of growth and prosperity, and we will continue to deliver on this promise."

Group Director Farhan Javed emphasized the importance of sustainable development, introducing a comprehensive proptech ecosystem focusing on urban planning and intelligent client management.

He said that unplanned development can have detrimental effects on both the planet and its people,

resulting in wasted resources and complex, expensive urban projects," Javed explained. "At IMARAT Group, we are committed to developing a holistic model that addresses every step in the lifecycle of a project.

The event culminated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony, inaugurating the Mall of IMARAT Head Office. Clients expressed satisfaction and excitement for future events, ensuring the suc-

cess of upcoming MEGA DOWNTOWN EVENTS.

IMARAT Downtown is a visionary development crafted by world-leading architects and consultants designed to revolutionize urban living in Pakistan. The project encompasses exceptional projects, including the largest mall in Pakistan, a modern-day Grand Bazaar, a state-of-the-art healthcare facility, premium residences, and a software technology park.

CPI inflation decelerates further to 11.1 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation decelerated to 11.1% during the month of July 2024 as compared to 12.6% recorded during June 2024, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Thursday.

According to PBS data, the CPI based inflation during the same month of last year (July 2023) was recorded at 28.3%. On month-on-month basis, it increased to 2.1% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.5% in the previous month and an increase of 3.5% in July 2023.

According to data, CPI inflation Urban, increased to 13.2% on year-on-year basis in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 14.9% in the previous month and 26.3% in July 2023. On month-on-month basis, it increased to 2.0% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.6% in the previous month and an increase of 3.6% in July 2023. CPI inflation Rural, increased to 8.1% on year-on-year basis in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 9.3% in the previous month and 31.3% in July 2023. On month-on-month basis, it increased to 2.2% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.3% in the previous month and an increase of 3.3% in July 2023.

The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) inflation on YoY increased to 15.7% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 16.6% a month earlier and 29.3% in

July 2023. On MoM basis, it increased by 2.0% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.3% a month earlier and an increase of 2.8% in July 2023.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on YoY basis increased to 10.4% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 10.6% a month earlier and an increase of 23.1% in July 2023. On MoM basis, it increased by 2.3% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.4% in the previous month and an increase of 2.5% in corresponding month of last year

i.e. July 2023.

The urban core inflation, measured by non-food non-energy, increased to 16.9% on (YoY) basis in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 17.0% in the previous month and 24.6% in July 2023. On (MoM) basis, it increased by 1.1% in July 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.9% in previous month and an increase of 1.2% in corresponding month of last year i.e. July 2023.

Gold rates up by Rs1,400

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,400 and was sold at Rs. 254,900 on Thursday against its sale at Rs. 253,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 1,201 to Rs. 218,536 from Rs. 217,335 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 200,324 from Rs. 199,224, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs2,900 and Rs.2,486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$17 to \$2,432, the Association reported.

F.P. Report

KARACHI. A workshop was organized under heading of "Bridging the collaboration gap between Academia and PDMA/DDMA Sindh through curriculum development and advancing research on disaster preparedness/DRR/Climate Change adaptation" by the Fast Rural Development Program (FRDP) in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and consortium partner CESVI, funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) under the technical support of the PDMA Sindh and the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

In opening of the event Mr. Mubashir Hassan, Expert for DP - DRR WHH Pakistan emphasized the critical need for collaboration between academia, disaster management authorities, and the NGOs.

He stated that while significant efforts are underway, a distinct gap remains, which WHH is striving to bridge with the support of DG ECHO and PDMA. In this effort, a disaster management course has been developed for university-level education, for course design technical support from DevRes consultants is available.

The proposed course was shared with participants from various universities of Sindh, including Sindh Madarsatul Islam,

University of Peshawar, Federal Urdu University, NED University, University of Sufism, University of Karachi, Center for Excellence in Women Studies, Dawood University, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University, Sir Syed University, Indus University, LUMHS, Renowned experts provided their input to improve the course outlines and pledged their cooperation in offering the course as an elective subject in ongoing degree programs.

Chief guest Imdad Hussain Siddiqui, Director of Operations at PDMA Sindh, highlighted the importance of Disaster Risk Management education at all levels and offered his support for its smooth imple-

mentation through collaboration with the HEC, academia, and the NGOs. Siddiqui further shared that He will personally follow up with the vice chancellors of respective universities and HEC about the progress after this initiative.

At the end He also discussed the challenges faced during the 2022 disaster and shared his experiences along with PDMA's contributions to successfully managing past events by presenting Atlas of hazard profiling of Sindh province.

Ms. Fozia Rajput, Executive Director of FRDP, expressed her appreciation and gratitude to PDMA for their crucial role in guiding all humanitarian partners toward building a more

resilient society. Hidayatullah Kasi, Deputy Director, Curriculum development HEC - Islamabad, presented the procedure and guidelines about the addition of degree and elective courses of Disaster management in the universities. He also shared the roles and responsibilities of board of studies and HEC.

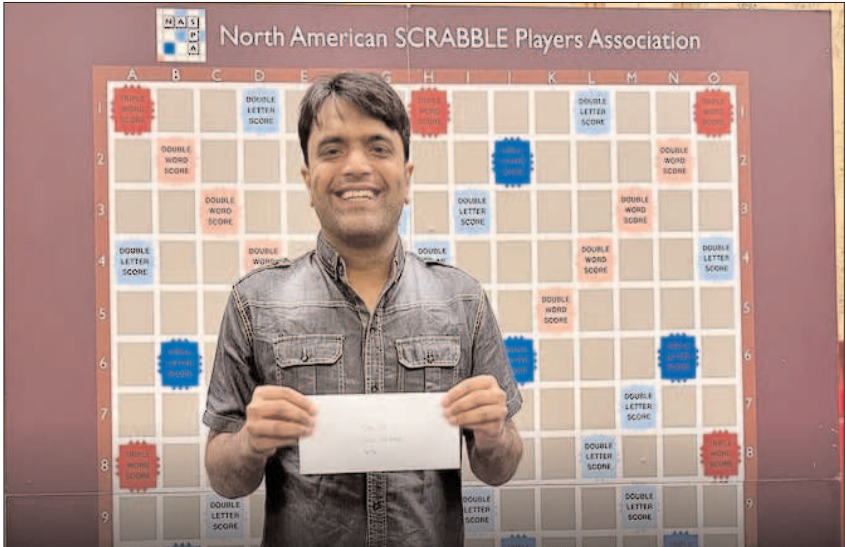
Renowned professors and vice chancellors shown a great interest to work together to improve coordination by engaging stakeholders, including PDMA/DDMA/PM, legislature, media, academia, and the telecom sector. The aim is to enhance hazard risk knowledge, bridge the gap between research and practice, and foster discus-

sions on linking disaster risk financing to effective response mechanisms.

Photos. workshop was organized under heading of "Bridging the collaboration gap between Academia and PDMA/DDMA Sindh through curriculum development and advancing research on disaster preparedness/DRR/Climate Change adaptation" by the Fast Rural Development Program (FRDP) in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and consortium partner CESVI, funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) under the technical support of the PDMA Sindh and the Pakistan Meteorological Department.



