

Cop martyred in Lakki
F.P. Report
LAKKI MARWAT: A cop was martyred while several others were injured when terrorists targeted a police patrol van in Lakki Marwat. The gunmen attacked the mobile vehicle near Syed Azam Pump within the limits of Bargi Police Station. In the incident, policeman Nisar Ahmad, belt number FRP-9671, was martyred and three other cops injured when the terrorists sprayed the van with bullets.

IT Park to boost exports to \$25b: PM

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the completion of Information Technology Park project in Islamabad would help boost country's exports in this sector and prove as significant milestone in achieving \$25 billion IT exports target. The prime minister, while chairing a meeting to review the ongoing projects of Information Technology, digitization and steps to increase IT exports, termed the progress on IT project in Islamabad as satisfactory. He further directed for taking steps to reduce its completion time-frame after consultation with the Korean experts, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting was attended by Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attullah Tarar, Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Deputy Chairman Planning Jehanzaib Khan, PM's Coordinators Malik Mukhtar Bharath, Rana Ahsan Afzal and relevant senior officials. The meeting was appraised that work on the IT park project was in full swing and the Korean company had reset

its completion date to February 2025 from earlier June 2025. The Capital Development Authority's (CDA) teams were regularly visiting and monitoring the project site. The meeting was further briefed over the digital smart cities and the commencement of its pilot project from Islamabad, which would enable the residents of the city to get easy access to 150 government's services through City Super Application. Through this mobile application, the governmental and administrative services including CDA, Islamabad Police, health and educational services would be made available. The prime minister said that the citizens should be encouraged to use mobile application for availing of the government's services. The meeting was also apprised of the IT sector performance over the past five months. Under the government's steps, IT exports saw a growth of 30 percent when compared with the figures in the last year. A total of 300,000 students had been registered to get training in IT skills programmes while four new incubation centers had been set up. Under the government's steps, the manufac-

turing of mobile phones in the country saw a surge by 30 percent whereas the number of its users had increased by further 800,000. Under the prime minister's vision, all the relevant institutions and departments were collectively working on different projects to take Pakistan's IT exports to \$25 billion mark. The meeting was briefed over investment in IT projects and the phased wise increase in IT exports. With government's investment of \$77 million in IT sector, an increase in IT exports upto \$25 billion was expected. About \$13 billion foreign reserves from government's steps in IT exports, \$10 billion from country's digital transformation and \$2 billion foreign reserves in telecom sector were expected, the meeting was told. The meeting was informed that throughout the country, federal government's services including financial, health, agriculture, education, administration and security were being made available to the citizens through mobile application and in this respect, a project was in the final stages. The prime minister directed for accomplishment of all steps in the IT sector within the stipulated period.

Actions speak louder than words, says Bilawal

F.P. Report
KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has gifted the people of Sindh, including Karachi, another milestone in healthcare by inaugurating new state-of-the-art facilities at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC). The newly inaugurated units include the 120-bed Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, the 110-bed Department of Neurology and Stroke Unit, and the cutting-edge CyberKnife S7-FIM, continuing the province's commitment to providing quality and free healthcare services. According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, while addressing the inauguration ceremony at JPMC, stated that the best hospitals in Pakistan are located in Sindh. He highlighted that Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), and National Institute of Child Health (NICH) represent the top healthcare institutions in the country. He added that while negative news about Pakistan is often circulated on various media platforms, these three institutions stand as beacons of hope. He termed these hospitals as exemplary models of good governance and successful public-private partnerships by the provincial

government, adding that they are proof of how effectively the province has managed its institutions post the 18th Constitutional Amendment. "You may have heard criticisms suggesting that the Sindh government does nothing or that we don't undertake mega projects. But actions speak louder than words," remarked Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He emphasized that after the devolution of powers from the Center, the PPP-led provincial government has established the world's largest heart hospital, NICVD, offering free treatment to patients. Furthermore, NICH is providing free healthcare services to children. He mentioned that JPMC's CyberKnife machine, used for cancer treatment, is available in only a handful of countries globally. He pointed out that while cancer treatment using this machine abroad costs over a thousand dollars, JPMC offers the same treatment for free, a facility unmatched anywhere else in the world. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also highlighted that the Royal College of Radiology has ranked JPMC's cancer treatment department among the top ten in the world. He commended the contribution of Sindh's business community for partnering with the provincial government in providing free healthcare services and recognized them as leaders in charity work across the country.

In contrast to the governments of other provinces, which prioritize private hospitals through health cards, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari asserted that the his party and Sindh government takes pride in providing free and quality healthcare services to the public. He further noted that the expensive PET-CT scan required for cancer diagnosis is not offered for free in any province other than Sindh. He proudly stated that JPMC's cancer department attracts patients from 167 cities across the country, as well as from 15 other countries. Addressing Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chairman PPP suggested that during the Prime Minister's next visit to Karachi, he should be taken on a tour of JPMC, NICVD, and NICH. He expressed his willingness to assist in establishing similar hospitals in Punjab and highlighted ongoing efforts to set up such facilities in Balochistan. "We want similar hospitals in Lahore so that people there can also benefit from free treatment," he added. In addition, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari participated in a signing ceremony between the Patients' Aid Foundation and the Sindh Government for the Radiation Oncology Section at JPMC. The ceremony was also attended by Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Health Minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, provincial ministers, assembly members, and party leaders.

Three soldiers martyred, five more terrorists killed

F.P. Report
RAWALPINDI: Movement of a group of Khwarij, who were trying to infiltrate Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in Bajaur District. Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, five khwarij of Fitna al Khwarij were killed, while four khwarij got injured. However, during intense exchange of fire, three brave sons of soil; Naik Inayat Khan (age: 36 years, resident of District Khyber), Lance Naik Umer Hayat (age: 35 years, resident of District Mansehra) and Sepoy Waqar Khan (age: 25 years, resident of District Peshawar), having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat. Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan. Security Forces of Pakistan remain committed to secure its borders and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Bus collides with trailer, killing 8

F.P. Report
SUKKUR: A speeding passenger bus collided with a trailer, resulting in the deaths of eight people, including women and children, and leaving seven others injured. This incident took place in Sukkur Multan Motorway (M5) in the town of Ghotki. According to the police, the ill-fated passenger bus was traveling from Mansehra to Karachi when the accident happened at a location near the village of Dring Malook in Ghotki. The bus collided with the side of a trailer, leading to the loss of 8 lives and 7 injuries. The deceased include women and children, and 3 of the injured are reported to be in critical condition. Upon receiving the information, the police and Rangers reached the site, rescued the injured, and transported them to the Tehsil Hospital in Ghotki. The motorway police stated that it was raining at the time of the accident, and the wet conditions may have been a contributing factor to the tragic incident. The wreckage of the bus and the trailer have been moved to a rest area in Ghotki, while the identification of some of the deceased has become challenging due to the lack of immediate family members. According to the initial information, the deceased include Noor Elahi, Shagufta, Rozina, Aneeba, and Hasanat, all from Mansehra. The bodies of the victims have been kept at the hospital. Similarly, in Liaquatpur, near the Nonari settlement, an oil tanker that was parked for repairs collided with a trailer, leaving 4 people severely injured. They were shifted to the hospital.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding the review of ongoing projects of Information Technology, digitization and steps to increase IT exports.

Torrential rains claim 19 lives in Balochistan

F.P. Report
QUETTA: As torrential rains caused havoc across the country, at least 19 people lost their lives in Balochistan, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Monday. According to a PDMA report the rains, which started since July 1, have caused widespread damage to infrastructure and crops. As many as 2919 houses have been damaged, with 124 completely destroyed and 293 partially damaged. In addition to the loss of life and property, the rains have also caused significant damage to crops, with 97 acres of crops and 31 kilometers of roads affected. The PDMA report also stated that six bridges have been partially damaged, while 120 animals have died due to the heavy rains. Yesterday, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) issued a warning of heavy and intense rainfall across the country in the next 24 to 48 hours, raising concerns about potential urban flooding in major cities. The NDMA alerted all relevant departments to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions. According to the advisory, there is a significant risk of urban flooding in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Gujranwala, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, and Sialkot. Additionally, low-lying areas in Sargodha, Faisalabad, Nowshera, and Peshawar are also at risk of flooding. The NDMA cautioned that urban flooding could damage infrastructure and disrupt daily life. Communities living near drainage channels are particularly vulnerable to flash floods and may experience severe impacts. In light of these urban flooding threats, the NDMA has launched the

Flooded river swept away two schools, a BHU building in D I Khan

F.P. Report
D I KHAN: Flooded due to heavy rains, the River Indus swept away two primary schools and a basic health unit (BHU) building in Kacha area of Dera Ismail Khan on Monday. Heavy monsoon rains during recent days increased the water level of Indus River which swept away buildings Beit Kalu and Beit Noorpur primary schools besides BHU Khery Kacha. Talking to media persons, Assistant Commissioner Faseeh Ishaq Abbasi said that the administration has made all the arrangements for Monsoon season, adding, the staff and machinery of the administration were present at the site for relief activities. He said the overall situation was under control and the people of affected areas were shifted to safe locations. While responding to a question about the flood water in different areas due to heavy rains, Faseeh Ishaq informed that there was no more risk of flood as the rain water has been passed through Looni area of Kulachi. He said that no loss of lives was reported so far. Moreover, the assistant commissioner said the water level of Indus River has also started to decrease.

"Pak NDMA Disaster Alert" application, now available on both Google Play Store and iOS App Store. The public is urged to stay informed about weather updates and alerts through this app to ensure their safety. Meanwhile, although the fresh spell of monsoon rains, which had affected large parts of the country is over, still fears of flood are not as residents of Saffdarabad, on the outskirts of Rojhan in south Punjab, were forced from their homes after floodwater entered their homes. As per eyewitnesses' accounts, the height of floodwater was over six feet on Monday. The residents said that when they were facing great difficulties in shifting to safe places, how they could take their cattle with them. They complained that nobody from the administration had reached there as yet to rescue them. They said their homes had been washed away and they had lost all their belongings, but the administration was least bothered about their predicament. The situation was no different in Jampur where floodwater washed away a road, leaving people cut off from each other. On the other hand, it appeared that the administration had surrendered as residents of the area, who were without food and fodder for their animals, had to move to safe places on their own. In Narowal, in north-eastern Punjab, water levels are normal in River Ravi as well as in nullahs. The water level in the river at Jasarr on Monday dropped from 45,000 cuses to 6,602 cuses. On the other hand, Deputy Commissioner Syed Hassan Raza said that the administration was fully prepared to deal with any situation. "We have set up four temporary rescue camps on the bank of the river," he informed.

Audio leak case: SC overturns IHC verdict

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday overturned the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) decision and barred it from conducting any further proceedings in the audio leak case of former first lady Bushra Bibi and son of former chief justice Saqib Nasir, Najam Saqib. A two-member bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan and also having Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, heard the case on the application filed by the federal government against June 25 verdict of the IHC. At the outset of the hearing, Justice Khan asked if the IHC had found out who was doing recordings. The deputy attorney general replied that it was still unknown. "Unfortunately no one wants to reach the truth in this country. An inquiry commission was formed which was given stay by the apex court. But the case was never fixed again for hearing in the Supreme Court. "Parliament also tried to find truth but it couldn't. If courts and parliament are not allowed to unearth truth, then who will do that?" asked Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan. Later, the apex court accepted appeals of the federal government and suspended the IHC orders of May 29 and June 25 citing overstepping from its constitutional ambit while seeking record of the audio leak case. The federal government, through Additional Attorney General Anis Muhammad Shahzad, filed an appeal under Article 185(3) of the Constitution against the order dated June 25, 2024, passed by an IHC single bench. It prayed to the apex court to grant leave to appeal against the impugned order dated 25-06-2024 by the IHC and set aside the said order. In its petition, the Centre made Najam — an Advocate High Court — as respondent besides making the federation of Pakistan through the Secretary, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Division, Speaker, National Assembly, Special Committee, appointed by Speaker, Assistant Director/Secretary Committee, at National Assembly Secretariat and others as Proforma respondents. The federal government submitted that an alleged audio conversation of Respondent No 1 with his friends regarding managing party ticket for contesting the election of the provincial assembly seat against certain monetary consideration became viral on social media along with the electronic media. Upon becoming the alleged audio leaks viral and discussion thereon in the National Assembly, the NA speaker took notice of the same and constituted a special committee vide circulation dated 02-05-2023 to audit, inquire and investigate the petitioner's alleged audio leaks, it submitted.

ADB calls for tax reforms in real estate sector

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has demanded tax reforms and the abolition of tax exemptions in the real estate sector. According to ADB, the tax exemption on open plots should end after six years and tax on property development should be imposed. Due to tax exemption on property development, investment in manufacturing and agribusinesses is decreasing. Lack of investment in manufacturing and agri-businesses is a hindrance to growth and productivity. The Asian Development Bank stated that a standard tax should be levied on the sale and investment of immovable property. The tax incentives on property development have deprived the government of revenue. Tax exemptions have led to local investment in the real estate sector.

IHC Bars Azam trial court from announcing final verdict in £190m case

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday stopped the trial court from announcing the final verdict in the 190 million pounds case on Imran Khan's request. A division bench comprising Justice Babar Sattar and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case with objections from the Registrar's Office. The petitioner's counsel, Barrister Salman Safdar and Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry, appeared before the judges. The petitioner's lawyers argued, "There have been 35 witnesses in the reference against the PTI founder, the last witness is being questioned. Moreover, the PTI founder was arrested on the IHC premises in the Al-Qadir Trust (190 million pounds) case." According to the petition, the NAB initially filed a reference against eight accused. Barrister Salman said that according to NAB, the NCA confiscated 190 million pounds. The allegation, according to the NAB, is that when the petitioner was the prime minister, he facilitated the transfer of 190 million pounds. The amount came to the account of the Supreme Court instead of the State Bank of Pakistan, he argued. Salman Safdar said they moved the trial court to seek the records of the NAB executive board meeting, but the trial court rejected the request. The trial judge wrote surprising reasons for it, the counsel apprised the court. The court issued a notice to NAB and sought reply by Wednesday. It should be recalled that on Aug 16, former prime minister Imran Khan moved the IHC to stop the trial in the 190 million pounds case. Khan — along with his wife Bushra Bibi and other PTI leaders — are facing a NAB inquiry related to a settlement between the PTI government and the property tycoon, which reportedly caused a loss of £190 million to the national exchequer. As per the charges, Khan and other accused allegedly adjusted Rs50 billion — £190 million at the time — sent by Britain's

National Crime Agency (NCA) to the Pakistani government as part of the agreement with the property tycoon. They are also accused of getting undue benefit in the form of over 458 kanals of land at Mouza Bakrala, Sohawa, to establish Al Qadir University. During the PTI government, the NCA seized assets worth 190 million pounds from the property tycoon in Britain. The agency said the assets would be passed to the government of Pakistan and the settlement with the Pakistani property tycoon was "a civil matter, and does not represent a finding of guilt". Subsequently, then-prime minister Khan got approval for the settlement with the UK crime agency from his cabinet on December 3, 2019, without disclosing the details of the confidential agreement. It was decided that the money would be submitted to the Supreme Court on behalf of the tycoon. Subsequently, the Al-Qadir Trust was established in Islamabad a few weeks after the PTI-led government approved the agreement with the property tycoon. Zulfi Bukhari, Babar Awan, Bushra Bibi, and her close friend Farah Khan were appointed as members of the trust. Two to three months after the cabinet's approval, the property tycoon transferred 458 kanals of land to Bukhari, a close aide of the PTI chief, which he later transferred to the trust. Later, Bukhari and Awan opted out as the trustees. That trust is now registered in the name of Khan, Bushra Bibi and Farah. NAB officials were earlier probing the alleged misuse of powers in the process of recovery of "dirty money" received from the UK crime agency. Following the emergence of "irrefutable evidence" in the case, the inquiry was converted into an investigation. According to the NAB officials, Khan and his wife obtained land worth billions of rupees from the property tycoon, to build an educational institute, in return for striking a deal to give legal cover to the property tycoon's black money received from the UK crime agency.