Waseem grabs 3rd position in Word Cup Scrabble C'ship



ISLAMABAD (APP): Waseem Khatri of Pakistan put up another scintillating performance to bag the 3rd position at the Word Cup Scrabble Championship played at

Albuquerque, New Mexico in USA. According to Pakistan Scrabble Association (PSA) Director Tariq Pervaz, playing in the top division Waseem was pit-

ted against several world champions but surprised everyone with his great strategy and word knowledge. Waseem had a rough start in the four-day tournament after losing a num-

ber of games in the first two days but recovered in time and won 10 of his last 11 games to clinch the 3rd position. Eta Karo of Nigeria won the championship winning 23 of his 31 games while the 2015 World Champion Wellington Jighere was 2nd with a 20-10 record, he said. Waseem won 19 of his games in an extremely tough field. He said two-time World Championship finalist Jesse Day of USA was 3rd while former World Champion Joel Wapnick of Canada finished 3rd. Waseem was also a finalist in the North American Championship last week and is the only player to have finished in the top three in both championships played in USA this month, he said.



PARIS: Ecuador's Brian Daniel Pintado (#29) in the men's 20km race walk of the athletics event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Trocadero in Paris on Thursday.

GB men seal hockey spot in quarter-final with comeback win

PARIS (BBC): Great Britain's men came from behind for the third match in a row to beat France and seal a quarter-final place at Yves-du-Manoir Stadium. GB had the better of the early stages but, with 46 seconds remaining in the second quarter, France's Timothee Clement was in the right place to bundle past keeper Ollie Payne.

However, Zach Wallace's powerful conversion from a penalty stroke brought GB level with the host nation to quieten the partisan crowd. James Albery then picked a fine moment to register his first senior goal for GB, slapping the ball goalwards and seeing it diverted beyond the French keeper. The win moved Britain up to second in the group, with the top four teams advancing to the knockout stages. Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain have all secured their last-

eight spots but, with two games remaining, GB's aim now is to top the group. "France fought for every inch but I'm very proud of our guys, the way we've fought back consistently over the last three games," said captain David Ames. "We have a never-say-die attitude, this team wants to fight for each other and we're doing whatever it takes to win. "Quarter-finals, yes, it's a nice one - but ulti-

mately this team wants to stand on the podium." Britain's men have not won a hockey medal since their gold at Seoul in 1988. They reached the quarter-final stage in Tokyo three years ago, losing 3-1 to India. GB face medal contenders Germany on Friday at 19:15 BST (20:15 local time). Britain's women, who picked up their first win on Wednesday, face the United States at 16:00 BST on Thursday.

Boxing-Controversy over Algerian Khelif takes focus

PARIS (Reuters): The storm brewing over the participation of Algeria boxer Imane Khelif at the Paris Olympics overshadowed the sixth day of the women's competition on Thursday when defending welterweight champion Busenaz Surmeneli of Turkey got off to a winning start. Khelif, who has been in the spotlight for failing a gender eligibility test at a tournament last year, progressed to the welterweight quarter-finals after Italian opponent Angela Carini

abandoned the bout after 46 seconds. Carini later explained that she had decided not to fight after feeling intense pain in her nose. Khelif will next face either Hungarian Luca Anna Hamori or Australia's Marissa Williamson in the quarter-finals on Saturday. Surmeneli, who clinched Turkey's first ever boxing gold in Tokyo, is one fight away from ensuring another medal after her 4-1 win over Poland's Aneta Rygielska. The European Games

and twice world champion had a poor second round, but clinched the win after finishing ahead on every judge's scorecard in the third round. In Thursday's opening bout, Asian Games and world champion Wu Yu of China was a class above her Indian opponent Nikhat Zareen, landing a number of devastating blows to score a unanimous win in the flyweight bout. "This is my first Olympics. I want to enjoy it. This is my biggest stage," Wu said.

"I want to go all the way. This is the first time I've met so many people. I've been to the World Championships before. There were a lot of spectators, but not as many as this. I was very excited." Wu's compatriot Chang Yuan beat Bulgarian Stanimira Petrova in a bantamweight quarter-final, while in the men's lightweight category, Wyatt Sanford ensured Canada's first boxing medal since 1996 with a 4-1 win over Ruslan Abdullaev of Uzbekistan.

Saudi 2034 plans include stadium 350m above ground



RIYADH (BBC): Saudi Arabia has submitted plans to build 11 stadiums - including one set 350 metres above ground level

- as part of the country's bid to host the 2034 World Cup. The proposed stadium in Neom, an as-yet-unbuilt

The arena, which is part of the country's 'The Line' project to diversify the kingdom's economy away from oil, is set to host a quarter-final fixture. Saudi Arabia's bid is uncontested and the country had until October's deadline to submit its plans. Of the 11 new stadiums, eight will be in the capital Riyadh - including the 92,760 King Salman International Stadium, which will host the opening game and the final. The cities of Jeddah, Al Khobar and Abha will also host matches. The 2034 World Cup will be the first time the expanded tournament is held in just one country as a 48-team event. The hosts are set to be confirmed by the Fifa congress on 11 December.

Pakistan down Chinese Taipei in Asian Volleyball Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan U18 Volleyball Team continued its impressive journey in the 15th Asian Men's U18 Volleyball Championship, securing a victory against Chinese Taipei with a scoreline of 3-1 at Bahrain. The match, showcased an outstanding performance by the Pakistani players, who demonstrated skill and resilience on the court.

- Advertisement - In the First Set, Pakistan beat Chinese Taipei by 25-20 while Chinese Taipei defeated Pakistan in the Second Set by 26-24. In the Third and Fourth set Pakistan downed Chinese Taipei by 25-18 and 25-23, respectively. The key performances Muhtat Ali Shah, Abubaker, Muhammad Yahya, and Muhammad Anas were instrumental in

clinching this victory. Their exceptional play, coordination, and determination were evident throughout the match, helping Pakistan secure an important win in this prestigious tournament. Head Coach Saeed Ahmad Khan Sadi expressed his satisfaction with the team's performance, stating, "The boys showed great character and composure, especially

after losing the second set. Their ability to bounce back and execute our game plan was commendable." With this victory, Pakistan maintains a strong position in the championship. The team will face Japan in their next match on August 2. This upcoming match promises to be another exciting encounter as Pakistan aims to continue its winning streak.

‘Key must approach McCullum about England white-ball job’

LONDON (BBC): England managing director Rob Key must speak to Brendon McCullum about becoming the country's new limited-overs head coach, says former captain Eoin Morgan. Matthew Mott stepped down from the white-ball role on Tuesday after England failed to defend either of the limited-overs World Cups during his tenure. His assistant Marcus Trescothick has been put in temporary charge for the series against Australia in September as Key begins the search for a successor. Morgan, who skipped England to glory at the 2019 World Cup, said on Sky Sports that Test coach McCullum "is one of the best coaches in the world" and should be sounded out about combining the two roles. "Rob Key should have that conversation, because we've seen the dramatic turnaround in the Test team and the foil he has made with Ben Stokes," Morgan said. "I'm not sure he [McCullum] has given it a lot of thought yet [but] he should. "He is a very versatile, more than capable coach, who is highly regarded and ultimately made the England Test team a better side - which is what you want from your head coach." McCullum was asked after last month's Test series victory over the West Indies if he could combine his current role with the white-ball job, but did not answer. Key split England's head coach position into separate Test and white-ball posts after the last man to combine the roles, Chris Silverwood, left in 2022.

MLB roundup: O's get grand slam from Jackson Holliday, beat Jays

NEW YORK (Reuters): Top prospect Jackson Holliday hit a fifth-inning grand slam for his first career home run in his return to the major leagues as the Baltimore Orioles defeated the visiting Toronto Blue Jays 10-4 on Wednesday afternoon. Holliday, who had only two hits across 34 at-bats during a spring promotion, returned from Triple-A Norfolk. He was 0-for-2 on Wednesday before extending Baltimore's 4-3 lead with the long ball to right off reliever Yerry Rodriguez. It was Holliday's only hit of the game. Colton Cowser also homered for the Orioles, who lost All-Star third baseman Jordan Westburg to a fractured right hand after he was hit by a Rodriguez fastball in the fifth inning. Grayson Rodriguez (13-4) allowed four runs (three earned) and tallied six strikeouts over six innings as Baltimore won for the fourth time in five games. Paolo Espino (0-1), in his third outing of the season, took the loss by giving up four runs in four innings for Toronto, which has lost three of its past four. Red Sox 3, Mariners 2 (10 innings) Rafael Devers led off the bottom of the 10th inning with a double that scored Tyler O'Neill and handed Boston a win over visiting Seattle. Jhonathan Diaz (0-1) took the loss. Devers was the only

batter he faced. Zack Kelly (4-1) held the Mariners scoreless in the top half of the 10th to earn the win. Josh Rojas hit a solo home run -- his sixth homer this season -- for Seattle. Rojas and Justin Turner each collected two hits for the Mariners. Cardinals 10, Rangers 1 Tommy Pham, who spent parts of five seasons with St. Louis to start his career, continued his happy homecoming by driving in two runs and scoring twice in a rout of visiting Texas. Pham hit a grand slam on Tuesday following a trade from the Chicago White Sox and is now 4-for-6 with three runs and six RBIs since his return. Cardinals starting pitcher Michael McGreevy (1-0) won his major league debut while allowing one run on five hits in seven innings. He struck out three and walked one. Rangers starting pitcher Andrew Heaney (4-11) allowed six runs on six hits in 4 1/3 innings. He struck out two and walked one. Marlins 6, Rays 2 Jake Burger blasted a two-run homer during a three-run third inning as Miami earned a split of a two-game series with a win over Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Fla. The Marlins rocked red-hot right-hander Taj Bradley (6-5) for four runs on four hits in his five-frame stint. Bradley extended his major-league-best

scoreless innings streak to 24 after a clean first before running into trouble. Miami's Xavier Edwards produced three RBIs and Jonah Bride was 2-for-4 with a double and a solo homer. Jonny DeLuca notched two triples and an RBI and Christopher Morel homered in his second straight game with the Rays. Yankees 6, Phillies 5 DJ LeMahieu hit a grand slam and drove in a career-high six runs to help New York complete a three-game sweep of host Philadelphia. Giancarlo Stanton had two hits and scored a run for the Yankees, who have won five in a row overall. New York starter Nestor Cortes (5-9) allowed three runs and three hits in 5 1/3 innings. The left-hander struck out six and walked two for his first win in his past seven starts. Weston Wilson homered, Alec Bohm doubled, tripled and scored twice and Nick Castellanos had two hits and three RBIs for the Phillies, who have lost 11 of their past 15 games. Twins 8, Mets 3 Pablo Lopez tossed six strong innings and Minnesota salvaged the finale of a three-game interleague series with a victory over host New York. Matt Wallner went 2-for-5 with a two-run homer for the Twins, who lost a series for just the sixth time in 20 tries dating back to May 20. Mark Vientos

hit a two-run homer and Francisco Alvarez had an RBI for the Mets, who finished July at 17-10, the second-best record in the National League. Lopez (10-7) gave up two runs on three hits and three walks while striking out seven. He retired 14 of the final 17 batters he faced, a span in which Lopez did not allow a runner past first base. Royals 10, White Sox 3 Freddy Fermin smacked a two-run home run among his four hits and Salvador Perez had three hits and two RBIs as visiting Kansas City routed Chicago to cap a three-game series sweep. Brady Singer (8-6) pitched seven strong innings to earn the win for the Royals. He allowed three runs and six hits. Chicago stumbled to its franchise-worst 17th consecutive defeat while suffering a sweep for the 17th time this season. Braves 6, Brewers 2 Austin Riley grounded a go-ahead two-run single into left field in the top of the seventh inning to lift visiting Atlanta over Milwaukee in the rubber match of a three-game series. Matt Olson and Travis d'Arnaud hit back-to-back solo shots in both the fourth and eighth innings for the Braves, who have won four of their past five games. Pierce Johnson (4-2) pitched 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief to secure the win. Gary Sanchez and Blake

Perkins each had an RBI as the Brewers dropped their second straight series. Sanchez and Jackson Chourio had two hits apiece. Jared Koenig (8-3) took the loss, yielding two unearned runs in two-thirds of an inning. Diamondbacks 5, Nationals 4 Geraldo Perdomo, Corbin Carroll and Jose Herrera had RBI hits during a four-run sixth inning for Arizona, which held off Washington in Phoenix to secure its seventh win in eight games. Jake McCarthy tallied three hits, including a triple, and one run for the Diamondbacks. McCarthy is batting .545 (12-for-22) over his past five games. Ryan Thompson notched his first save this season to preserve the win for Zac Gallen (9-5), who allowed one run over six innings. Arizona improved to 19-8 since June 29, the most wins in the majors during that span. Riley Adams and James Wood had two hits apiece for the Nationals, who lost their fourth straight game. Washington starter MacKenzie Gore (6-9) was charged with three runs over 5 1/3 innings. Giants 1, A's 0 Logan Webb won a 1-hour, 55-minute pitchers' duel over Ross Stripling with his second career shutout as host San Francisco salvaged a split of its two-game series against Oakland. Webb (8-8) allowed just five

hits, none for extra bases. He walked one and struck out six. The game's only run came on Brett Wisely's fifth-inning sacrifice fly. A's starter Ross Stripling (2-10) went 5 2/3 innings, allowing one run on four hits. Cubs 13, Reds 4 Ian Happ went 3-for-4 with a tape-measure home run and Seiya Suzuki added two doubles and three RBIs as visiting Chicago routed Cincinnati to salvage the finale of a three-game series. Cody Bellinger added three hits, two runs and two RBIs for the Cubs, who had nine doubles and a season-high 17 hits. Kyle Hendricks (3-9) allowed three runs on four hits over five innings. The Reds' Santiago Espinal had two hits and extended his hitting streak to 11 games. Nick Lodolo (8-4) was tagged for 11 hits and eight runs in 5 2/3 innings. Astros 5, Pirates 4 Mauricio Dubon clubbed his first career pinch-hit home run and Houston topped visiting Pittsburgh to salvage the finale of a three-game series. Dubon turned on a first-pitch sinker from Pirates reliever Colin Holderman (3-2) with two outs in the sixth inning, capping the Astros' comeback from an early four-run deficit. Houston's Framber Valdez (10-5) allowed four runs on six hits and recorded a season-high-tying 10 strikeouts over

six innings. Joey Bart homered for Pittsburgh. Padres 8, Dodgers 1 Luis Campusano homered while Dylan Cease won his fourth straight start as San Diego earned a two-game sweep of visiting Los Angeles. In his first outing since not hitting the Washington Nationals on July 25, Cease (11-8) allowed one run in 5 2/3 innings. Cease has permitted just one run over his past four starts, covering 27 2/3 innings, and he has fanned 36 during that span. Clayton Kershaw (0-1) lasted only 3 2/3 innings in his second start of the year, giving up six hits and seven runs (three earned). Los Angeles' lead over San Diego in the National League West fell to 4 1/2 games -- the Dodgers' smallest margin since May 4. Rockies 2, Angels 1 Brenton Doyle's eighth-inning home run snapped a tie and lifted Colorado past Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif. Doyle's home off reliever Hans Crouse (4-2) was his 18th of the season and 11th in July, during which the center fielder hit .333 (30-for-90) with 27 RBIs. Rockies starter Kyle Freeland (3-4) gave up one run on six hits in seven innings. Victor Vodnik handled the ninth inning for his fourth save as Colorado snapped a five-game losing streak and evened the three-game series.