Sindh govt provides \$41m state-of-the-art Cyberknife system

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that, on the instructions of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, his government has been covering the operational costs of the Cyberknife unit since 2018. Now, we have provided them with a new state-of-the-art Cyberknife system worth \$4.1 million.

He said this on Monday while speaking at the inauguration ceremony of two cutting-edge medical facilities at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC): the 120-bed Rashid Soorty Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences and the 110-bed Saif-ul-Islam Department of Neurology & Stroke unit by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

The ceremony was attended by Health Minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, provincial ministers, Secretary of Health, Executive Director of JPMC Prof. Shahid Rasool, Head of the Cyberknife Unit Dr. Tariq Mahmood, Chairman of HEC Sindh Prof. Tariq Rafi, and others.

New Cyberknife: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that, on the guidance of Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the provincial government has achieved another significant milestone in a successful public-private partnership between the Sindh government and Patients' Aid Foundation. The Sindh government donated a new state-of-the-art Cyberknife system worth \$4.1 million to the Patients' Aid Foundation to handle the growing workload," he said.

The Sindh govt has authorized the Patients' Aid Foundation for the operational autonomy of the Radiation Oncology Section through an agreement, Murad Shah said. He added that these new free-of-charge facilities would be a great help for patients needing Psychiatry, Neurology, and Radiation oncology services.

The CM said that with these new additions, JPMC ranks among the world's top 10 centers for cancer treatment with radiation. "Now, It houses two Cyberknives and two Tomotherapy units under one roof," he said and added it was also the only center globally that offered free Cyberknife and Tomotherapy treatment, irrespective of nationality, religion, or ethnicity.

Murad Shah said that 15 countries and 167 cities in Pakistan have benefited from these free facilities. Cyberknife is widely recognized for its use in brain and spinal tumours. Nowadays, it is the preferred treatment for stage-I prostate cancer, the CM said and added that the new unit features IRIS & MLC, allowing procedures to be completed in 20 minutes. Previously, the older unit took over 90 minutes to complete the same procedures.

Sindh CM Murad Shah stated that the Sindh government, under the guidance of the PPP chairman, is dedicated to providing world-class cancer care within the country. This initiative aims to cater specifically to Pakistani citizens who cannot afford costly treatments abroad.

Murad Shah informed the PPP Chairman that due to the exceptional free services offered at JPMC, the Sindh government has granted operational autonomy to the Patients' Aid Foundation. "This move allows the foundation to oversee the Radiation Oncology Section independently, fostering growth and introducing new

technologies," he said.

Talking about medical insurance, the chief minister said that his government was being advised to ensure all the citizens so that they could avail medical treatment in private hospitals. He went on to say that to ensure the citizens means to give a 25 per cent profit margin to private hospitals and a 25 percent profit to the Insurance company. Instead of giving 50 percent of funds in the shape of profit to the private hospitals and the Insurance companies, why should we not strengthen our government hospitals where free-of-cost treatment, even for cancer patients, is being provided around the clock," he said.

Minister Health Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho said that in 2020, the Patients Aid Foundation introduced the cancer treatment technology Tomotherapy in Pakistan. "Fifty patients are treated every day using this technology, and a second Tomotherapy unit is currently being installed," she said..

Head of the Cyberknife Unit Dr. Tariq Mahmood told the Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto that Cyberknife offered curative treatment for early-stage tumours with radiation without pain or anaesthesia. This facility was introduced in 2012 at JPMC by the Patients Aid Foundation through its donors but could only serve four patients daily. Due to increased demand, they upgraded the Cyberknife in 2015 and started treating four patients daily. In 2018, due to increased patient demand, the Patients Aid Foundation arranged a second Cyberknife unit through donors Nayyar and Yaqoob Ahmed, on which they are treating 12 cases daily and the Sindh government started paying the operational cost. In 2016-17, the Patients Aid Foundation



also arranged a free PET-CT scan facility and a Radiotherapy unit, Equinox 100 treating around 80 patients daily.

In 2020, the Patients Aid Foundation introduced the cancer treatment technology Tomotherapy in Pakistan. Fifty patients are treated every day using this technology, and a second Tomotherapy unit is currently being installed. Psychiatry & Neurology Building: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari inaugurated the New Rashid Soorty Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences. It has 120 inpatient beds, making it the largest mental health facility. It has 17

rooms for OPD on the ground floor, entertaining around 650 patients daily. Its first floor has faculty offices and special clinics, and the second to fourth has 40 beds on each floor for inpatients, including a dedicated floor for women and children.

It may be recalled that the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences at JPMC was serving in a 60-year-old building with few rooms for OPDs and only 30 inpatient beds. The new 110-bed Saif-ul-Islam Department of Neurology & Stroke unit, inaugurated by Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto also has 17 rooms for OPD on the ground floor, entertaining around 600 patients daily. This facility also has faculty offices and special clinics, including Video EEG, EMG, and Plasmapheresis.

It has a 55-bed inpatient facility for Neurology on the second floor and a 55-bed stroke unit/ICU on the third floor. These facilities will address the needs of mental health and neurological care for many needy patients. It is worth mentioning that the Department of Neurology also served in a 60-year-old building, which had a very cramped facility for OPD patients. There was no space for stroke patients.

Removal of debris from roads initiated in Lahore

F.P. Report

LAHORE: To clear the roads in the provincial capital of construction material and debris, the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) and Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) initiated the operation on Monday.

Director General LDA, Tahir Farooq to oversee the clearance operation visited the Adda Plot, Pine Avenue and adjacent roads. Speaking on the occasion, the DG directed the Chief Town Planner of LDA and the Assistant Commissioner of Raiwind to remove

Serving humanity key to development

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif emphasized that serving humanity is the key to a nation's development and progress.

In her message on World Humanity Day today, the Chief Minister reiterated that serving humanity is her government's manifesto and motto, aiming to create a society where every individual can live with dignity adding that education, health and welfare projects are the first priority to serve the people. She paid tribute to the servants of humanity all over the world saying serving humanity is worship.

No more free degrees in PU

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Facing a financial crunch, the Punjab University on Monday introduced a new revenue general policy, according to which the students will not be able to get their degrees free of cost any more.

In order to get his degree, every student will have to pay Rs6,000 fee. The university administration has withdrawn the facility for acquisition of the degree free of cost for the first time. The PU administration altered the police in order to generate more revenue for the institution.

Met official denies claim

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz has denied the claim of 300mm record breaking rainfall in Sukkur.

Mayor Sukkur Arsalan Shaikh has claimed heavy rainfall breaking 77 years record in the city. The Met official called the claim as incorrect adding that "there is no truth in the claim about 300mm rainfall within two days in Sukkur". "Sukkur received 116mm rainfall in 48 hours, while 134mm rain recorded in adjacent Rohri during the period," Sardar Sarfaraz added. Mayor Arsalan Shaikh has insisted that Sukkur received 292mm rainfall yesterday breaking 77 years record. "The water pumped out of all areas of the city including Ghanta Ghar, Bunder Road, High Court road, Old Sukkur, Tanga Stand and other areas," he added.

Girl shot dead

PISHIN (INP): A bachelor girl was gunned down by neighbour over dispute of throwing garbage outside his home here on Monday. The incident took place in Surkhhab area of Pishin where an unmarried girl threw garbage of her home outside house of neighbour.



Mayor welcomes birth of two African lions at Zoo

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has welcomed the birth of two African lion and rare breed deer fawns at the Karachi Zoo, instructing the zoo administration to ensure special care and attention for the newborns.

This is to ensure the protection and breeding of rare wild animals at the zoo, while also providing citizens with the opportunity to observe these animals up close.

According to details, after the birth of two cubs

to the African lion pair at the Karachi Zoo, the cubs have been kept in a highly observed environment, separate from other animals, following the zoological animal kids care procedures to ensure their health is fully protected.

In addition to the African lion cubs, the zoo has also welcomed the birth of one fawn each of the rare white and black deer, and three spotted deer fawns. This has further increased the number of beautiful and rare deer in the deer enclosure.

Sources from Karachi Zoo have stated that visitors, especially children including many students, feel immense joy in seeing the wild lions up close in their designated enclosure. This is why special arrangements are made for the breeding and health protection of African and other breeds of lions at the zoo. Furthermore, steps are taken to provide quality food and health care for other animals, ensuring a suitable and appropriate environment in various cages, enclosures, and areas of the zoo, and maintaining a continuous system for the care and feeding of the animals.

Gilani condoles demise of Hammad Raza with his family

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Monday condoled the death of Makhdoomzada Syed Hammad Raza s/o late Makhdoom Syed Jaffar Raza with his family.

The Chairman Senate along with custodian of the shrine of Hazrat Musa Pak Shaheed, Makhdoom Abu

Al-Hassan Gilani went to their residence and expressed condolences with family members and offered Fatiha on the demise of Makhdoom Syed Hammad Raza.

Yousaf Raza Gilani extended his condolences and prayed for the elevation of the deceased's ranks. He while expressing sympathies with the bereaved family stated that social services of Makhdoom

Syed Hammad Raza would always be remembered. Members of the deceased's family, including Syed Hussain Abbas, Makhdoom Syed Qasim Shah, Syed Saif Gillani, Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah, Makhdoom Syed Amir Abbas, Dewaan Naqi, along with other notables, social and political personalities, were also present on the occasion.

YouTuber Aun Ali reaches home safely, lawyers say

F.P. Report

LAHORE: YouTuber Aun Ali Khosa, who was allegedly abducted on August 15, has returned home safely on Monday, his lawyers confirmed. On Friday, the Lahore High Court (LHC) ordered the Lahore police to recover Khosa by Aug 20.


A day prior, his wife Binish Iqbal had filed a petition in the court claiming that her husband was "in the unlawful and illegal custody of the law enforcement authorities". Iqbal stated that the whereabouts of Aun were unknown and she feared for his "safety having strong apprehension that his husband has been a victim of enforced disappearance."

According to the petition, Aun was a "digital content creator, a writer, and a dignified comedian/artist having a massive following of 137,000 subscribers on YouTube". It claimed that at 2am on August 15, a dozen police officials and "men with masked faces in plain clothes" barged into his apartment after breaking apart the entrance door.

The heavily armed men confiscated Aun's phone, laptop, computer system, and digital camera, the petition further detailed. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) had said that it was alarmed by reports of Khosa's abduction, and concerned that the incident may be related to his work as a satirist and called for his immediate recovery.

On Monday, a little after midnight, Khosa's lawyer Khadija Siddiqi shared a post on X saying: "Alhamdulillah, Aun Ali Khosa has been released! He has reached home!" Another one of Khosa's lawyers, Mian Ali Ashfaq, also confirmed his return home in a statement on X. In another statement, Ashfaq said he had spoken to Khosa in great detail.

"Alhamdulillah, he is courageous, safe and determined," Ashfaq said.

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Auction of Gold


Finance facilities were extended by Mobilink Bank against the security of deposit and pledge of gold to the customers mentioned below. The customers who have neglected and failed to repay the finance extended to them by Mobilink Bank along with the markup thereon.

Details:				
Branch	Peshawar	Branch code	0016	
Auction Date	26 th August-2024	Time	10:30 AM	

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Fouzia Bibi	17301-0893642-8	Bashir Line Number 3, Peshawar Cantt, Peshawar	4.7	1 Haar
Abdul Karim Khan	17301-6938644-9	House Number 6, Dar Kamil Road, Mohalla, Peshawar	16.6	2 Karay

Notice is hereby given to the customers in above mentioned that if payment of entire outstanding amount financed along with markup is not made by them to Mobilink Bank within 1 day of the publication of this notice, Mobilink Bank shall auction the gold ornaments and no further Public Notice shall be issued to call upon the customers to make the payments.

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MICROFINANCE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Auction of Gold

Finance facilities were extended by Mobilink Bank against the security of deposit and pledge of gold to the customers mentioned below. The customers who have neglected and failed to repay the finance extended to them by Mobilink Bank along with the markup thereon.

Details:				
Branch	Timergara	Branch code	0025	
Auction Date	27 th August-2024	Time	11:00 AM	

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Sarhad Bibi	15302-9407440-0	Khaima, PO Timergara, Tehsil Balmabt, Lower Dir	29	1 Necklace
Muhammad Mohsin	15302-5791699-7	Khaima, PO Timergara, Tehsil Balmabt, Lower Dir	29.058	1 Nama, 2 Chains

Notice is hereby given to the customers in above mentioned that if payment of entire outstanding amount financed along with markup is not made by them to Mobilink Bank within 1 day of the publication of this notice, Mobilink Bank shall auction the gold ornaments and no further Public Notice shall be issued to call upon the customers to make the payments.

Mobilink Bank

Solar energy: A key solution to Pakistan’s energy woes

PESHAWAR (APP): As Pakistan grapples with an increasing demand for electricity especially for industries and agriculture amid a growing supply deficit, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa started leading the way with a surge in solar energy adoption.

Being a home to nearly 41 million people, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has seen a significant rise in solar panel installations, driven by the need for affordable and reliable power solutions in the wake of rising supply-demand gap of electricity in recent years that affected common man.

While travelling on GT Road, a visitor can witness abundance of solar panels adorning the rooftops of buildings in Nowshera, Peshawar, Mardan and Swabi. The affordability of solar technology, coupled with its ability to ensure uninterrupted power supply, has made it a popular choice among the residents of KP.

Riaz Khan, a retired government employee who recently installed seven solar panels, shared with APP that solar energy has proven to be both cost-effective and dependable, particularly during the scorching summer.

Globally, the energy landscape is shifting, and Pakistan is no exception. The country's power production capacity has expanded significantly, with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reporting a total installed capacity of approximately 43,775 megawatts (MW) for the fiscal year 2022-23.

While fossil fuels still dominate the energy mix—comprising around 26,683 MW—the spotlight is increasingly on renewable sources, especially solar and wind having great scope in Pakistan.

The coastal areas of Balochistan and Sindh provinces were most suited for wind energy where a substantial investment in wind would help make Pakistan's self sufficient in energy.

“Solar energy's prominence is evident in its growing installed capacity, which reached over 2,368 MW by the end of Financial Year 2022-23. This tremendous growth is fueled by both domestic and international investments in solar projects,” said Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem Khattak, ex Chairman, Economics Department, University of Peshawar told APP.

Appreciating State Bank of Pakistan for facilitating this expansion by providing Rs74 billion (about \$400 million) in financing to over 1,175 renewable energy projects, which collectively contribute 1,375 MW of capacity, he said such favorable policy would help turnaround in solar energy especially in Pakistan.

The World Bank estimated that Pakistan has the potential to generate up to 40 gigawatts (GW) of solar power and aims to source 20% of its electricity from renewables by 2025. Historically reliant on fossil fuels—63% of total power generation in 2020—the country is gradually diversifying its energy sources. Hydropower, nuclear energy, and renewables each contribute varying proportions to the energy mix, with solar energy gaining an increasing share, he said.

Emphasizing that Pakistan's abundant sunshine makes it a prime destination for solar energy development, he said this potential has been recognized in Pakistan by the respective governments that helped introduction of favorable policies and incentives to boost solar energy investments in all provinces.

He said that Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) supported this key initiative with net metering and feed-in tariffs, encouraging both residential and commercial solar installations for agriculture and economic growth.

According to Dr. Naeem Khattak, the growing appeal of solar energy is likely to attract more capital investment, bolstered by foreign direct investment (FDI) and collaborative projects like those under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Despite the promising outlook, he said that several challenges remain before our policy makers to addressed on priority basis such as high initial costs, limited financing options, lack of awareness, and inadequate grid infrastructure hinder broader adoption.

He commended the current government efforts for addressing these issues through a 25-year energy policy aimed at achieving 20-30% renewable energy by 2030 and reducing reliance on imported fuels.

Dr Naeem said the recently approved Alternative and Renewable Energy Policy provided an additional incentives for renewable projects, while efforts are underway to address the challenges faced by previous policies, including the National Electricity Policy 2021. He said this policy, although intended to ensure affordable and reliable electricity, encountered resistance over tariff determinations and sector governance.

By leveraging its abundant solar resources, he said the country has the opportunity to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels, enhance energy security, and contribute to environmental sustainability.

To fully capitalize on solar energy's benefits, he said we must overcome existing challenges related to financing, awareness, and grid infrastructure. Encouraging private sector involvement, improving access to financing, and investing in grid upgrades and energy storage solutions are crucial for integrating solar power into the national grid effectively. He underscored the need for shifting all tube-wells, mosques and government offices in districts on solar energy besides giving soft loans to underprivileged and poor segment of the society.

The spokesman of KP Energy Department told APP that 6,500 mosques across the province would be solarized while conversion of 10,000 more mosques to solar energy has been in the pipe-line.

A model design and online application system for the CM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Solarization Scheme has been inaugurated and solar panels on soft loans would be provided to over 130,000 households, with 30,000 from the Merged Districts.

The spokesman said the project will provide complete 2kW solar systems to underprivileged households across the province.

He said the solarization scheme is part of the provincial government's broader efforts to address energy needs in communities where access to electricity remains a challenge, particularly in backward and remote areas of KP.

By prioritizing the most vulnerable populations, he said the scheme aims to reduce the energy burden on families, enhance living standards, and promote the use of clean energy solutions in the province.

Govt making efforts to address industries’ energy problem: Tordher



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher has said that the provincial government is making efforts to utilize 180 megawatt electricity of its own resources to address the energy problem of the local industries.

He expressed these views while addressing an annual prize distribution function of Interlink Communication Private Limited, a mobile phone accessories company, here on Monday. The best performing sales officers and other employees of the company were awarded awards.

Besides, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Interlink Communications, Ayaz Ali, Country Manager,

Shoaibuddin, General Manager (Sales) Saifullah and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Mohammad Saddique, sales officers and other concerned staffers also attended the ceremony.

During the ceremony the Special Assistant awarded the best performing sales officers and other staffers with prizes including cash, shields and commendation certificates and appreciated their performance.

Abdul Karim Tordher said that the province has started work on utilizing its own resources for the economic development and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minerals Development Company is being set up for the use of the mineral resources.

He said that due to different unfavourable situations in past had born negative impact on the business activities. However, he said the region is blessed with precious natural resources and various sectors offers huge potential of development.

The provincial government, he said is focusing on the utilization of the available natural resources potential economic sectors to stand the province on its own feet.

He said that the development of any institute or company depends on its marketing and sales department and when this section carries out its performance with best strategy take it forward towards development and achievement of the desired goal. The Special Assistant attributed the achievements of the Accessories Company to its sales department.

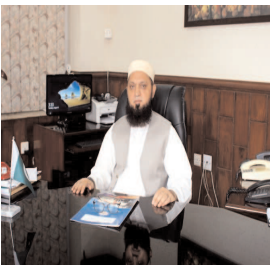
Presenting a brief review of the measures taken by the provincial government for the economic development and promotion of industries and provision of conducive business environment, he said that a markup free credit scheme has been initiated through Akhuwat Foundation for the graduates of various technical trade courses of the technical education. The purpose of the scheme is to enable such youth to begin their own business and earn livelihood on the basis of their skill.

He said that in the housing sector, the provincial government is beginning a markup free credit scheme of Rs.1.5 million for the construction of the house. Similarly, he said that an Ehsas Rozgar Scheme is also being initiated for beginning various businesses in head of cluster development programme.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi in a group photo with the Turkish delegation.

Prof. Dr. Qaisar elected as Vice Chairman PEC



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: According to unofficial results of Pakistan Engineering Council Elections (2024-27), Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor, University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar has been elected as Vice Chairman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Dr. Qaisar Ali is the first Vice Chancellor of a university to achieve this position in the PEC elections. He secured the role with a significant mandate. The elections took place on August 18, 2024 under the auspices of the PEC.

Encroachments Cleared from Saddar Road

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Cantonment Board Peshawar, acting under the directives of Station Commander Peshawar Cantt and following the orders of Chief Executive Officer Irfan Ahmad, conducted an operation led by Enforcement Officer Raja Yasir and Inspector Muhammad Ali, with the assistance of their staff.

The operation focused on clearing illegal encroachments in the market sector and other unauthorized markets in Saddar. The encroachment goods were seized and taken into custody.

On this occasion, Chief Executive Officer Irfan Ahmad, in a statement to the press, advised shopkeepers to refrain from any form of encroachment in front of their shops and to prevent others from setting up stalls, warning that legal action would be taken, and all such encroachments would be confiscated by the government.

HEC strategic leaders nurturing champions

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the strategic leadership of Chairman HEC/PUSB, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan (HEC) has embarked on a transformative journey to cultivate a generation of well-rounded individuals through sports and co-curricular activities. HEC's commitment to holistic student development has yielded remarkable results, as evidenced by the exceptional performance of Pakistani university athletes on both national and international platforms.

Sports and Co-curricular Activities Division, HEC encompassing a wide range of sports events, has witnessed remarkable growth and achievements. Through initiatives such as the Talent Hunt Youth Sports League and Establishment of Sports Academies and Resource Centers has empowered hundreds of students to excel both academically and athletically.

As evidenced by the exceptional performance of Pakistani university athletes at national and international competitions. The HEC's dedication to providing state-of-the-art sports facilities and expert coaching has yielded impressive results, with a record number of medals won in national championships and 34th National Games, Quetta. The HEC's outstanding contribution to the games was acknowledged at the closing ceremony, where HEC was bestowed with the prestigious title of Best Turn Out Trophy. This remarkable achievement underscores HEC's commitment to promoting sports and nurturing champions.

"We are immensely proud of our students' accomplishments," said Chairman HEC.

"Their dedication and hard work, coupled with HEC's support, have brought immense pride to Pakistan. He further said that sports are an integral part of a well-rounded education, and we are committed to fostering a thriving sports culture in our universities.

Mr. Javed Ali Memon, Director Sports and Co-curricular Activities Division, HEC emphasized the importance of sports in character development and nation-building. "Our focus is not just on winning medals but on developing well-rounded individuals who can contribute positively to society," he said. "We are grateful for the unwavering support of the government and the HEC leadership in enabling us to achieve these remarkable results."

HEC's commitment to sports extends beyond competitive achievements. The HEC is actively engaged in promoting physical fitness, health, and wellness among students through various co-curricular activities. By organizing sports events, HEC aims to create a vibrant and inclusive campus environment.

HEC is determined to build upon its successes and further elevate the status of university sports in Pakistan. The HEC is committed to investing in sports infrastructure, talent development, and research to ensure that Pakistan produces world-class athletes in the years to come.

Dr Aysha Elahi visits Hamza Foundation Thalassemia center



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr Aysha Elahi Ph.D scholar AFIP Islamabad visited Hamza foundation welfare Thalassemia center and Blood Transfusion Services Peshawar KP Pakistan and she collected data for PHD topic impairment to prevent Thalassemia disease in Pakistan.

She appreciated the welfare services of the organization under very limited resources and especially pre natal diagnosis (CVS), Thalassemia (test of Thalassemia baby before birth in mother uterus) and screening of volunteers donors through Eclia method.

The management of Hamza Foundation has thanked Dr. Ayesha Elahi for her visit to Hamza Foundation Peshawar KP.

Qasim chairs meeting on Mpox outbreak prevention

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the Provincial Outbreak Committee was held under the chairmanship of Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah. Director General Health Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Additional Director General Administration Dr. Siraj, Border Health Services Representative at Bacha Khan International Airport Dr. Fareez Uddin, Chief HSRU Dr. Ifthikhar Khalil, Director Public Health Dr. Irshad Roghani, Director EPI Dr. Arif, MS Police Services Hospital Dr. Niaz, WHO Khyber Pakhtunkhwa representative Dr. Babar, and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

The meeting began with a briefing by Director Public Health Dr. Irshad Roghani on the current Mpox situation, management strategies, and response efforts. Dr. Roghani informed the committee that the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern for Mpox on August 14. The disease is zoonotic, spreading from animals to humans. The first case of Mpox was reported in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Before 2022, outbreaks were limited to Central and West Africa. As of now, 3,527 cases have been reported in Asia, including China and Vietnam. Mpox spreads through respiratory droplets, direct contact with the blisters or rash of an infected person, and unprotected sexual contact.

Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah appealed to the public to maintain social distancing and exercise caution during social interactions. He urged the media to support the Department of Health in raising awareness about Mpox to inform and protect the public. Rapid response teams have been formed, and isolation wards are being set up across districts.

The minister also mentioned that the recent Mpox patient had an accident in Saudi Arabia on August 3, returned to Pakistan on August 10, and visited Khyber Teaching Hospital's OPD for treatment of a broken leg. Upon noticing skin conditions and symptoms, the hospital isolated the patient and sent samples to the Public Health Reference Laboratory.

Regarding the current case, Dr. Roghani shared that genetic sequencing revealed the patient is infected with the Clade 2B strain, originating from West Africa. All three confirmed Mpox cases in the province have travel histories linked to Saudi Arabia. A Provincial Control Room has been established within the Directorate General of Health Services, and rapid response teams have been activated. District Outbreak Committees are also setting up control rooms at the district level.

Health Minister Qasim Ali Shah was briefed that advisories, guidelines, and case management protocols are being regularly issued to all healthcare staff across the province. Screening areas and staffing have been established at Bacha Khan International Airport and Torkham border. Isolation wards are being set up in district-level DHQ hospitals, while private hospitals have been notified through the Healthcare Commission.

In response to the current case, an isolation ward has also been established at MTI Mardan. Screening of passengers is ongoing at Bacha Khan International Airport, where more than 10,000 passengers from 83 flights have been screened for Mpox symptoms. Additionally, over 5,000 passengers crossing the Torkham border have been screened.

Speaker KP Assembly vows to address harmful milk issue

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: "We cannot find a solution to any problem until we address its root cause. People elect their representatives to the assembly to protect their rights and legislate based on research and ground realities," expressed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati while presiding over a committee meeting in the Assembly Conference Room. The meeting was called to discuss a report published regarding harmful milk in the province.

The meeting, chaired by the Assembly Speaker, included attendance by the female member Sobiya Shahid, who had submitted the adjournment motion on this critical issue on the Assembly floor, Minister for Livestock Fazal Hakim, officials from the Livestock Association, the Livestock and Halal Food Authority, and other relevant departments. Speaker Babar Saleem Swati stated that this was the first time such extensive checks had been conducted, and the findings had shocked everyone. He remarked that if our children are consuming chemically tainted milk, then there is no point in establishing these authorities. He criticized the fact that agencies do not define their boundaries, leading to multiple agencies performing the same tasks. This results in the core issue being neglected, and instead, all efforts are consumed in a battle of authority, leaving the public confused about where to take their grievances.

The Assembly Speaker emphasized that the current issue of harmful milk has been raised seriously, which is why everyone is gathered here today to examine every aspect of it. It was essential to have representatives from those connected with the livestock sector, relevant authorities, and public representatives at the table to discuss and reach a conclusion. For this purpose, the research wing of the Assembly and officials from other relevant departments are also present in this public interest meeting, where they will compile a research document based on the discussions held here so that we can present our recommendations after a thorough study of every aspect.



In brief

Five die in Khairpur

KHAIRPUR (INP): Five persons, including three girls, died after drinking poisonous milk at Pir Goth tehsil in Khairpur, while the condition of two girls was stated to be critical till last reports came in on Monday. Taking notice of the incident, Commissioner Sukkur division Fayyaz Abbasi sought a report from the Khairpur deputy commissioner. Police said that the deceased had been identified as 18-year-old Asghar, 15-year-old Dilbar, Fehmida, Ganj Baby and Sonia Brohi, while the girls who were in critical condition had been shifted to a hospital. Police further said they were investigating how the milk was mixed with poison.

Two die in road mishap

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Two including a cop and a woman died while another injured after an over speeding truck rammed into residential houses, police said on Monday. According to details, the accident took place near Barkat Town area of Ferozewala, district Sheikhupura where a Lahore bound truck got out control of driver and rammed into residential houses by roadside. As a result of accident, two people including a cop and a woman died on the spot while truck driver was injured. The rescue teams reached the scene, pulled out the bodies trapped under the truck and shifted them to hospital. The police impounded the truck and after registering a case against the driver started investigations.