In brief

688 open cases received in 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Human Right's Helpline Zainab alert response and recovery agency report has received 688 open cases and close cases of violence which include 3230 and 1704 child cases found during the last six months, revealed the data issued by Ministry here on Thursday. Around 558 cases have been resolved, the duplicate cases were 285 and 683 cases were fake. Around 2,589 cases were received of male child and 1123 cases have been received in which from the age 0-5 years old age 2,820 cases were received, from 5-10 around 261 cases were received and from the age 10-15 year, around 701 cases have been received and from the age 15- 18 - year only 03 cases have been received.

Sugar export recommended

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday chaired a joint meeting of Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) and the Cabinet Committee on Monitoring Sugar Export which recommended exporting 40,000 metric tons of sugar to Tajikistan. Following this recommendation, the ministry would present updates on the sugar industry to the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) for a decision regarding the sugar export, a news release said. The minister also noted that the SAB recommended increasing the export period from 45 to 60 days. During the meeting, representatives of the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association stated that there had been no increase in the ex-mills price of sugar and it had nothing to do with the retail price of the commodity. They urged the government to take steps to maintain the retail price.

Randhawa meet envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa Thursday met with Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, Jemal Beker to discuss a joint initiative of participation in the Margalla Hills plantation drive. The Embassy of Ethiopia in Pakistan will be allocated a section of the Margalla Hills where they will plant trees as part of the campaign. During the meeting, Ambassador Beker briefed Chairman Randhawa on the successful "Green Corridor" project in Addis Ababa, which aims to create green spaces along natural rivers. Inspired by this initiative, the CDA plans to study and implement similar projects around the natural rivers flowing through Islamabad.

412,600 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 412,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 523,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1530.00 feet and was 132.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 318,000 cusecs and 236,900 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1203.05 feet, which was 155.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 39,700 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 286,200, 194,800, 143,000 and 79,100 cusecs respectively.

Rivers likely to run furious from today: FED

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) on Thursday predicted medium to high flood in rivers Jhelum, Kabul, Ravi, Indus and Chenab catchments between Friday to Monday while medium to high flood (flash flooding) is also expected in hill torrents of DG Khan Division (Punjab) and nullahs of Zhob, Sibbi, Nasirabad and Kalat Divisions (Balochistan).

In light of the weather and flood forecast by the FFD, all relevant organizations are advised to strictly remain on alert and vigilant and to take immediate action in response to warnings issued by the authorities to ensure the safety of

communities living in low-lying areas.

According to daily Federal Flood Commission Report, currently, the rivers Indus and Kabul are experiencing low flood in Kalabagh-Chashma reach and Warsak-Nowshera reach respectively owing to increased upstream flow due to persistent higher temperatures at Skardu. Other main rivers of Indus River System (Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej) are running normal. The combined live storage of country's three major reservoirs (Tarbela, Chashma and Mangla) stood at 9.203 million acre feet (MAF).

According to FFD,

trough of Westerly Wave that was over Kashmir yesterday has shifted eastwards and now a fresh trough of strong Westerly Wave is present over Northern Iran and adjoining areas. The low pressure area that was over north-west Uttar Pradesh (India) has moved slightly Westwards and is now over East Haryana, while upper air circulation persists over West Bengal.

A well-marked seasonal low is situated over Northeastern Balochistan. Moderate to strong moist currents from both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are penetrating into the upper parts of Pakistan

upto 5000 feet.

Widespread thunderstorm rain of moderate to heavy intensity with scattered very heavy falls and isolated extremely heavy rainfall is expected over Punjab (Lahore and Gujranwala divisions) including upper catchments of rivers Sutlej, Ravi and Chenab during the next 24 hours. Scattered to widespread thunderstorm rain of moderate to heavy intensity with isolated very heavy falls may occur over Islamabad, Punjab (Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Multan D G Khan, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal and Faisalabad Divisions and KP during the said period.

Anti Rape Crisis Cell launched in Polyclinic Hospital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government Polyclinic Hospital, with technical support from UN Women and funding from the US Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INLE) on Thursday launched the Anti-Rape Crisis Cell (ARCC) as part of the Tahaffuz project at the Hospital here Thursday.

The ARCC represents a unified effort to combat sexual violence and empower survivors in their pursuit of justice and healing. These facilities will serve as essential resource centers, providing a range of services to survivors, including medical and psychological support, legal aid and counseling. The ARCC will operate around the clock with robust security measures in place.

Pakistan's first-ever Anti-Rape Crisis Cell was launched at the Karachi Police Surgeon's Office in

August 2023, with support from the United States (INL) and technical assistance from UN Women. Another Anti-Rape Crisis Cell was established at Nishtar Hospital in Multan in November 2023.

The event began with a warm welcome from Dr. Naushin Farooq, head of Department Gynecology at the Hospital who highlighted the government's dedication to eradicating sexual violence and providing comprehensive support to survivors.

Saman Ahsan, UN Women OIC, addressed the audience, emphasizing the critical importance of Anti-Rape Crisis Cells as foundational centers for consolidated services for rape survivors. She stated, "Anti-Rape Crisis Cells serve as essential pillars in our collective efforts to combat sexual violence and ensure the rights and well-being of rape survivors. By provid-

ing comprehensive services and support, these cells play a pivotal role in empowering survivors to reclaim their lives and seek justice."

The launch of this essential facility in Islamabad represents a significant advancement in the quest for justice and support for survivors of sexual assault. The Deputy Director for INL, Carrie Basnight highlighted the US government's commitment to combating sexual violence and advocating for the protection of survivors' rights in Pakistan. "I commend the Federal Government and UN Women for establishing the Anti-Rape Crisis Cell. Sexual violence is not only a local issue but a global challenge that requires collective action. The international community stands united in efforts to fight sexual violence and ensure survivors have the resources needed for recovery and justice."

Pak, Indonesia share brotherly relations, mutual Sufi traditions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting Ambassador of Indonesia, Rahmat K on Thursday said that Pakistan and Indonesia shared brotherly relations and mutual Sufi traditions based on deep relations between our founding fathers.

The Acting Ambassador was addressing a seminar on "Nation-State, Islam and Democracy: Perspectives from Pakistan and Indonesia", organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, said a press release.

Chairman Nahdatul Ulema, Indonesia, Ulil Abshar Abdalla was chief guest on the occasion.

The speakers emphasized that debates on nation-state and democracy were common in academia and should be discussed. "Islamic teachings prioritize a welfare state over a specific governance form, with the rightly guided Caliphs selected through diverse methods suited to societal needs. The gover-

nance in Islam is based on clear objectives from Islamic Injunctions and laws. Islamic societies do not permit representatives to create policies against Islamic values, though concessions are allowed in exceptional circumstances," the speakers said.

"Pakistan, founded on Islamic principles by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, unites diverse cultures and ethnicities. Jinnah advocated for democracy based on Islamic ideals and principles, emphasizing discussions and consultations in state affairs. Debates on nation-state and democracy also require examining post-colonial perspectives. It is crucial to consider these epistemologies and recognize the rich history of Islam as the common denominator for addressing challenges in Muslim nation-states," they said.

The Ambassador of Indonesia remarked that Pakistan and Indonesia

were two largest Muslim countries having one of largest democracy. There are deep relations between our founding fathers. Indonesia always tries to take part in creating a peaceful world for all. Muslims have a duty to excel, following Quranic rules and regulations, and to educate people on true Islamic practices in daily life, he said.