Protective kits distributed

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Protective measures have been started in the Mangah area of the monkey pox patient, while protective kits were provided to the affected patient under the supervision of DHO Dr. Javed Iqbal. Similarly, disinfectant spray is also being done in the area. Dr. Javed Iqbal said that the patient was quarantined at home where his condition is better and out of danger. Meanwhile, under the public agenda program of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, DC Mardan Mian Behzad Adil visited Mardan Medical Complex and DHQ Hospital. DHO Mardan Javed Iqbal and AAC Mardan Shaguffa Sarwar were along with him. He also visited various wards and labs of the hospital and especially the monkey pox ward and took information about the arrangements and facilities and services available there. On this occasion, he said that providing the best health facilities to the people is one of the topmost priorities of the present government. He directed the staff to provide best health-care facilities to the patients.

Body recovered

MULTAN (INP): A dead body was recovered from Muzaffargarh canal in limits of Mahmood Kot police station. Police informed the body being identified as Asif Munir Gurmami with no father's name was yet reported to the media through the initial information. He was said to have abducted three days ago from Mohalla Garibabad Kot Adu at his home. The kidnapping case was registered with the city police station just earlier, it said. According to FIR, some two people reached out at the victim's home for meet-up last Friday and later took him away to unknown location. Since then, he couldn't be seen anywhere nor did return back to his home. There was no marks of torture or bruises appeared on the body, police said.

One killed, three injured as roof collapses

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: A laborer killed while three injured due roof collapse incident occurred at under-construction Government High School in Shagai village of Tehsil Maidaan, District Dir Lower. The injured and the deceased laborer's body were rescued by local people and shifted to a nearby hospital, where the injured received medical treatment and were later sent home.

According to eyewitnesses, the roof of the Government High School Shagai collapsed yesterday when laborers were working on the roof's concrete filling. The shuttering, cement, and seriya (construction materials) failed to withstand the weight, causing the roof to collapse suddenly. As a result, one laborer died, and three others were injured.

Local people blamed the contractor for the incident, saying that it was unwise to continue construction work



on the roof during heavy rainfall. The ground had become slippery due to the rain, and the pillars supporting the shuttering had sunk into the ground, leading to the accident. Locals demanded a transparent investigation into the incident and asked the government to hold those responsible accountable.

On the other hand, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister, Malik Liaquat Ali Khan, visited the site of the roof collapse at

Government Girls High School Shagai and sought a report from the relevant authorities. During his visit, he expressed deep sorrow over the incident and condoled with the family of the deceased laborer. He directed the provision of best medical facilities to the injured and ordered a transparent investigation into the incident. He also instructed that strict legal action be taken against those responsible for the incident.

Tribesmen announces Plan C of continuous protest

Amjad Ali Afridi

JAMRUD: Internally Displace people of Rajgal area of Tirah valley, district Khyber announced Plan C of their continuous protest in favor of their demands while addressing a press conference at the Jamrud Press Club, on Monday.

The participants of the sit-in announced to intensify their protest. The sit-in of the affected people of Tirah Rajgal is ongoing at the historic Bab-e-Khyber, and the participants have announced to intensify their protest by unveiling Plan C. In this regard, the responsible persons of the sit-in, including Malik Naseer Ahmed Kuki Khel, Haji Barakat, Khan Muhammad Torikhel, Sanullah, Malik Wahid Shah Afridi, Haji Ahmad Shah



Manyia Khel, and others, said that the protest has been ongoing for 15 days for the dignified return of the affected people of Tirah Rajgal.

Their demands include a dignified return to their homes from Tirah Rajgal to Khurwal Gandao area, a rehabilitation package similar to Swat and Waziristan, and development work in the area. The sit-in participants also announced Plan C, under which they will block the Pak-Afghan highway in front of the Tehsil

Compound on Friday to intensify the protest. From Tuesday and Wednesday, they will block the highway at Bhagiar or Ali Mosque.

They said that the operation in Tirah Rajgal, Khyber Agency, has been completed, and the area has been cleared, but the affected people are not being allowed to return to their homes, which is a matter of concern for them. Therefore, after consultation, they have announced Plan C.

Injured person died, relatives hold protest

F.P. Report

LARKANA: After the death of an oldman Imdad Sheikh, who was injured during a quarrel between the Baddani and Sheikh communities in the village of Juma Shaikh, near Baqrani Larkana district, the relatives protest at SSP chowk Larkana and demand to arrest of the accused involved in the murder & they sit-in was held against Shaheed Elahi Bakhsh Sial Police Station.

On this occasion, the relatives of the deceased Peersan, Ayaz Sheikh, Shaukat Sheikh, Nizamuddin and others protested and said that 15 days ago, the relative of the

chairman of the Union Council, Wadda Mahar, was killed in our house at night.

They broke into the house during which they caught him and handed him over to the said police who gave him a heavy sum of money from the chairman of the deceased party and released him. They demanded that the murderers of the deceased Pearson should be arrested soon and the chairman of the Union Council should be arrested and justice should be done to us, otherwise the scope of the protest will be extended.

Badeh city make to be status of taluka: Citizens from the platform of "Badah Taluk Movement"

took out a protest rally against the city of Larkana, which has a large population, was not given the status of a taluka.

At the spot of Town Committee office, Ali Anwar Askari, Asghar Noonari, Dodo Deshi, Bakhshal Magsi and other leaders related to social organizations and various religious groups, said that it is said to say that the rulers of a public party have promised many times to make Badah Shahr a taluk. They have turned to the other side every time the elected representatives have succeeded by showing false dreams of making Badah a Paris city, with the people.

DDI Agriculture visits at Kissan Sahulat center

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Continuous monitoring of farmer-friendly initiatives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is on going.

According to the details, Deputy Director Information Agriculture Faisalabad Muhammad Ishaq Lashari visited Toba Tek Singh Kissan Sahulat Center and also reviewed the facilities provided to the farmers. On this occasion, Deputy Director Agriculture (Extension) Dr. Naushir Khan gave a briefing about Kissan Sahulat Centers established in Toba Tek Singh and said that four Kissan Sahulat Centers have been established in Toba Tek Singh on the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

These include Toba Tek Singh, Gojra, Pirmahal and Kamalia. Ishaq Lashari said that the establishment of Kissan Sahulat Centers in cotton growing areas under the direction of Punjab

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is a good step.

He said that agricultural medicines are available at the centers at a discounted price of 10 to 15 percent from the market. Advisory desks have also been established for technical guidance of the farmers. Experts at the centers provide guidance on good crop care. Deputy Director Information Agriculture Ishaq Lashari inquired from the farmers about the usefulness of Kissan Sahulat Center. Farmers appreciated and thanked Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif for this initiative.

Meanwhile, on the special instructions of DG Punjab Food Authority Mohammad Asim Javid, crackdown is on against adulteration and counterfeiting mafia. According to the details, under the leadership of Deputy Director (Operations) Toba Tek Singh Adnan Haider, the food safety team of Kamalia, who smuggle

fake drinks raided 2 units, 9,462 liters of fake and substandard drinks containing 8,278 bottles of various well-known brands were recovered.

All the fake and substandard drinks were packed in well-known brands' labels and packaging. According to the inspection and testing done on the spot, the drinks were declared fake and substandard. 9,462 liters of fake and substandard drinks were seized and the samples were sent to the lab for further testing. 2 cases have been registered against the accused in City Police Station Kamalia and Sadar Police Station Kamalia. Deputy Director (Operations) Adnan Haider while talking to the media said that fake drinks are prepared by using different chemicals and other ingredients.

Consumption of fake and substandard drinks leads to many diseases. He further said that a large crackdown is on against counterfeiting mafia.



HYDERABAD: A view of flooded water accumulated at Sehrish Nagar.

3 children drown in pond in Jamrud

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Three children including a real brother and sister drown in water pond in Wali Khel, Ghundi village of Jamrud, district Khyber Rescue 1122 official told on Monday.

Immediately after a mishap, the Rescue 1122 officials along the medical teams rushed to the spot and started rescue activities. The Rescue 1122 workers assisted by the locals fished out the children and shifted it to nearest health center where the doctors declared them dead after examination.

The deceased were identified as Mudasser 07, Aryan 04 and Sumbul 05. Locals informed that a ditch had been dugged out for basement construction work that filled with water in recent down pour that caused death of three children of one family.

Tarbela reaches full capacity

TARBELA (INP): In a significant development for Pakistan's water and power sectors, Tarbela Dam has been filled to its maximum capacity, with water levels reaching 1,550 feet.

This marks the second consecutive year that the dam has been fully filled, storing over 5.8 million acre-feet (MAF) of water. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) announced that with the dam now at full capacity, there is no room for additional water storage. As a result, spillway gates have been opened to manage the overflow.

WAPDA is expected to make an official announcement regarding the dam's status later today. The completion of Tarbela Dam for the second year in a row is being hailed as a major success, particularly for the agricultural and energy sectors. The stored water will be used for irrigation purposes across the country, ensuring that agricultural activities remain uninterrupted during the upcoming seasons.

Additionally, the dam will continue to generate hydroelectric power, contributing to the stability of the national grid. On the other hand, over the past 10 years, Pakistan's oil and gas production has witnessed a significant decline instead of the anticipated growth, a situation attributed to political instability, security concerns, and a persistent lack of investment in exploration and development. Due to the reasons mentioned above, large reserves have not been discovered over the last decade.

Special cleaning drive launched in Bannu

F.P. Report

BANNU: Under the public agenda of Chief Minister Bannu, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Bannu Abdul Hameed Khan, Tehsil Municipal Administration Bannu Muhammad Yusuf Khan formally inaugurated a special cleaning campaign from Women and Children Hospital. An operation was conducted against the illegal encroachment on the roadside and the stand was removed.

On this occasion, Tehsil Municipal Officer Mohammad Yusuf Khan while talking to the media said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin under the special cleaning campaign of Gandapur. Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Bannu Abdul Hameed Khan, the cleanliness campaign is ongoing in the district. Illegal encroachments and stands on the roadside were also removed. HKD Chief Land Inspector of Tehsil Municipal Administration Hafiz Karim Dad Khan, Senior Sanitary Inspector Wali Ayaz Khan and other staff were present in the ceremony.

They said that Tehsil Municipal Administration

Minister Under the public agenda of the Highness, cleanliness will be inspected on a daily basis. The aim of starting the campaign from women's hospital bins is to provide a clean environment to the patients and the attendants. Kariga and any kind of negligence in this regard will not be tolerated.

Meanwhile, Additional Assistant Commissioner Revenue Riaz Ahmed along with TMO Yusuf Khan, HDK Karim Dad Khan and other officers visited DHQ Hospital and Inspected the ongoing special cleaning campaign in the hospital. This TMO Bannu gave a detailed briefing to the Additional Assistant Commissioner Bannu Riaz Ahmed regarding the ongoing campaign and encroachments in the hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Bannu Abdul Hameed Khan presided over the meeting. In the held meeting, DEDAC Chairman and Member Provincial Assembly Zahidullah Khan took special part in the meeting. Munir, Dil Shamd, Bahram Khan, Gul Dad, Sher Ayaz, Safatullah, Iqar Khan, Ismail Khan former tehsil opposition leader Malik Khalid Khan, Rizwan Khan Garhi Sher

Ahmed, Nazim Sohail Khan and Ashfaq Khan were also DEDAC Chairman Zahidullah Khan Wazir informed the Deputy Commissioner Bannu and the concerned authorities about the landslide situation and public difficulties, on which the Deputy Commissioner Bannu assured the Dedic Chairman and Elders that the problem will be resolved soon and directed the concerned authorities to visit the site of the incident.

Assistant Commissioner Khayyam, CNW, TMA Irrigation and others were also present in the meeting. Member Provincial Assembly Zahidullah Khan Wazir said that Ahmed Zai Wazir will solve the problem of landslides of the chiefs of the sub-division and measures should be taken on an emergency basis. Ahmedzai Wazir will provide all possible support for the remedy of the sub-division road sliding as well as other problems will also be solved on a priority basis. He said that the provincial government is not oblivious to the public problems, it will solve the problems from time to time. The provincial government is trying for the welfare of the people on an emergency basis.

Search operation against anti-state elements

F.P. Report

KARAK: A joint search operation of police, CTD, Pak Army and local regional Chigha party against anti-social and anti-national elements in the hilly areas of Karak-Bahadur Khel, according to the details, under the direct leadership of District Police Officer Karak Khan Khel, Tehsil Banda Dad Shah. A search and strike operation was conducted against elements hostile to society and the country in various hills of the sensitive area of Bahadur Khel.

Anti-Terrorism Unit, Pakistan Army troops, Police Elite Commandos, Rescue 15 Squad and Regional Chigha Party of the local population jointly participated in this operation. During the search operation, the forces and local people raided and searched the possible hide-outs and ambushes of anti-social and anti-national elements in the mountains.

On this occasion, DPO Khan Khel reiterated this commitment and said that he will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the peace and security of the country and elements hostile to the society and the country will not be allowed to disturb the peace. And strict action

will be taken against these elements and said that the people, police and other forces are all on the same track against this evil and are always ready to fight a common war against them.

Advocate attacked: Murderous attack on Kirk-Mansoor Elahi Advocate, the attack was carried out at 11:30 at night at the house of Mansoor Elahi Advocate in village Khurram Muhammad Zai, the bodies of Mansoor Elahi Advocate and Mazhar Naman were miraculously saved. A case has been registered against unknown persons.

According to the details, the political and social personality Mansurullahi Advocate belonging to Khurram Muhammad Zai was not attacked, the attack was carried out at the house of Mansurullahi Advocate in village Khurram Muhammadzai, Mansurullahi Advocate and Mazhar were killed in the attack. Miraculously saved, it should be clear that Mansoorullahi Advocate does not have any kind of enmity, tension and differences with anyone in the village and area, he belongs to a civilized, noble and educated family and in the village and area. Has a good reputation, continues to actively partici-

pate in the political and social activities of the village and the area.

Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council and District Bar Association, Peshawar Bar Association has strongly condemned the murderous attack on Mansoorullahi Advocate and the authorities. It was demanded to take disciplinary action against the people involved in the incident.

Farewell ceremony held: Farewell ceremony held in honor of DSPs transferred from Karak-District Karak. District Police Officer Karak Khan Khel organized a wedding ceremony in their honor on the transfer of two DSPs of District Karak. In which under the changed DSP Nusrati Falak Nawaz Bangash and DSP Banda Dad Shah Mohammad Zaman Khan along with SP Investigation Mohammad Ashfaq Khan, DSP Headquarters Abid Afridi and DSP CTD Imtiaz Khan participated. During the wedding ceremony, DPO Khan Khel and SP Investigation Ashfaq Khan presented commemorative gold medals to the transferred officers. And appreciated their services and expressed good wishes for the new appointment.

Elected members on same for rapid development

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Chairman District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Kohat Shafiullah Jan MPA has asked the authorities of all government departments to wholeheartedly work shoulder to shoulder with the elected representatives for the rapid development of Kohat so that the dream of development of Kohat can be cherished. This he said while addressing the

introductory meeting held with the Heads of Line Departments in his office on Monday. In the meeting, each Department told about its work and the future plan of action besides the issues it is facing in delivery of services in detail.

Chairman DDAC said that he is aware of the problems and difficulties of the departments, but we have to take our district forward by making better use of the available resources. He added that he alongwith his other elect-

ed colleagues are in close contact with the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Insha Allah the current 5-year period will prove to be an ideal and memorable one in the history of Kohat in the context of progress and prosperity. He made it clear that there is no place for anyone who does not support the development of Kohat. Shafi Jan maintained that they are from the people and will speak for the interest of the people in each and every forum.



Democrats, protesters gather in Chicago to cheer

CHICAGO (Reuters): Democrats gathered in Chicago on Monday to celebrate Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign for the White House against Republican Donald Trump and to honor President Joe Biden, whose exit from the race turned his party's fortunes around.

Monday's kick-off of the four-day Democratic National Convention is expected also to draw tens of thousands of protesters, many of them opposed to the Biden administration's support for Israel's Gaza offensive, who will march on a mile-long route through the city outside the security perimeter. Biden, 81, who reluctantly ended his reelection campaign a month ago under pressure from top Democrats worried he was too old to win or govern for another four years, will give a prime-time address at the convention on Monday night to make the case for electing Harris and defeating former President Trump, 78.

As Democrats seek to project a sense of unity after the unprecedented change-up in candidates, Harris, 59, is likely to join Biden on stage, sources said, where he will ceremonially pass the torch to her. Harris will formally accept the nomination with a highly anticipated speech. If elected on Nov. 5, Harris would make US history as the first female president. A coalition of some 200 social justice organizations, many from pro-Palestinian groups, will gather outside the convention. Some pro-Palestinian delegates to the convention are pushing for the party to change its platform to limit weapons to Israel.

Harris is heading into the convention riding a historic whirlwind: her campaign has broken records for fundraising, packed arenas with supporters, and turned opinion polls in some battleground states in Democrats' favor. Biden abandoned his reelection bid after his disastrous debate against Trump on June 27 prompted long-time allies, major donors and other party supporters to demand he step aside. Polls a month ago showed Trump with a clear lead over Biden, but Harris has closed the gap both nationally and in many of the highly competitive states including Pennsylvania that will play a decisive role in the election. "I've been to every convention since I was able to vote, and I can say I've not felt this kind of energy and electricity at any convention other than the one for Barack Obama," said Democratic

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker on CNN's State of the Union.

Harris went on a bus tour in western Pennsylvania with her vice presidential running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz. During the tour she suggested Trump was a coward whose politics focused on putting down rivals. She will be in Chicago for much of the week, but will make a side trip to Milwaukee for a campaign event, returning to Chicago to hear her husband, Doug Emhoff, address the convention that night. The Trump campaign will barnstorm the key battleground states during convention week to try to steal the spotlight away from Harris and highlight some of the policy issues where Republicans hold a polling advantage. In Trump's most intense stretch of campaigning this race, he will deliver remarks on economic policy at a small business in southern Pennsylvania on Monday afternoon, before events in North Carolina, Michigan, Arizona and Nevada later in the week. Some major allies and donors have been urging Trump to steer clear of racial and gender-based insults on Harris and focus his attacks instead on her policy record. Trump's Michigan event will be in Howell, a city struggling to move past its racist history, including Ku Klux Klan rallies in the 1970s and 1980s. Last month, about a dozen white supremacists chanted "Heil Hitler" and carried signs such as "White Lives Matter" during a march through downtown.

Another group of demonstrators shouted, "We love Hitler, we love Trump" from a highway overpass in a nearby town, according to local media. The Harris campaign criticized Trump for refusing to condemn what it called a "blatant display of racism and antisemitism in his name." Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said Trump would emphasize in Howell that hate would have no place in the country if he returns to the White House. She noted Biden visited Howell in 2021. A Trump campaign official said the event was targeted at the Detroit media market and being hosted by a Trump-supporting local sheriff whose office is in Howell. Democrats will also pay tribute on Monday night to their failed 2016 presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, who is expected to speak before Biden. Former President Barack Obama will speak and former President Bill Clinton will speak.

Cholera outbreak in Sudan killed at 22 people

KHARTOUM: Sudan has been stricken by a cholera outbreak that has killed nearly two dozen people and sickened hundreds more in recent weeks, health authorities said. Health Minister Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim said in a statement that at least 22 people have died from the disease, and that at least 354 confirmed cases of cholera have been detected across the war-torn country in recent weeks.

He declared a cholera epidemic in Sudan and noted that the outbreak was "because of the weather conditions and because drinking water has been contaminated". He said the decision was taken in conjunction with authorities in the eastern state of Kassala, United Nations agencies and experts after the "discovery by the public health laboratory of the cholera virus".

An official from the World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Harris,

said in a media call that 11,327 cholera cases with 316 deaths had been reported in Sudan so far. "We expect to have more than has been reported," she added. Cholera is a fast-developing, highly contagious infection that causes diarrhoea, leading to severe dehydration and possible death within hours when not treated, according to the WHO. It is transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food or water and can kill within hours without treatment. Children under five are at particular risk. Cholera is not uncommon in Sudan. A previous major outbreak left at least 700 dead and sickened about 22,000 in less than two months in 2017.

But the outbreak of the disease is the latest calamity for the region. Devastating seasonal floods in recent weeks have also compounded the misery. Dozens of people have been killed and critical infrastructure has been

washed away in 12 of Sudan's 18 provinces, according to local authorities. About 118,000 people have been displaced due to the floods, according to the United Nations' migration agency. To complicate the situation, the civil war, which began in April last year when simmering tensions between the military and a powerful paramilitary group exploded into open warfare across the country, has plunged the region into chaos. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - under Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as "Hemedti" - have been vying for power and control of the African country of 46 million people. The conflict has turned the capital Khartoum and other urban areas into battlefields, wrecking civilian infrastructure and an already battered healthcare system. — Aljazeera

Famine looming in parts of Yemen: UN

NEW YORK: Acute malnutrition is rapidly escalating in Yemen, with famine looming in four districts, United Nations experts have said. A report published by the UN's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Technical Group in Yemen, covering areas under government control, said the most critical cases are emerging along the war-torn country's Red Sea coast.

Yemen, already one of the poorest countries in the Arabian Peninsula, has been ravaged by years of war between the Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Houthis. The conflict, which has stalemated for years, has caused economic collapse and precipitated one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. The IPC report said malnutrition rates have significantly worsened due to a combination of factors including the spread of diseases such as cholera and measles, a shortage of nutritious food, a lack of drinking water, and broader economic decline.

The number of acutely malnourished children has increased by 34 percent compared with last year, the report said, including more than 18,500 children under five who are projected to be severely malnourished by the end of this year. Some 223,000 pregnant and lactating women are also expected to be malnourished in 2024. All 117 districts in government-controlled areas are expected to suffer from "serious" levels of acute malnutrition, it said.

Among them, four districts - Mawza and al-Makha (Mocha) in Taiz province, and Hays and Khawkhah in Hodeidah province - are projected to slip into famine between July and October this year. A famine is declared in an area when one in five people or households severely lack food and face starvation and destitution that would ultimately lead to critical levels of acute malnutrition and death. The IPC, a global partnership of 15 UN agencies and humanitarian organisations, has emphasised the urgent need for increased support and intervention to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

"These findings should be a wake-up call that lives are at stake," said Pierre Honnorat, the World Food Programme director in Yemen. "It is critical to step up support to the most vulnerable who could sink deeper into food insecurity and malnutrition if current low levels of humanitarian funding persist." The report does not provide details on recent deaths from severe hunger nor on the situation in Houthi-held areas. The rebels have in recent months launched a crackdown on UN agencies and aid groups, detaining dozens of workers. About half of the country's population - or 18.2 million people - are in need of humanitarian aid this year, according to the UN. — Aljazeera

India's schoolgirls leading a silent cycling revolution

NEW DELHI (BBC): Nibha Kumari, a resident of Bihar, India's poorest state, recalls how a bicycle transformed her life when she turned 15. For two years, six days a week, she cycled two hours daily from home to school and coaching classes and back, using a bicycle provided by the state government. "If I didn't have a cycle, I don't think I could have finished high school. It changed my life," says Nibha, now 27.

The daughter of a farmer from Begusarai district, Nibha was sent to live with her aunt 10km (six miles) away to attend a nearby primary school. Mobility was challenging for girls and public transport was unreliable. When Nibha returned home for high school, she hopped on a bicycle, navigating the rough village roads to pursue her education. "Girls have gained a lot of confidence after they began using bicycles to go to schools and coaching classes. More and more of them are going to school now. Most of them have free bicycles," says Bhuvaneshwari Kumari, a health worker in Begusarai.

She's right. A new peer-reviewed study published in the journal ScienceDirect reveals remarkable insights about school-going children and cycling in rural India. The study by Srishiti Agrawal, Adit Seth and Rahul Goel found that the most notable rise in cycling in India had occurred among rural girls - increasing more than two times from 4.5% in 2007 to 11% in 2017 - reducing the gender gap in the activity. "This is a silent revolution. We call it a revolution because cycling levels increased among girls in a country which has high levels of gender inequality in terms of female mobility outside the home, in general, and for cycling, in particular," says Ms Agrawal. State-run free bicycle distribution schemes since 2004 have targeted girls, who had higher school dropout rates than boys due to household chores and exhausting long walks. This approach isn't unique to India - evidence from



countries like Colombia, Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe also shows that bicycles effectively boost girls' school enrolment and retention. But the scale here is unmatched.

The three researchers - from Delhi's Indian Institute of Technology and Mumbai's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies - analysed transport modes for school-going children aged 5-17 years from a nationwide education survey, looked at the effectiveness of state-run schemes that provide free bicycles to students and tested their influence on the cycling rate. Nationally, the percentage of all students cycling to school rose from 6.6% in 2007 to 11.2% in 2017, they found. Cycling to school in rural areas doubled over the decade, while in urban areas, it remained steady. Indian city roads are notoriously unsafe, with low urban cycling to school linked to poor traffic safety and more cars on the road. India's cycling revolution is most substantial in villages, with states like Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, and Chhattisgarh leading the growth. These states have populations comparable to some of the largest European

countries. Cycling was most common for longer distances in rural areas than in urban areas, the study found.

India began reporting cycling behaviour for the first time only in the last Census in 2011. Only 20% of those travelling to work outside home reported cycling as their main mode of transport. But people in villages cycled more (21%) than in the cities (17%). Also, more working men (21.7%) than their female counterparts (4.7%) cycled to work. "Compared to international settings, this level of gender gap in cycling is among the highest in the world," says Ms Agrawal. American suffragist Susan B Anthony famously said that the bicycle "has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance". Researchers wonder if women cycle less as they age due to shrinking job opportunities and work-force dropout. Nibha stopped cycling after marriage and moving to her in-laws' home. While she still travels outside the house as she trains to become a teacher, when asked about her commute, she simply says, "I don't need the cycle anymore."

UK Foreign Office official resigns over Israel arms sales

LONDON (BBC): A British Foreign Office official who worked on counter terrorism has resigned in protest at arms sales to Israel, saying the UK government "may be complicit in war crimes". Mark Smith wrote to colleagues, saying he had raised concerns "at every level" in the Foreign Office, including through an official whistle blowing mechanism.

Mr Smith, who was based at the British Embassy in Dublin, added he had received nothing more than basic acknowledgments. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) declined to comment on an individual case but said the government was committed to upholding international law. The resignation email, which has been seen by the BBC, was sent to a wide set of distribution lists including hundreds of government officials, embassy staff and special advisers to Foreign Office ministers. Mr Smith said he had previously worked in Middle East arms export licensing assessment for the government and "each day" colleagues were witnessing "clear and unquestionable examples" of war crimes and breaches of international humanitarian law by Israel in Gaza. "Senior members of the Israeli government and military have expressed open genocidal intent, Israeli soldiers take videos deliberately burning, destroying and looting civilian property," he wrote. "Whole streets and universities have been demolished, humanitarian aid is being blocked and civilians are regularly left with no safe quarter to flee to. Red Crescent ambulances have been attacked, schools and

hospitals are regularly targeted. These are War Crimes."

He said there was "no justification for the UK's continued arms sales to Israel". The FCDO said Foreign Secretary David Lammy had initiated a review "on day one in office" to assess whether Israel was complying with international humanitarian law. While hundreds of officials in the UK, Europe and the US have registered unprecedented levels of dissent at their governments' policies towards Israel over the war in Gaza, there have been far fewer known cases of so-called principled resignations, meaning Mr Smith's case is extremely rare for the British government. Details of Mr Smith's resignation first emerged when the journalist Hind Hassan posted a copy of its contents on the social media platform X. According to the email, his role was "Second Secretary Counter Terrorism" - understood to be a relatively junior rank, but one in which he described himself as "a subject matter expert in the domain of arms sales policy" after "a long career in the diplomatic service".

His email continued: "Ministers claim that the UK has one of the most 'robust and transparent' arms export licensing regimes in the world, however this is the opposite of the truth." "As a fully cleared officer raising serious concerns of illegality in this Department, to be disregarded in this way is deeply troubling. It is my duty as a public servant to raise this." A source close to Mr Smith said his email was limited to internal government addressees and he did not resign publicly.

Since the story has emerged in pub-

lic, Mr Smith has issued a statement calling on the government to "listen to the concerns" of civil servants, adding that he was previously the lead author of the central assessment governing the legality of UK arms sales in the Middle East and North Africa Directorate. He said: "It was my job to gather all relevant information regarding civilian casualties, international law compliance as well as assess the commitment and capabilities of the countries in question." "To export arms to any nation, the UK must be satisfied that the recipient nation has in place robust procedures to avoid civilian casualties and to minimize harm to civilian life. It is impossible to argue that Israel is doing that." "I have written to the Foreign Secretary informing him of my resignation and urging him to urgently review the UK approach to the situation in Gaza. I sincerely hope that he will listen to the concerns of Civil Servants on this issue and make the necessary changes." Since 2008, the UK has granted licences for weapons exports to Israel worth £574m (\$727m) in total, according to the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT). The UK government has recently played down the scale of the supply, calling it "relatively small" at £42m (\$53m) in 2022. Israel has repeatedly denied breaching international humanitarian law in Gaza. Responding to previous cases of dissent by Western officials over policy and arms supply, Israel's government has said it is acting to defeat Hamas as "a genocidal terrorist organisation which commits war crimes as well as crimes against humanity".