The Ambassador said there are similarities and differences between the two countries, adding that both countries shared Sufi traditions and have brotherly relations. The teachings and essence of Islam are the same globally, he said.

The speakers observed that Islam was preached in Indonesia and Pakistan through Sufis, and they remained indebted to them for that. Pakistan and Indonesia together represent the largest Muslim population. If there are misconceptions about Islam, the fault lies with us. The

biggest question since September 2001 is whether Islam is compatible with democracy. Indonesia serves as an example that Islam is indeed compatible with democracy. There is also the question of whether nationalism is compatible with Islam. Scholars have put forth arguments proving that Islam is compatible with nationalism. However, the concept of nationalism for Muslims is different and that is well explained by Allama Iqbal, they expressed.

Amongst distinguished speakers were Former Caretaker Federal Law Minister, Ahmer Bilal Soofi, Ambassador (R) Tariq Osman Hyder, Adhoc Member Shariat Appellate Bench, Supreme Court Dr Qibla Ayaz Sahib, Senior Research Associate MUSLIM Institute, Kashif Aslam and Public Relations Associate MUSLIM Institute Asif Tanveer Awan.



ISLAMABAD: President ECO Science Foundation Prof. Seyed Komail Tayebi meeting with Federal Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

CDA Chairman hold meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): A meeting was held between Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa and Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Jakob Linulf on Thursday to discuss various projects aimed at making Islamabad a modern city.

Chairman Randhawa highlighted the launch of new projects and initiatives taken to make CDA a dynamic institution.

He emphasized the efforts to transform Islamabad into a model city, with a focus on environmental sustainability.

Ambassador Linulf commended the environment-friendly initiatives undertaken by Chairman Randhawa, particularly the Climate Change Fund and Margalla Hills Fund.

He expressed his support for these initiatives, stating that they will play a crucial role in protecting Islamabad's natural environment.

The meeting also touched upon solid waste management, with Chairman Randhawa expressing interest in utilizing Denmark's expertise in this area.

Furthermore, Chairman Randhawa extended an invitation to Ambassador Linulf to participate in the Margalla Hills plantation drive, which the ambassador gladly accepted.

Meanwhile, in a significant move to bolster bilateral relations, Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of Iraq, met with Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday. The meeting highlighted the deep-rooted brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iraq.

During the discussion, a proposal to name a street in the diplomatic enclave after Baghdad was explored, symbolizing the strong bond between the two nations.

Furthermore, the Chairman CDA extended an invitation to the Ambassador to participate in the Margalla Hills plantation drive, which was warmly accepted.

The Embassy of Iraq has pledged full support for the Margalla Hills Plantation Campaign, underscoring their commitment to environmental cooperation.

Hunerkada concludes workshop

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hunerkada successfully concluded its six-week Children's Art Workshop on Thursday with an exclusive showcase of the artists' endeavours of the children at the Islamabad Art Gallery in F-9 Park today.

The exhibition featured artwork created by the young participants, highlighting their creativity and progress. The event was graced by Chairman Mr. Jamal Shah and Hunerkada Director, Amna Shah, hosted the showcase.

Over the past six weeks, children aged 5-15 participated in an enriching art workshop led by experienced instructors from Hunerkada.

The workshop provided a comprehensive exploration of various artistic techniques, including drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media.

The participants were encouraged to experiment with different materials and develop their unique artistic voices.

The showcase displayed a diverse range of artworks, reflecting the creativity and talent nurtured throughout the workshop.

The event offered a unique opportunity for families, friends, and the public to celebrate the young artists' achievements.

Cyber-security, top priorities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday said that data regulation and cyber-security were the topmost priorities of the present government.

"The Ministry of IT & Telecom is committed for the growth of IT sector, as taking IT exports up to \$25 billion is our target", she said while addressing Roundtable on Open Data Flows & Pakistan's Digital Economy held at Ministry of IT.

Managing Director Asia Internet Coalition (AIC) Jeff Paine, Google and Meta representatives attended the Roundtable session. Convener Digital Pakistan Committee Tania Aidrus and Secretary IT

Aisha Humera Chaudhry were also present.

Shaza Fatima said that on the directives of the Prime Minister, private sector was being fully supported and facilitated in the country.

She said that steps were being taken for transforming Pakistan into Digital Economy.

Detailed discussion was held on data localisation, and the participants also gave recommendations regarding data hosting and data sensitivity.

Authorities of Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), PTA, SECP, State Bank of Pakistan, NITB, and senior officers of the Ministry of IT also participated in the Roundtable session.

PQEPC briefs Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari on Thursday held a meeting with the delegation of Port Qasim Electric Power Company (PQEPC) which was led by CEO Liang.

The delegation briefed the minister about the operations of the power company and certain issues it faced due to overdue receivables, a news release said.

It said that Power-China was a major state-owned Chinese enterprise and key investor in Pakistan's energy market.

The company would continue to work with the Government of Pakistan and play its role in the improvement of power sector.

for Finance and the Energy

Minister would continue to coordinate with the stakeholders to find and implement sustainable solutions to the power sector's issues.

The PQEPC delegation expressed gratitude to the Finance Minister for his constructive feedback and support.

The head of the delegation offered full support of the company to work out ways to address the power sector issues.

Hashmi as Dean appointed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Professor Dr. Shah Mohayuddin Hashmi, Chairman Department of Islamic Thought History and Culture has been appointed as the Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIQU).

According to the AIQU on Thursday, the appointment has been made by the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, who is also the Chancellor of the University.

The appointment was made officially yesterday, with the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training issuing a letter to the university,

followed by a notification from the Registrar Department.

Professor Dr. Hashmi, who has previously served as Dean, has expressed his commitment to dedicating himself fully to the university's service, working closely with the administration and faculty members.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, extended his warm congratulations to Professor Dr. Hashmi on his appointment, praising his exceptional leadership qualities and academic credentials.

The university's principal officers and faculty members have congratulated him on his appointment.

Child protection centers demanded

ISLAMABAD (APP): Civil society activists here on Thursday have demanded the government to ensure child protection and open special centers in Islamabad Capital Territory.

Talking to APP, child rights activist and former NCRC member Dr. Rubina Fareed said that it was very crucial to facilitate children and protect them.

Psychologist Dr. Bashir Ahmad highlighted that child abuse has created psychological issues protection centers of higher quality can significantly benefit children, for instance, by supporting better social and academic performance, she added.

Children out of home growth in cases involving

multiple risk factors, including cases where children faced risks both inside and outside the home, or simply risks outside the home.

He further added that domestic abuse was combined with other factors, particularly emotional abuse and parental mental health ('complex domestic abuse/risks at home').

There were complexities related to parental mental health, which often involved domestic abuse and substance misuse. There were concerns relating to family members other than the child or parent ('concerns about another person'), which tended to co-exist with other risks, including domestic abuse.

Karzai flays assassination

KABUL (Ariana News): The former president of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai has condemned the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in the "strongest terms". "This act of terrorism and against international rules takes place at a time when efforts were being made to establish a ceasefire in Gaza, and there was hope for the end of the war and the realization of peace in the region. Therefore, it can be called an action against peace and security in the Middle East," said Karzai.

The Frontier Post

Muharram 26 1446 — Friday, August 02, 2024

Afghan refugee found dead

KABUL (Ariana News): An Afghan refugee was found dead at a railway station in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, local media reported. Mohammad Yasin Nazari, 36, was found dead on Platform 1 at Sudirman Station, Central Jakarta, Jakarta Globe newspaper reported. The Head of Public Relations for the Jakarta Metro Police, Commissioner Ade Ary Syam Indradi, said that the tragic incident occurred at 05:15 a.m. local time.