'Treated like slaves' on Scottish fishing boats

LONDON (BBC): Dozens of workers from around the world may have been trafficked into the UK to work for a small family-owned Scottish fishing firm, a BBC investigation has revealed. Thirty-five men from the Philippines, Ghana, India and Sri Lanka were recognised as victims of modern slavery by the Home Office after being referred to it between 2012 and 2020.

The workers were employed by TN Trawlers and its sister companies, owned by the Nicholson family, based in the small town of Annan on the southern coast of Scotland. The TN Group denied any allegation of modern slavery or human trafficking and said its workers were well treated and well paid. The company was the focus of two long-running criminal investigations but no cases of human trafficking or modern slavery have come to trial, although some of the men waited years to give evidence. While TN Trawlers' lead director, Thomas Nicholson, was under active investigation, TN Group companies continued recruiting new employees from across the world. Experienced fisherman Joel Quince was 28 when he landed at Heathrow Airport in 2012, thrilled to have secured a job as a deckhand with TN trawlers. Joel had a young family back home in the Philippines, thousands of miles away. He had been expecting to earn a good income working in the UK. He was to be paid \$1,012 (£660) a month for a 48-hour week.

He caught a bus from London to Carlisle, where, he says, he was picked up by the owner's son, Tom

Nicholson Jr. "On our way to go to the boat he told us: 'You have to give me your documents' - so without hesitation I gave all my documents to them," he said. Joel says he was then taken straight to the fishing ground to start working. But he was surprised to find that his boat was the Philomena rather than the Mattanja, which was the only vessel he was authorised to work on under the terms of his visa. "This was already something fishy for me," he said. He claims that instead of the 48-hour week he had been told about, he was working 18 hours a day, seven days a week while the Philomena was out fishing. On his monthly wage of £637, it meant Joel was earning less than the UK minimum wage - although at that time there was no legal requirement to pay it to fishermen like him. Joel was one of about 30 seafarers who arrived in the UK to join TN Trawlers between 2011 and 2013, mostly from the Philippines. They joined dredgers trawling for scallops along the UK coastline.

These dredgers, built in the 1970s and 80s, work by towing metal nets along the seabed. They scrape up shellfish, as well as stones and bycatch - the other marine life which gets caught in the nets. Deckhands throw back the stones and pack the scallops in ice below deck. Several of the men the BBC spoke to had little or no fishing experience. All describe working shift patterns as gruelling as Joel's or worse. Joel said he struggled to get up to go to work because he was so exhausted - but he didn't complain because his colleagues were

also suffering.

"If I stop working, there's three people suffering, not getting their rest, because the operation keeps continuing. They won't stop." He said there was not enough drinking water on board the vessels, and the crew were reduced to eating tomatoes from the stores to wet their throats. He also said that on one occasion a skipper threw an empty Coke can at the crew. All the men the BBC spoke to described shortages of proper clothing, food and water. Jaype Rubi was a young Filipino when he worked on board the TN dredger Sea Lady in 2012.

"Picking up and throwing out rocks is really tiring," he said. "The boat had CCTV, so the skipper could watch us. If we stop, he'd pull down the window and say: 'Why are you resting?'" Jaype said he was "super cold" and there was not enough food. When he spoke to his mum on the phone, he started crying. "I said: 'I want to go home because it's a nightmare working on that boat.'" Jaype said he was subjected to verbal abuse and was treated "like a slave". Other men said that, despite arriving in the UK on 48-hour transit visa, they were told to work onshore in the TN yard at Annan, in breach of their visa entitlement. One man, Jovito Abiero, told the BBC he was sometimes sent to the home of the company owner Tom Nicholson to do gardening. On 22 August 2012, Joel was aboard the Philomena off the coast of Northern Ireland during rough weather. He was fixing a broken link in the metal nets when the towing bar swung up.

He leapt out of the way - but fell and hit his head on the deck. His crew mates estimated he was unconscious for up to 15 minutes. When Joel woke up with a bandage on his head, he asked his skipper - Tom Nicholson Jr - if they were going to hospital. "He said: 'No, we're not going to the hospital. We continue fishing,'" said Joel.

Joel was given paracetamol by the skipper and his head was bandaged. The Philomena didn't turn around and head for the port of Troon in Ayrshire until 11 hours after the accident. Joel got off the Philomena, never to return. He found support at the Fisherman's Mission, a harbour-side charity that supports seafarers. At that time the mission was run by two sisters, Paula Daly and Karen Burston, who helped Joel get medical help. They had been hearing rumours about TN boats for some time. "In 2012, it became really quite abundantly clear that we were getting the same message from quite a few different crew," said Paula. "There were so many things that were so wrong," added Karen. Police forces on several UK coasts had long been aware of allegations about TN Trawlers.

The company had been prosecuted in 2007 for illegal catches worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. Tom Nicholson and TN Trawlers were ordered to pay £473,000 under proceeds of crime laws. They were also ordered to pay almost £150,000 in fines and costs after the Maritime and Coastguard Agency found a string of defects and safety breaches on ves-

sels between 2009 and 2011. A 2012 police briefing, seen by the BBC, also noted six Filipino fishermen swam ashore from TN boats and complained of mistreatment. That year, police in Dumfries and Galloway launched Operation Alto, an investigation into human trafficking and labour abuse at TN Trawlers. Eighteen former TN Trawlers employees - including Joel - passed into the Home Office's National Referral Mechanism, a system which identifies and supports victims of human trafficking. Modern slavery is a term that can encompass human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. The Home Office defines the essence of human trafficking as a situation where a person is "coerced or deceived into a situation where they are exploited". Under this guidance, the men were all given recognition by the Home Office that they had been trafficked.

They were taken to a safe house somewhere in Scotland, then police asked them to stay in the UK to help with further enquiries and act as witnesses when the case came to court. TN Trawlers continued to recruit, switching its main recruitment operation from East Asia to West Africa. In June 2013, Gideon Mensah from Ghana signed up to work on the TN scallop dredger Noordzee. He said he soon found himself in the same situation as the Filipinos - overworked and undernourished. Gideon told the BBC his wages were diverted to his recruitment agent back home, leaving him with £50 cash in hand each month -

just £1.66 per day. He was later recognised as a victim of modern slavery by the Home Office and spent several years on file as a witness for forthcoming prosecutions.

In 2017, five years after Joel Quince stepped off the Philomena at Troon harbour, 25-year old Vishal Sharma left India and arrived in London on a transit visa. He'd signed a contract with a different company to work in the engine room of a Belgian tanker for 15 months. But his agent in India then told him to travel to a different meeting point in the south of England, and he was taken to the Noordzee. "I asked: 'Why am I working here? It's not my ship... I am not a fisherman.'" Vishal claims he was threatened with deportation if he didn't comply. He spent three weeks on the trawler and says he was never paid.

He claims he worked 22-hour days, had little food, and that his boots began to fall apart in the seawater. Men continued to arrive from Ghana, including Augustus Mensah and Gershon Norvivor. They both described being put to work in the Nicholson's compound before being shipped out, and both ended up working on a vessel called on the Sea Lady. The BBC has seen payment schedules given to both men upon employment. Both were to earn £850 per month, with an additional cash payment of £50. Based on a 48-hour working week, they would receive £4.68 an hour. The conditions they alleged were similar to those described to the BBC by the workers from 2012.

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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US key to unlocking gateway to cease-fire

SPEAKING at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East last week, China's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Fu Cong, pointed out that two months ago, when pushing for Security Council Resolution 2735, the United States claimed that Israel had accepted a cease-fire agreement. But that instead of credible signs of Israel's commitment to a cease-fire, what was being seen was ever-expanding military operations and ever-increasing civilian casualties. He also correctly pointed out that the US has enough influence over Israel to push it to stop its military operations and to negotiate in good faith for an immediate and durable cease-fire.

Instead, the US is continuing to string the same old line. On Thursday, mediators from the US, Qatar and Egypt said they had presented a proposal for a cease-fire and hostage release deal that "closes the remaining gap" between Israel and Hamas.

US President Joe Biden said on Friday: "We are closer than we have ever been."

Any agreement that suffices to bring the brutal conflict between Israel and Hamas to an immediate end would of course be a tremendous accomplishment. It would not only stop the humanitarian crisis in the region that has been worsening on a daily basis, but also prevent a wider Middle East war.

But at this point at least, neither Israel nor Hamas sounds as though a deal is in the offing.

"We are not on the verge of an agreement or a real negotiation, but are faced with directives imposed by the US," senior Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said.

It is not only the US that is supposedly trying to push a deal into place, France and the United Kingdom have sent their top diplomats to Israel to deliver the message of urgency in ending the hostilities. British Foreign Secretary David Lammy and French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne both underscored now is a key moment "because it could lead to peace or war".

Continuing or expanding the present conflict would prove disastrous not only for the two parties themselves, but for the civilian population in Gaza, which is paying a heavy price for the US' indulgence of its ally. But neither Israel nor Hamas seems ready to accept the other's latest conditions for a cease-fire and hostage swap, as their conditions are still too divergent for now. Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu government insists its conditions for a deal remain unchanged, which are unacceptable to Hamas. And Hamas remains suspicious of Israel's sincerity, and is still counting on Teheran's and its regional allies' promised strikes to weaken Israel's resolve to pursue its war aims.

Yet despite the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian enclave and the rising death toll that have drained international sympathy for Israel, the Netanyahu government has shown no sign of de-escalating its military operations in Gaza. Nor has Washington made corresponding moves to press for de-escalation. Instead, both the Biden administration and the Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, have reiterated their respective support for Israel, the former with new arms sales. That may at least partly explain why a senior Hamas official said there had been no progress in Qatar, and the mediators were "selling illusions".

Israel has just issued a new evacuation order to make way for its further military operation in Gaza. There have been new reports of violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in occupied territories.

Such developments certainly are not conducive to striking a deal.

China has reiterated that the key to avoiding the deterioration and escalation of the situation lies in achieving a comprehensive and lasting cease-fire in Gaza without delay. It urges the US to act responsibly and take sincere actions to push Israel to stop its military operations in Gaza as soon as possible.

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Israel's war in the West Bank must be stopped

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

PROMISES of "absolute victory" in Gaza are nothing but "gibberish," according to Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Gallant's comments were not meant to be made public, but somehow they were leaked and published by Israeli media last week.

The explanations of why Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is pursuing a losing war in Gaza have been largely confined to his personal interests: avoiding the outcome of his corruption trials, preserving his extremist government coalition and avoiding early elections. Still, none of these rationales explain the absurdity of continuing with the war.

What else could explain Netanyahu's motives? And why are his most crucial government allies, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, determined to prolong it? The answer may not lie in Gaza, but in the West Bank.

While Israel is extending its failed military campaign in the Strip with no clear strategic objectives, its war on the West Bank is driven by clear strategic motives: the annexation of territory and the ethnic cleansing of large sectors of the Palestinian population.

This is not only obvious through Israel's daily actions in the West Bank, but also because of the statements made by extremist government officials.

These include a commitment by Netanyahu's own Likud party to "advance and develop settlement in all parts of the land of Israel — in

the Galilee, Negev, Golan Heights, and Judea and Samaria (referring to the West Bank)."

An audio recording obtained by the Israeli group Peace Now conveyed the following remarks by Smotrich at a June 9 conference: "My goal is to settle the land, to build it, and to prevent, for God's sake, its division ... and the establishment of a Palestinian state." To do so, the far-right politician has assigned himself the job of changing "the system's DNA." This "system" was put in place decades ago.

Following its military occupation of the West Bank, Israel began the slow but determined process of illegally annexing Palestinian territories. This included the establishment, in 1981, of the so-called Civil Administration. This is essentially a branch of the Israeli military, but it was designated as "civil" as part of a greater government effort to convert a temporary military occupation into the permanent colonization of Palestine. This entailed the practical annexation and continued expansion of the illegal Israeli Jewish-only settlements built on Palestinian land after the war.

The Oslo Accords of the early 1990s gave Palestinians nominal administrative control over small areas of the West Bank, designated as Area A and Area B. This necessitated the transfer of some of the Civil Administration's responsibility to the newly formed Palestinian Authority, based on the understanding that the

latter would essentially continue to prioritize Israel's security.

This new arrangement allowed Israel to expand, unhindered, its illegal settlements in most of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It tripled both the size and population of the settlements between 1993 and 2023.

As Israel's colonial plan in the West Bank reached its zenith, Netanyahu sought, in 2020, to reinforce Israeli gains with the annexation of more than 30 percent of the West Bank. Due to international pressure and growing Palestinian resistance, Netanyahu postponed his plan, though with the understanding that "annexation remains on the table."

Without much fanfare, however, Israel swapped its hope of a sweeping de jure annexation of the West Bank for de facto control, through the rapid seizure of Palestinian land and the expansion of settlements.

Though the Israeli military is faltering in Gaza, this war is being used as the perfect smokescreen to finalize old colonial plans in the West Bank.

In 2017, this scheme was dubbed by Smotrich as "victory through settlement."

Now in a position of power and with access to a massive budget, he is making his life's goal a reality.

For Smotrich's dream to be realized, he needed to revitalize the once-central role of the Civil Administration. In May, he invented a new position of deputy head of the administration and granted it to his close associate, Hillel Roth. Now, both have unparalleled

sweeping rights to expand the settlements. Netanyahu's government has already approved 12,000 new housing units for illegal settlements, while ordering the demolition of thousands of Palestinian homes and other civilian infrastructure.

In the first three months of 2024, Israel declared nearly 6,000 acres of West Bank territory as "state-owned land" and therefore eligible for settlement construction. The decision was described by Peace Now as the "largest West Bank land grab in 30 years."

The ethnic cleansing of Palestinians is already underway. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, in the first half of 2024 alone, at least 1,000 Palestinians were forcefully displaced, while nearly 160,000 were affected by home demolitions.

The Israeli war on the West Bank has also come at a high price of blood. As of Sunday, at least 633 Palestinians had been killed and 5,400 wounded in the territory since Oct. 7, according to the Ministry of Health.

When the war on Gaza is over, the war on the West Bank will grow more intense and bloodier, but with the clear strategic goal of annexing the whole of the area.

The International Court of Justice last month resolved that Israel's "annexation and assertion of permanent control" in the West Bank was "unlawful."

To avoid a greater war and genocide, the international community must use all available means to enforce international law and end the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Attacks on health facilities and staff must not become the norm

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

THE violent upheaval tearing apart Khartoum has forced many Sudanese people to flee for safety. The war's impact on the capital's healthcare system has made it even more urgent for many families to leave.

Attacks on medical facilities in Khartoum in 2023 led to a shortage of drugs throughout the capital, which meant that many chronically ill Sudanese could no longer find the medicines they needed.

This is the reality for millions in vital need of healthcare not just in Sudan but elsewhere in the world as well.

In Gaza, multiple attacks on hospitals have killed and injured hundreds, including health workers and displaced people seeking refuge in what were thought to be safe havens.

In the Democratic

In Gaza, like in Ukraine, Sudan, the DRC, Haiti and beyond, those who fall leave behind grieving families and communities. Parties to conflicts are failing humanitarian and health workers and the people they serve.

Even in responding to clear threats to public health, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ebola outbreak in the DRC, humanitarian and health workers faced fatal attacks, physical threats and psychological intimidation on an unprecedented scale.

On August 19, when we mark World Humanitarian Day, we must confront the intensifying attacks on aid workers and attempts to normalise them. On this day, I reiterate my condemnation of all forms of violence, threats and attacks against humanitarians, including health workers. I also join fellow UN and humanitarian leaders in

As the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), I have repeatedly condemned such attacks and called for the protection and respect of health workers in humanitarian settings and beyond. Yet, my calls, and those of our humanitarian partners in the field and around the world, have gone unheard, despite health facilities, their staff, patients and other civilians being protected under international law during conflicts.

Republic of the Congo (DRC) city of Goma, doctors and nurses have been murdered while trying to care for displaced people. In Ukraine, the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital was targeted in an air raid, killing one doctor and one hospital worker and injuring 16 people, including seven children. In Pakistan, a bomb killed police officers deployed to protect polio vaccination workers.

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In 2023 alone, WHO recorded 1,520 attacks on healthcare, resulting in the deaths of at least 750 patients and health workers, and 1,250 injuries. So far this year, more than 700 attacks have also taken place. Dire as these numbers are, they likely underestimate the true scale of the problem.

While one attack is too many, some places have experienced alarmingly high numbers of attacks in short periods. In Gaza, more than 500 medical personnel have been killed since the conflict began last October. In addition, at least 287 aid workers have lost their lives, including many colleagues from UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, and at least one member of our WHO family, Dima Alhaj.

calling on all countries to take collective responsibility and action to ensure full protection for humanitarian workers. We must provide humanitarian heroes the protected space they need to save lives.

More than ever, World Humanitarian Day reminds us of the essence of our work: protecting everyone, everywhere, at any time, regardless of how difficult the situation is.

Beyond the legal implications, attacks on health interfere with the work of health workers, the distribution of health supplies, and the essential services of health facilities, like vaccinations, prenatal care, and treatment for chronic diseases, leading to preventable deaths and increased suffering.

Even a single attack on the only hospital serving a population can have devastating, long-lasting consequences on healthcare delivery for entire communities in the immediate term, and for years to come. Health facilities provide more than care – in many communities, they offer refuge and contribute to collective welfare.

The WHO Constitution states, "The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent on the fullest co-operation of individuals and States."

WHO knows all too well the immense value of our colleagues who work in humanitarian settings, and the pain felt when we lose them needlessly to armed violence. Their dedication is a testament to the impact humanitarian action can have on millions of lives. By safeguarding humanitarians, we uphold the principles of compassion and solidarity and reaffirm our commitment to a more humane world.

Pezeshkian's new government shows unity is a priority

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

MA S O U D Pezeshkian's selection as the new president of Iran marks a significant shift in the country's political landscape. His rise to power happened after the sudden death of former President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May, which created an opening for a more moderate Iranian president at a time when the country faced a trio of crises: social, economic and security/regional.

Pezeshkian, a former health minister and heart surgeon, is known for his moderate views within Iran's complex political system. He has promised to focus on economic reforms, reduce international tensions and improve relations with Western nations. His administration is also expected to ease the enforcement of strict social policies, such as the mandatory hijab law, which has been a source of significant unrest in recent years.

Nevertheless, former Foreign Minister Javad

Zarif last week resigned as vice president for strategic affairs after only 11 days in office, citing a failure to meet expectations and disagreements over Cabinet inclusivity. According to his official justification, he was not satisfied with the level of "representation of women, youth and ethnicities, and the expert opinion of the committees."

Zarif has voiced criticisms of Pezeshkian's new Cabinet, which has significant implications for Iran's political dynamics. Zarif, a key figure in negotiating the 2015 nuclear deal, has expressed concerns that the new Cabinet might not be capable of handling the delicate balance of domestic reform and international diplomacy that Pezeshkian has promised.

His criticisms stem from the composition of the Cabinet, which includes figures who are either inexperienced or too closely aligned with hard-line elements within the Iranian establishment. This raises doubts about the administration's ability to imple-

ment meaningful reforms or effectively engage with the West to revive the nuclear deal. Zarif's comments reflect broader apprehension among reformists and moderates, who fear that the new government may not live up to its promises of change and may struggle with the internal pressures from conservative factions.

This criticism could weaken Pezeshkian's standing, both domestically and internationally, as it underscores potential internal divisions and the challenge of fulfilling campaign promises in the face of a complex, entrenched political system and a delicate internal equilibrium between different security organizations.

At the same time, last month's killing of Ismail Haniyeh, a prominent leader of Hamas, plunged Iran's newly inaugurated president into a severe early crisis. For Pezeshkian, Haniyeh's killing presents multiple challenges. Firstly,

the new president is facing pressure from hard-liners. Indeed, the hard-line factions within Iran are demanding a strong retaliatory response against Israel. This is in line with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's rhetoric. He said last week that any non-tactical retreat on any front — military, political or economic — invites a "divine wrath."

These factions may see Pezeshkian's moderate stance and his potential willingness to engage diplomatically with the West as a weakness. The president, therefore, faces the difficult task of balancing these domestic pressures with the broader goals of reducing Iran's international isolation and easing economic sanctions.

Pezeshkian's positions on regional crises will be closely watched by his allies and adversaries alike. Even though he is not the main decision-maker regarding a possible Iranian military response, he faces

a dilemma. A measured approach might help him maintain diplomatic channels with the West, but it could alienate his domestic base and key allies like Hezbollah. On the other hand, a more aggressive response could derail his reformist agenda and provoke further international sanctions.

This crisis underscores the complexities of leading Iran, where domestic and international pressures are deeply intertwined and any significant event in the region can rapidly destabilize the political landscape. This is why Pezeshkian proposed a Cabinet line-up that is inclusive of all security organizations and political factions. In doing so, he was sending a message to the hard-liners that he is different from Mohammed Khatami and Hassan Rouhani.

Key ministers — including foreign, intelligence and defense — are selected under the supervision of Khamenei. According to conservative journalist

Reza Mohajeri, the Cabinet was supposed to become "like a third Cabinet for (former moderate president) Rouhani. They were carried away and they formed President Raisi's second Cabinet."

Despite the openness of the new president toward hard-liners, parliamentary scrutiny will focus primarily on the reformist ministers proposed by Pezeshkian. Reformists like Mohammed Reza Zafarghandi as minister of health and Ahmad Maydari as minister of labor, as well as female nominee Farzaneh Sadegh as minister of housing and urban planning, are likely to face the strongest opposition in the Iranian parliament.

This show of unity between the reformist and conservative factions is designed to overcome internal divisions inside the system. It remains to be seen if the parliament can allow the new president to deliver on his promise of forming a government of "national unity."

Strong men who have no solutions

Ali, a British political observer, who asked that I do not use his last name,

recognise the connections between their own economic hardship and political marginalisation and the suffering of the Palestinians under colonial rule. This makes the struggle for justice and peace for Palestinians a platform that gives communities visibility and power. This dynamic is particularly evident in immigrant-descendant communities in the United

ment. At the same time, many student protests, especially in urban environments, received community support thanks to effective outreach activities. The campus demonstrations were effective because they targeted elite institutions that produce

Furthermore, promoting certain candidates in any election just because they support Palestine is myopic. People generally prioritise daily concerns over foreign policy when they cast their ballots. This was evident in the latest UK election, where voters

The genocide in Gaza and the global mobilisation against it have put the Palestinian struggle at an important juncture. It is essential for Palestinians and their allies to seize this moment and push for a solution that dismantles colonial structures and establishes a single, democratic state where all citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion, are equal.

missile or an Iranian drone. Putin cannot afford to lose this war; the stakes are too high for both him and his country. He will push further, perhaps even deeper into the conflict. A strong man capable of shaking the world, but one who now finds himself without a clear solution.

From his office, he watched as NATO moved its pawns, gradually nearing his country's borders. He deceived the West with his smiles, all the while focusing on rebuilding the army to restore Russia's image and stature. He chose Ukraine as the battleground to launch his most significant challenge against the West. He probably expected Ukraine to collapse quickly and the West to lack the resolve to respond. Yet, the war is now in its third year. Although his forces occupy a substantial portion of Ukraine, he is unable to bring the conflict to an end.

Hamas is a Palestinian faction deeply rooted in Gaza. Its confrontations with Israel are not surprising given the ongoing injustices against the Palestinians and

Yahya Sinwar, a strong leader of Hamas, delivered an unprecedented blow to the Israeli state. But does Sinwar have a vision for moving beyond the current crisis, aside from waiting for the Biden administration to broker a truce that could mitigate the risk of a regional explosion? What will happen the day after in Gaza, and where does Hamas stand? What about its relationship with the Palestinian Authority and its president? While Sinwar is undoubtedly strong, he lacks a clear solution and seems unprepared to embrace any potential proposals that may arise after a ceasefire.

Iran is a significant player in the region. From the day after the revolution's victory, it recognized the importance of the Palestinian issue and invested in it without hesitation. The current crisis has demonstrated that Iran has the capability to strike Israel from multiple fronts.

His humanitarian values and global stature could help galvanize international action and pave the way for a more sustainable solution. However, the success of his efforts will depend on his ability to navigate the complex political and social dynamics within Bangladesh and the broader region. The world will be watching closely to see how Yunus addresses this critical issue and whether his leadership can bring about the change that the Rohingya so desperately need.



SBP increased clean lending limit for SMEs to Rs10m

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a collaborative effort to support the SME sector, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has recently increased the clean lending limit for SMEs to Rs. 10 million, following recommendations from the Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA). This strategic move aligns with the Government's objectives to boost SME growth and is part of the PBA's Priority Sector Initiatives aimed at enhancing financial access for SMEs, which are crucial for economic expansion and job creation in Pakistan.

Additionally, reflecting its shared commitment to strengthening the banking sector, the SBP has also introduced a risk coverage scheme, which will help the

banking sector to double its SME exposure to Rs. 1.1 trillion during the next five years.

PBA, under its Priority Sector Initiatives, has been actively working with the SBP to develop and promote financial products that cater specifically to the needs of the SMEs. The issuance of the risk coverage scheme and increased clean lending limit will provide much-needed financial flexibility to SMEs, enabling them to expand their operations, invest in innovation, and contribute more effectively to the national economy.

Furthermore, the enhanced lending limit is expected to stimulate greater financial inclusion and encourage banks to extend more credit to the SME sector. This move is anticipat-

ed to have a far-reaching impact, particularly in fostering entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses that form the backbone of Pakistan's economy.

Speaking on the recent developments, Zafar Masud, Chairman - PBA stated, "The introduction of the risk coverage scheme for banks and increased clean lending limit to Rs. 10 million is a game-changer for SMEs in Pakistan. It reflects the Central Bank's commitment to supporting the sector and aligns perfectly with PBA's Priority Sector Initiatives aimed at boosting SME financing. We are confident that this measure will lead to a substantial increase in SME lending, which is essential for economic growth and job creation."

PBA continues to advo-

cate for policy measures that facilitate greater access to finance for SMEs. The Association believes that by providing SMEs with easier access to credit, the banking sector can play a crucial role in driving sustainable economic development and addressing challenges such as unemployment and poverty.

Similar initiatives and policy recommendations are being developed, in close consultation with the SBP, for the Agriculture and Digital & Technology sectors to support the Government's broader economic objectives. The Association looks forward to continuing its collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, SBP, and other stakeholders on these priority sectors of national significance.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity remained active at the port where four ships namely One Reliability, Suzy, Ullswater and Marangas Kalymnos scheduled to load/offload Containers, Iron ore, LPG and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Engro Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Agios Dimitrios, Two million Ways and Fairchem Mako carrying Containers, Mogas and Palm oil also arrived at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Wisteria and One Reliability left the port on Monday morning and two more ships Saga and Ullswater are expected to sail on Monday afternoon.

Cargo throughput during last 24 hours stood at 90,706 comprising 70,811 tonnes imports cargo and 19,895 tonnes export cargo including containerized cargo carried in 1,090 Containers (440 TEUs imports and 650 TEUs export) was handled at the Port.

There are 07 ships at outer anchorage of the port, out of them two ships, Twi Million Ways and Navig8 & four more ships Amis Brave, Maersk Saratoga, Zhong Gu Bo Hai and Horizon 1 carrying Mogas, Palm oil, Coal, Containers and Chemicals are expected to take berths at FOTCO, LCT, MW-4, QICT and EVTL on Monday, while a containership Maersk Columbus is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

ICCI lauds government initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, on Monday lauded the government's directives to develop a comprehensive strategy for gemstone mining in Gilgit-Baltistan, aimed at reducing gemstone wastage.

He noted that authorities had been instructed to devise a strategy for gemstone mining in the Gilgit-Baltistan region within a month, with the goals of minimizing wastage and boosting exports to generate foreign exchange for the country, according to a press release.

Bakhtawari also welcomed the government's commitment to launching a pilot project in the region, which will align gemstone mining, cutting, and value addition with international standards.

He highlighted that the ICCI is focused on promoting economic activities in the country by improving the ease of doing business and unlocking its vast tourism potential.

He emphasized the importance of leveraging Pakistan's significant gemstone reserves, particularly in the northern and north-western regions, which are rich in high-quality stones such as peridot, aquamarine, topaz, ruby, and emerald. However, he pointed out that 80% of Pakistan's gemstone exports are in raw form.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fuad Ishaq speaking during executive meeting of Pakistan Sports Writers Association Federation at Chamber's House.

SCCI: Efficient utilization of natural resources imperative for economic progress

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq stressed effective utilization of natural resources to bring economic prosperity and development in the province.

Speaking during executive meeting of the Pakistan Sports Writers Association Federation held here at the chamber house, Fuad said abundant of natural resources like hydel power generation, gas and oil, marble were existed in Pakistan generally, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which need to be tapped in effective way so that it will bring economic stability and progress and change destiny of the people of the province.

The SCCI chief mentioned the business community is in great trouble owing to imposing additional burden of taxes and anti-trader policies/initiatives, consequently, industry, business and trade have immensely slowed down.