UNAMA disrespected Islamic rules in its human rights report

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate has rejected the recent report of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on the human rights situation in the country and said it is "biased". "Here, the laws of Sharia apply and the Sharia rights of every individual are ensured," Hamdullah Fitrat, deputy spokesman of IEA, said on X.

UNAMA said in its quarterly report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan that it had recorded at least 60 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention of former government officials and former government forces.

According to the report,



the Islamic Emirate has flogged 179 people, including 28 women, in public during this period.

"In one section of the recent UNAMA report, the implementation of Islamic Sharia is considered a violation of human rights, and

such statements are a blatant disrespect for the sacred rules of Islamic Sharia and hurt the feelings of Muslims," Fitrat said.

"UNAMA must respect the beliefs of the Muslim community of Afghanistan," he said.

Residents complain of increased power outages

KABUL (TOLONews): Kabul residents complained about the increase in power outages.

They ask the officials of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) to solve the electricity problem in the capital.

Hamidullah, a resident of Kabul, said: "Before 6 or 7 PM, the electricity is cut off. It is reconnected between 10 to 11:30 PM and then cut off again near prayer time."

Another Kabul resident, Imran, said: "In 24 hours, we only have electricity for 6 to 7 hours. Our request is that attention should be given to this matter. The weather is hot, and they should understand the people's problems."

Meanwhile, (DABS) said that they have plans to reduce power outages in the capital.

The operational head of Breshna Company said they currently provide nearly 14 hours of electricity for industrialists and about 10 to 12 hours for the residents of Kabul.

DABS official Safiullah Ahmadzai said: "One of the projects that we are about to inaugurate is the 10-megawatt Naghlu solar power project, which has been invested by one of the investors and will be operational in a month."

Some economic experts believe that investment in coal mines and water resources can have a positive impact on the country's economy.

Abdul Zahoor Madber, an economic expert, said: "We have 85 billion cubic meters of water in 180 rivers, in most of which we can build dams and produce 23,000 megawatts of electricity. We have 300 days of sunshine. Water resources are also accessible in our country. We have coal, and the more we invest, the more it can directly positively affect the country's economy."

Meanwhile, Afghanistan imports eighty percent of its electricity, which amounts to about 760 megawatts, from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran.

Terrorism related deaths dropped by 81 per cent

KABUL (Ariana News): The Institute of Economics and Peace, based in Australia, says in a report that Afghanistan is no longer the country most impacted by terrorism, adding that terrorism-related deaths dropped by 81 percent in 2023.

The organization has placed Afghanistan in sixth position among the 10 countries impacted the most by terrorism.

Until now, Afghanistan was ranked number 1 in the world – for four consecutive years since 2019.

According to the report, Burkina Faso, Israel, Mali, Pakistan and Syria are more impacted by terrorism than Afghanistan.

The Institute of Economics and Peace has reported that Afghanistan witnessed 119 deaths due to terrorism last year.

It noted that the deaths caused by terrorism in Afghanistan have decreased since the takeover of the country by IEA.

Ministry of Mines signs MoU with Afghan Gas for pipeline project



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Emirati (governmental) company Afghan Gas.

According to the Ministry's press office on

Thursday, this agreement is aimed at implementing a 94.5 kilometer pipeline for transporting gas from Sheberghan to Mazar-e-Sharif.

The memorandum was signed by Sheikh-ul-Hadith Zia-ur-Rahman Al-

Aryubi, Deputy Minister for Planning and Policy, and Mawlawi Akhtar Muhammad Mansoor, General Director of Afghan Gas.

To meet the gas requirements of consumers in Balkh province, the

Ministry, in collaboration with Afghan Gas, has initiated the construction of the pipeline.

About 65 kilometers of the pipeline have been completed, with the remaining 31 kilometers scheduled for installation.

Sewing workshop in Balkh creates jobs for 40 women

BALKH (TOLONews): A woman in Balkh province has established a sewing workshop, creating job opportunities and skills training for 40 other women and girls.

The workshop manager says that with support, she could provide job opportunities for many more women and girls.

Tahira Rahimi, after being deprived of education, created the sewing workshop by spending 400,000 Afghani.

Tahira Rahimi, the workshop founder, said: "My goal in creating the workshop is to provide job

opportunities. Currently, 40 girls are working in this workshop. If supported, we can create more opportunities."

Meanwhile, the Balkh Directorate of Industry and Commerce pledged to make efforts to facilitate and support businesswomen's activities in this province.

Naseer Ahmad Niazi, Deputy Director of Industry and Commerce of Balkh, said: "Institutions and NGOs, numbering 14, in coordination with the Directorate of Industry and Trade, have supported many women and girls,

helping them sustain their lives and their businesses to flourish."

The women and girls working in this sewing workshop say that by working here, they can meet their families' daily needs.

They urge cooperating institutions and the interim government to support such small workshops.

Somaiya Afghan, an employee, said: "If there is work, we might earn 6,000 a month, and now that there is no work, we earn 2,000 a month. The money helps with household expenses."

Shabana Mirzaei, a trainee, said: "When the

schools closed, many girls became depressed, and this sewing workshop became a good opportunity that changed our spirits and was good for our economy too."

Marsal Sarwary, an employee, said: "I ask all institutions to support us to promote our work and create job opportunities for other women and girls."

The manager of this sewing workshop said that they currently sew hijabs, children's clothing, and children's bedding, and they request interim government officials to help market their handmade products.

Retirees demand pension payments from Islamic Emirate

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of retirees are once again demanding the payment of their pensions by the Islamic Emirate.

Some of those who have gathered outside the Pension Fund office say they are facing various economic challenges in the current situation.

Abdul Hakim, a retiree, said: "I need to be fed; they should give me my pension and also pay my other friends. When my friend beside me is hungry, what can I say?"

Another retiree, Zubair, told TOLONews: "We are bewildered, have no way out, and lack the strength to go anywhere. We come here to the pension office gate from morning till evening. My children's empty stomachs hope that their father will bring home a piece of bread or fruit."

These retirees are once again demanding the payment of their pensions by the Islamic Emirate.

Habibullah, a retiree, said: "For the past three



years, they have been saying ten days later, twenty days later, after Eid. Eid came, and they said after Eid, Ramadan came, and they didn't pay. We were finally forced to go to the Ministry of Finance and the Administrative

Office."

Zarifa, a retiree, told a TOLONews reporter: "We want our rights, we want our pensions. We don't have a single piece of bread at home right now."

Although the Islamic Emirate has not recently

commented on the payment of pensions, their spokesperson previously stated, without mentioning the retirees, that efforts have been made to consider the needs of all eligible groups in the budget for the fiscal year 1403.

Money exchangers protest after shops closed

HERAT (TOLONews): Local officials in Herat announced that hundreds of unlicensed exchange shops in the province have been shut down.

According to the officials, these exchange shops have been operating for several years and must now obtain a license to continue their activities. The Central Bank had instructed these shops months ago to obtain a license from the bank to continue their operations.

Hayatullah Mohajer Farahi, the acting deputy governor of Herat, stated: "Obtaining a license has become mandatory, and those without a license will be dealt with by the government. We hope that by implementing this process, order will be established in the exchange market."

Ghulam Mohammad Sohrabi, head of the Herat Money Exchangers' Union, said: "Ten to

twelve markets in Herat city were operating arbitrarily and had not obtained exchange licenses for several years. I believe each market has between fifty to one hundred and two hundred exchange shops."

Money exchangers gathered in front of the governor's office in Herat city, demanding the reopening of their exchange shops. They have asked the government to give them more time and to reduce the license fee and guarantee money.

Yargul Alizai, one of the exchangers in Herat, said: "The government should have both retail and wholesale licenses and should assess the capital of the exchangers to see if we have the capacity for 13 million afghani or not. They have closed the exchange shops, and most of the exchangers have spent thirty years of their

lives in this business."

Noor Ahmad Hakimi, another exchanger in Herat, said: "My work is only transferring money from Iran in two districts of Herat. My capital is not more than 500 million Iranian Tomans, which equals 500,000 Afghani. Am I equal to an exchanger who has a capital of seven million dollars?"

Local officials in Herat said that the purpose of making licenses mandatory for exchange shops is to prevent money smuggling out of the country, maintaining the value of the afghani against foreign currencies, and regulating the activities of the exchangers.

According to the government's decision, each exchanger is required to deposit a guarantee of six million afghani with the Central Bank, and the activities of street exchangers have been banned throughout the country.

tions, said that it has facilitated the expansion of Afghanistan's trade relations with regional and global countries and has attracted investments.

According to officials in this ministry, about 800 billion afghani have been invested in the mining, transportation, and agriculture sectors in the country.

Ahmadullah Zahid, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce, said at this event that holding exhibitions of Afghan products inside and outside the country, creating a support fund for the private sector, facilitating transit, creating and activating a one-stop shop for processing export documents, better management of license distribution, strengthening and expanding trade relations with neighboring

and regional countries in the past year have been among the most important achievements of this ministry.

Zahid said: "The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has prioritized the Islamic Emirate's economy-oriented policy in the private sector and operates based on the principles of the Islamic Emirate."

Officials of this ministry also said that they have created facilities for Afghan investors currently in Iran and Pakistan to transfer their assets to the country.

Sebgathullah Akhundzada, head of Investment Promotion and Support at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, said: "The largest investment in Afghanistan has been in the mining sector, amounting to 506 billion afghani. Similarly, 11.5

billion afghani have been invested in the transportation sector and 117 million afghani in the agriculture sector."

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, said at this event that Afghanistan conducted about 10 billion dollars in trade last year.

He added that in 1402 (solar calendar), about 100 factories were established, and licenses were issued to over a thousand industrial and production companies.

Jawad said: "Employment for 646,000 people was created directly last year in the center and provinces through support and empowerment programs for factories, carpet factories, small and medium enterprises, and also through agreements with

institutions."

The increase in tariffs on Afghanistan's fresh fruits and vegetables by Pakistan is also one of the challenges for Afghan traders.

Ehsanullah Fetrat, Head of Development at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, said they are trying to address these problems through diplomatic means.

Fetrat said: "As we have discussed through diplomatic channels, they have responded that this is the case worldwide. We are indebted to the IMF, and it is the IMF's policy that taxes have increased."

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce also added that last year, about 10 billion dollars in trade was conducted with regional and global countries, of which 1.8 billion dollars were exports.

Commerce Ministry announces expansion of int'l trade relations



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce, during the first day of presenting the achievements of government institu-



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari speaking to a delegation o FPCCI, comprising on businessmen and office-bearers of 40 regional business association, led by Gohar Ejaz, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for solution to rising energy costs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for finding a win-win solution to address the issue of rising energy costs in the country. He proposed that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) should form a committee and work with the President's office to develop a viable solution to the issue of paying capacity charges to Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

President Asif Ali Zardari remarked this while talking to a delegation of FPCCI comprising of businessmen and office-bearers

of 40 regional business associations, led by Dr Gohar Ejaz, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.

He announced that the President's office would collaborate with a smaller committee from the business community to find a win-win solution for the Government, the people, the business community and IPPs.

The President urged for evolving a consensus solution so that none of stakeholders lose out. He said that he was aware of the problems being faced by Pakistani businesses who were in a "triple-whammy" due to high input, energy,

and fuel costs. Dr Gohar Ejaz highlighted that rising energy costs were overburdening the people, industry, agriculture and exports sector. He emphasised the need for reforming the energy sector to bring down energy prices.

Dr Gohar Ejaz requested the President to intervene in the matter and play his role in resolving the issues faced by Pakistan's industries and businesses due to high electricity prices. President Zardari assured the delegation of his support in coming up with a solution to their problems and taking up the matter with relevant quarters.

Ahsan asks PTI founder to clarify his agenda

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal said that the government has no trouble in talks between Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and military.

Speaking during an interview with a foreign news outlet on Thursday, he said that the military had announced distancing itself of politics but PTI founder desires its intervention in politics. He said that Imran Khan needs to clarify his agenda of talks with military.

Ahsan Iqbal said that the pattern of politics followed by PTI was a direct attack on national interests which could not be allowed. He said that PTI founder took the political spat to the US House of Representatives and the party would be banned in accordance with the law. He said that Imran Khan had confessed that holding a protest in front of General Headquarters (GHQ) was his plan. On the one hand, PTI founder talked about civil supremacy, on the other hand, he invited military to intervene.

IHC issues notice to AG

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has issued notices to the Attorney General and other relevant parties regarding the petition challenging the NAB Amendment Ordinance 2024.

During the hearing, Chief Justice Amir Farooq addressed objections on the petition and allowed it to proceed. Advocate Muhammad Azhar Siddique, representing petitioner Shehri Malik Najjullah, argued that the new ordinance, which extends remand periods from 14 to 40 days and reduces penalties for malicious prosecution from 5 years to 2 years, was passed without parliamentary approval.

Siddique contended that extending remand beyond 14 days violates basic human rights and criticized the reduced penalty for officers involved in malicious prosecutions. He argued that the ordinance, having bypassed parliamentary scrutiny, undermines the law's intent and should be repealed.

Chief Justice Farooq raised the fundamental issue of whether the Acting President had the authority to issue the ordinance. The court has directed the Attorney General and other parties to review past Supreme Court and Islamabad High Court decisions on presidential ordinances. The court adjourned the case until August 6.

SC forms bench to hear Arshad's case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Thursday constituted a five-member larger bench to hear a suo motu case pertaining to murder of senior journalist and former TV anchor Arshad Sharif.

The Practice and Procedure Committee of SC led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa decided to form a five-member larger bench instead of a three-member bench with a 2-1 majority vote.

PM vows to revamp Pakistan's economy by emulating Chinese model

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday pledged to revamp Pakistan's economy by emulating China's model, with the objective of achieving similar economic success on a smaller scale.

Speaking to a 12-member Chinese delegation led by Wang Fukang, the prime minister said that during his recent visit to China, he requested President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Qiang to send experts to Pakistan. "The goal is to model Pakistan's economy after China's. Today, these experts are here, and we're confident that progress will follow soon."

Welcoming the delegation by emphasizing that China and Pakistan were eternal friends, with a friendship that knew no bounds, he emphasized that industrial cooperation was crucial at this time and expressed hope that it could be shifted to Pakistan. He believes that joint ventures and cooperation would create a win-win situation.

He said the delegation's visit was highly reassuring, and expressed hope that it would be both useful and productive for Pakistan. He anticipated that it would enhance bilateral arrangements in areas such as industry, agriculture, economic zones, and help increase Pakistan's capacity to produce agricultural items in high demand in China.

He noted that Pakistan could meet Chinese requirements by exporting high-quality goods and exploring opportunities in mining and minerals, IT, and export zones. He also suggested relocating certain industries to Pakistan due to China's shift towards more advanced and sophisticated industrial ventures. He stated that the federal cabinet has decided to offer free visas to Chinese citizens starting August 14, demonstrating Pakistan's commitment. He emphasized that Sino-Pak relations were higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the oceans.

The delegation, comprising representatives from 10 different Chinese ministries, was visiting Pakistan to enhance cooperation across various sectors. They will provide input on Chinese investment, the second phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and boosting Pakistani exports. Additionally, they will review and offer recommendations on IT, agriculture, industry, investment, energy, minerals, special economic zones, and communication.

He stated that Pakistan has implemented robust measures to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens, with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal overseeing these efforts. The government was committed to maintaining stringent security and preventing any breaches. Those responsible for any harmful acts will be held accountable.

Additionally, he conveyed deep sorrow on behalf of his government and people for the loss of Chinese citizens in Bisham a few months ago. The Prime Minister stated that those responsible for the killings of Chinese citizens have been arrested and will get exemplary punishment. He mentioned that he has held several meetings with law enforcement agencies, the Interior Secretary, and NECTA.

Speaking on the occasion, delegation head, Wang Fukang stated that technical cooperation would further strengthen Pak-China strategic relations and expressed gratitude to Pakistan for its hospitality. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi, Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatmi, Coordinator to the Prime Minister Rana Ahsan Afzam, and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, along with other senior officials.

Commonwealth Secretary General calls on PM: Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland, leading a five-member delegation, met with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House.

The prime minister welcomed Secretary-General Scotland on her first official visit to Pakistan. Appreciating the Commonwealth's consistent support for Pakistan's socio-economic and democratic institutions, the prime minister reaffirmed the government's desire to work with the Commonwealth on issues of common interest, particularly on youth empowerment, good governance and climate change.

Noting that young people below the age of 30 accounted for two-thirds of Pakistan's population, the prime minister said that providing

modern education and technical training to the youth was one of the government's highest priorities. He highlighted the various initiatives taken by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and reiterated the government's commitment to working with the Commonwealth to help Pakistan's youth by enhancing access and opportunities for them in today's high-tech global economy.

Secretary-General Scotland appreciated the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and said that the prime minister's leadership and direct supervision of this Programme was reflective of his personal interest and commitment to youth empowerment initiatives.

In order to further improve the performance of government departments and know progress in real time, Ms Patricia offered the Commonwealth's Performance Management System. She also invited Pakistan to join the Commonwealth Artificial Intelligence Consortium (CAIC).

The prime minister expressed keen desire to evaluate the Commonwealth Performance Management System for further improving governance and transparency in Pakistan's public sector. He also welcomed the invitation to join CAIC where Pakistan's youth will have opportunities for training and could benefit from global innovations such as cloud computing and generative AI and shall be more empowered to play their role in sustainable economic development.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also described combating climate change as a common priority for both Pakistan and the Commonwealth. He appreciated the Secretary-General's climate advocacy for Pakistan, following the devastating 2022 floods. The prime minister said Pakistan wanted to work with the Commonwealth in helping mobilize more international support for climate-vulnerable countries like Pakistan at the forthcoming COP29 in Baku. Secretary-General Scotland appreciated the Government's efforts for post-flood reconstruction and hoped that the international community would provide more support in building Pakistan's climate resilience.

Looking forward towards the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa later this year, the prime minister and the Commonwealth Secretary-General discussed ways in which the two sides could coordinate on building consensus on key issues of mutual interest and chart a roadmap for the Commonwealth.

Russian advances in eastern Ukraine

MOSCOW: During the last week of July, Russia mounted its largest assaults in eight months in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, seizing a string of settlements in an apparent bid to cut off key supply routes and force a mass Ukrainian retreat. At the same time, Ukraine scored a high number of hits on Russian energy infrastructure and occupied Crimea, suggesting that its strategy of degrading Russian air defences is working.

Russian assaults focused on central and southern Donetsk – from areas west of Bakhmut, which fell in May last year, to areas west of Avdiivka, which was lost in February, down to areas west of the city of Donetsk, which pro-Moscow separatists have controlled since 2014 – a line about 130km (80 miles) long. Russian forces have pressed their advantage in these areas to prevent Ukraine from digging entrenched defences, and they have inched forward for months, swallowing settlements at a staggering cost to their own troops.

British military intelligence estimated that Russian casualties in May and June reached record daily highs of about 1,200 – about 70,000 soldiers for just those two months. Al Jazeera was unable to verify the claims. In the past week, the tempo of Russia's westward crawl has increased and included two battalion-sized assaults that the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a Washington-based think tank, said Russia has not mounted since the battle for Avdiivka in October.

It appeared that Russia's strategy was to cut off two highways – one supplying Ukraine's garrison in Vuhledar in southern Donetsk and the other supplying garrisons in Chasiv Yar and Toretsk in central Donetsk. Russia mounted a battalion-sized assault involving 200 soldiers southwest of Donetsk city on July 24. It was supported by 11 tanks, 45 armoured fighting vehicles and 12 motorcycles. Its apparent purpose was to seize the T-0524 highway supplying Vuhledar.

Ukrainian forces stopped it, destroying six of the tanks, seven armoured vehicles and all 12 motorcycles.

Then on Monday, Russia tried again, mounting another battalion-sized assault in the same area, this time with 10 tanks, 47 armoured vehicles, 10 motorcycles and a buggy. Again Ukraine stopped the assault, striking eight tanks,

a dozen armoured vehicles and nine of the motorcycles plus the buggy. "The Russian military command's willingness to accept costly armoured vehicle losses without conducting a large-scale, multi-directional offensive operation or making operationally significant advances in western Donetsk Oblast will likely burden the Russian military in the long-term," the ISW said.

Other Russian assaults did succeed in taking territory. On Friday, Russian troops seized the villages of Prohres, Yasnobrodvka and Lozuvatske, all within 15km (9 miles) of each other, extending a salient west of Avdiivka. That brought them within 7km (4 miles) of the T-0504 highway, extending from Pokrovsk to the garrisons of Chasiv Yar and Toretsk. "If the armed forces of Ukraine fail to stabilise the situation, Russian troops across a wide swath of the front may be able to reach the Pokrovsk-Kostyantynivka highway – the main supply line for the [Ukrainian troops] in Chasiv Yar and Toretsk – in a matter of weeks," wrote Meduza, an independent Russian newspaper banned by Moscow. — Aljazeera

Three policemen embraced Shahadat (martyrdom) when dozens of dacoits of Katcha area of Sadiqabad attacked their checkpoint in Bhong Bachao Bandh area on Wednesday. The deceased were identified as Tariq, Imtiaz and Jahangir.

The bandits targeted their checkpoint where they were deployed to ensure law and order following an operation on the previous night in which five dacoits were killed and four injured. After the incident, a police contingent reached the crime scene and started investigation after sending the dead bodies to hospital.

It is pertinent to mention that the area police had been remained unaware of the incident for many hours and reached to site after finding no response in the Whatsapp groups. Police have intensified patrol in the area and launched a manhunt for the arrest of the killers.

It is suspected that the robbers have avenged their accomplices killed in an operation held on Tuesday night. Punjab IG Dr Usman Anwar took notice of the incident and paid tributes to the martyred policemen and said their sacrifices will not go in vain. On their way back after the police encounter, SHO Rana Ramzan breathed his last due to heart attack.

Funeral of 4 martyred cops offered in Sadiqabad

F.P. Report

SADIQABAD: The Namaz-i-Janaza (funeral prayers) of four policemen martyred while fighting dacoits were offered in Sadiqabad on Thursday morning. Additional inspector general of police South Punjab, police officers and families of the martyrs attended the funeral.

A smartly turned out police contingent offered salute to the martyrs after which the bodies were dispatched to their hometowns for burial. It may be mentioned here that five dacoits of Shar Gang were also killed and four injured in the Wednesday's encounter.

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