The meeting was attend-

ed by office bearers of Pakistan Sports Writers Federation from Sindh, Balochistan and KP along with Islamabad.

Fuad urged the government and relevant authorities to revisit policies and make them business and trade-friendly.

Businessmen can support healthy sports activities and players through trade and economic activities that would not enhance economic and trade activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but rest parts of the country and make people's lives prosper, the SCCI chief said.

Fuad said the business community has played a pivotal role in promotion and uplift of sports.

He termed sportsmen as assets of the nation and we are highly proud that our national heroes' players promote the soft image of Pakistan in the rest of the world.

The chamber president commented on the significance of sports journalists, stating that sports journalists are playing a proactive

role in the popularity of games and players.

He praised the contribution of Sports Journalists in promotion of sports.

On the occasion, he mentioned Arshad Nadeem who won the gold medal in the Paris Olympic and made a new record in Olympic history of Olympic, saying that his success is a new

life for Pakistan's games and players.

Earlier, welcoming office bearers of Sports Writers Federation on land of hospitality Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Fuad Ishaq said Peshawar's Nahwa Kallay produced seven world champions, which has no example in any part of the world.

KCCI demands relief in electricity bills for Sindh too

KARACHI (INP): The Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) has also demanded relief in electricity bills to the people of Sindh.

Karachi Chamber in its statement said that like Punjab, the federation should announce immediate relief in electricity bills, and that the people of Sindh should also be given Rs14 per unit relief in electricity bills.

Karachi Chamber stated that the people of Sindh are also very worried due to the excessive electricity bills. The Federation should announce immediate relief in electricity bills to Sindh like Punjab. The people and businessmen of Sindh are unable to pay the bills at the current rate.

It is pertinent to note that the Punjab government has decided to give immediate relief in the bills of August and September, saying that those who consume up to 500 units will be given a relief of Rs14 per unit, but those consuming up to 200 units will be deprived of the relief.

After relief in Punjab, other provinces are also demanding relief in electricity bills.

Sindh Bank and SEDF sign institutional collaboration agreement

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Bank Limited and Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF) have entered into a pivotal Institutional Collaboration Agreement, in a significant move to enhance economic growth and promote strategic alliances.

The event was attended by Mr. M. Anwaar Sheikh, President & CEO (A) - Sindh Bank; Mr. Khizar Pervaiz, CEO - SEDF, Syed Assad Ali, Senior Executive Vice President and Regional General Manager for Sindh and Balochistan - Sindh Bank; Mr. Faisal Mujeib, CEO - Special Economic Zone Authority; and Mr. Kabool Muhammad Khatian, member - SEDF Board of Directors.

This strategic alliance is designed to harness the combined strength and expertise of Sindh Bank and SEDF. Sindh Bank has strong presence with 200 of its 330 Branches located strategically in all districts of the Sindh particularly in



the agriculture based areas.

On the occasion, Mr. Anwaar Sheikh President & CEO (A) Sindh Bank, stated, "We are pleased to collaborate with SEDF for making bank financing affordable and viable for setting up small and medium businesses in Sindh including Agriculture and IT related SMEs which have been marked as priority sectors at Regulatory level. SEDF initiative of

reducing cost of financing substantially by subsidizing Kibor is a landmark step by Government of Sindh for development of SMEs in Sindh.

Khizar Pervaiz, CEO - SEDF, was also enthusiastic about the partnership, emphasizing that this agreement underscored their dedication to foster economic development in Sindh, by creating new opportunities and enhance

sustainable growth of SMEs. He noted that SEDF was committed to offering markup subsidies to SMEs to bolster and encourage their expansion.

Sindh Bank & SEDF place highest level of commitment to foster an environment conducive to the growth of SME, stimulate investment, boost employment and promote economic prosperity of Sindh Province.

1Link denies rumors regarding online banking

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 1LINK denied rumors circulating about ATM closures and online banking. In this regard a press release has been issued stating that a false message being circulated on different WhatsApp groups and social media platforms, warning people to avoid using ATMs and Online banking in Pakistan.

A similar scare surfaced in 2017 during the Wannacry Ransomware, cyber attack, which targeted Microsoft Windows machines, including apps used by banks. However, the Pakistani banking sector successfully defended against those attacks in 2017.

The public is advised not to pay any attention to such hoaxes and to consult their banks for any guid-

ance. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is actively working with banks and 1LINK to maintain the security of Pakistan's financial infrastructure and digital payments ecosystem, ensuring compliance with stringent IT and security guidelines. Thus far, no cyber threat has been observed on the ATM and online banking ecosystem in this context, and the financial service industry remains vigilant as ever before.

Moreover, the press statement added that be watchful of your surroundings while banking at ATMs, branches, or online, and report suspicious activities immediately.

Do not share your payment cards or personal and financial information, such as card number, PINs, OTP, user D, and

password, with anyone.

Inspect ATMs for any unusual attachments that could be devices to copy the data on or from your card.

Don't click on suspicious links or share personal information online. Always log out of your online banking session after use.

Review your account statement regularly and immediately notify the bank in case of any unauthorized transaction and/or stolen/lost card.

Meanwhile, this communication is intended solely for informational purposes and raising public awareness only.

1LINK expressly disclaims any and all liability for any actions taken or not taken based on the information provided in this advisory, the statement added.

Internet disruptions affecting export-oriented

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: When the businesses are already facing several serious issues the slow and unreliable internet services are creating additional hurdles, severely affecting revenue streams and service quality.

The internet disruptions not only impact large-scale businesses but also individuals running small enterprises who rely on stable connections to sustain their livelihoods. When the internet slows down, businesses experience major disruptions in daily operations. Key functions such as communication, order processing, inventory management, and customer service are all hindered.

Small businesses, in particular, are vulnerable as they often depend entirely on mobile internet and Whatsapp to attract and serve customers. Although the situation appears to have improved after several days of disruptions, repetitive outages can lead to diminished credibility and lost customers, directly hitting revenue.

These issues were raised by the Chainstore Association of Pakistan Chairman Tariq Mehboob, along with CAP Co-

founder and National E-Commerce Council Member Asfandiyar Farrukh, in a meeting held here on Monday, raising serious concerns over the recent internet disruptions, primarily affecting mobile internet and Whatsapp, warning of significant impact to export-oriented and domestic commercial activity.

They highlighted the far-reaching consequences of these disruptions, stressing the urgent need for permanent resolution.

Asfandiyar Farrukh, Co-Founder of CAP and a member of the National E-Commerce Council, echoed these concerns, underscoring the economic impact. "It has been reported that there has been much higher usage of VPNs by individuals and businesses due to which internet slowdowns are occurring. However, VPNs would not be needed if local disruptions to Whatsapp, a key communication tool, and other digital services were prevented in the first place. The repetitive internet slowdowns are causing substantial financial losses in both the IT and e-commerce sectors. With over \$3.2 billion in annual IT and freelancing exports, and a \$5 billion domestic

e-commerce ecosystem at stake, the situation is critical. Freelancers, remote-workers, ride-hailing drivers and delivery riders who depend on stable mobile internet connections have been especially hard hit, facing missed deadlines, service delays, and loss of income. Moreover, the image and credibility of Pakistani businesses serving foreign clients are being impacted, which could result in further financial damage if not permanently addressed. If any disruptions are imminent or occurring, the government and regulators must provide proactive information, complete transparency (including any changes to internet-related systems), and clear timelines for resolution so that individuals and businesses can plan accordingly and manage customer expectations."

The Chainstore Association of Pakistan strongly urges the government to take immediate and decisive action to protect the country's digital economy. The recent disruptions have underscored the vital role that a stable and secure digital infrastructure plays in Pakistan's economic stability and growth.

Soyabean, palm oil imports reduced

ISLAMABAD (APP): Edible oil including soybean and palm into the country during the first month of the current financial year decreased by 93.20 percent and 13.99 percent respectively as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the month of July 2024 about 1,000 metric tons of palm oil costing \$1.017 million were imported as compared to the imports of 12,575 metric tons valued at \$14.995 million in the same month of the last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

PSX loses 214 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 214.97 points on Monday, showing a negative closing of 0.28 percent, closing at 77,830.34 points against 78,045.31 points on the last working day.

A total of 471,749,071 shares were traded during the day as compared to 600,719,724 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 16.915 billion against Rs 17.071 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 441 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 115 of them recorded gains and 275 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 51 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading

companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 134,856,426 shares at Rs 9.27 per share, Yousuf Weaving with 43,550,458 shares at Rs.5.89 per share and Flying Cement with 15,135,807 shares at Rs 10.96 per share.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.101.77 per share price, closing at Rs 1,762.06, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with a Rs 59.53 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,599.00.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs436.21 per share closing at Rs17,523.60 followed by Mari Petroleum Company Limited with Rs 97.90 decline to close at Rs 3,288.28.

Gold rates dip by Rs200 per tola to Rs260,000

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.200 and was sold at Rs.260,000 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs. 260,200 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.172 to Rs.222,908 from Rs. 223,080 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.204,332 from Rs. 204,490, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,950 and Rs.2,529.14, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$5 to \$2,502 from \$2,507, the Association reported.



Merged Districts Inter-Academies Games 2024 conclude

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Merged Districts Inter-Academies Games 2024 have concluded with the final day's football match seeing North Waziristan defeating South Waziristan to claim the trophy.

The match ended with North Waziristan winning 4-1. Additional Secretary for Sports and Youth Affairs Pir Abdullah Shah presented trophies and cash prizes to the winning players. He was accompanied

by Director of Sports for Merged Districts Raziullah Khan Betani and other notable figures.

The Directorate of Sports for Merged Districts organized the Inter-Academies Games which concluded yesterday at the Tehmas Khan Football Stadium in Peshawar.

The final football match was contested between North Waziristan and South Waziristan with North Waziristan emerging victorious with a 4-1 scoreline, securing the trophy.

In a historic cricket final District Khyber faced defeat for the first time with District Mohmand claiming victory by six runs. In badminton District Bajaur defeated District Mohmand 2-0 to win the trophy.

A total of 455 players from seven merged districts and six sub-divisions participated in the games.

The event was officially inaugurated on August 14 by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur accompa-

nied by Adviser for Sports Syed Fakhar Jehan and other notable figures.

In the games cash prizes of PKR 150,000 and PKR 100,000 were awarded to the winning and runner-up teams in cricket and football respectively while in badminton the winning team received PKR 80,000, and the runner-up team received PKR 50,000. Additionally the Chief Minister announced an additional PKR 3 million for the event during the inauguration ceremony.

Pakistan squad named for Test against Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced an 11-member squad for the first Test against Bangladesh, starting on Wednesday, August 21, at the Pindi Stadium, Rawalpindi.

The playing XI includes Shan Masood (captain),

Saud Shakeel (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Khuram Shahzad, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Rizwan (Wicket-Keeper), Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha and Shaheen Shah Afridi, said a press release.

Pakistan will hit the field with a combination of four

fast bowlers. Shan Masood will lead the team for the first time in a home series, while Jason Gillespie will make his debut as the Pakistan cricket team's coach.

Pakistan has played 13 Tests against Bangladesh, winning 12 and drawing one.

Bairstow to play for Yorkshire in County



LONDON (BBC): Yorkshire have confirmed England wicketkeeper-batter Jonny Bairstow will play in their County Championship game against Sussex this week.

The White Rose host the Division Two leaders at Scarborough from Thursday.

Bairstow, 34, has not featured for Yorkshire in any competition so far this year but is available after being recently dropped by England.

Yorkshire head coach Otis Gibson suggested last week that he was hoping to be able to call on Bairstow.

"I spoke to Jonny, and he still has ambitions of getting back into the England team," Gibson told the club website.

"When he was coming back from his injury last year, our medical team and coaches, everybody associated with the club, helped him get back into the England fold.

"If it's that we need to do that again with him, give him some love and get him into a position where he puts good performances in, everybody benefits from that. "Jonny Bairstow is a serious cricketer anyway, but when he has a point to prove he's even more dangerous."

Bairstow has made 100 Test appearances for England but was left out for the series win over West Indies and has not been selected for the upcoming games against Sri Lanka.

After a game for Welsh Fire in The Hundred last month, Bairstow told BBC Sport: "All I want to do is play for England."

Yorkshire are third in the second tier of the County Championship, with the top two winning promotion.



PESHAWAR: The winning team of Merged Districts Inter-Academies Games 2024 in a group photo with the chief guest Secretary Sports Pir Abdullah Shah

Cricket stadiums must move out of 1980s model to meet int'l standards, says Naqvi

LAHORE (APP): The Chairman, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi on Monday visited Gaddafi stadium here to inspect pace of construction work under the upgradation project to enhance facilities and improve infrastructure as per international standards of the cricket stadium.

The three main cricket stadiums in Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi are being upgraded in anticipation of the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy tournament scheduled to be held in Pakistan next February. The stadiums are designed to rub shoulders with the best in the world.

A London based renowned firm in sports stadium design BDP Pattern has been awarded the contract for the engineering and infrastructural designing of the stadium.

In a tweet on his personal social media handle on X, the Chairman PCB said, "Cricket binds nations closer through memories, gushing adrenaline, and bringing unlimited joy and

laughter with this vision at heart, PCB is revolutionizing Pakistan cricket experience by revamping three main stadiums on international standards, providing a 180-degree change in fan experience. Our on-ground teams are committed and are working day in and day out for making this vision a reality. Long Live Pakistan!"

The Chairman PCB directed to plan the excavation and construction work, keeping in view the Monsoon rains, adding that the project must be completed within the deadline by working round the clock.

Naqvi also reviewed the progress of excavation work on the basement in the newly designed stadium.

Later, the Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi chaired a meeting at the FWO Camp Office at Gaddafi Stadium. He was briefed on the progress of work by the FWO, NESPAK, and PCB officials. The Chairman PCB directed to speed up the pace of upgradation and desired

that the first phase of the upgradation project be completed before the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

Talking to the journalists, the Chairman PCB said the upgradation of the three stadiums was an uphill task but the PCB would complete this mega infrastructure project well before the ICC Champions Trophy, adding that the group stage matches and final will be played at the Gaddafi stadium.

To a query, he said our stadiums were a far cry from other stadiums of the world as far as infrastructure and facilities were concerned, adding that there was need to improve public facilities and improve view of the pitch for the spectators.

"Our stadiums were stuck in the 1980s model while the world has moved to the 21st century modern facilities and we needed to improve the facilities to meet international standards," Naqvi responded, adding that two enclosures and main building of the stadium will be completed in the next five months.

To a question, the Chairman PCB said the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium was completed in the last minute, but our stadiums will be ready well before the ICC event.

He said the PCB was working on a new stadium in the federal capital Islamabad besides setting up high-performance centres in Sakardu and Abbottabad.

He, responding to a query, said some stadiums are under the administrative control of the provincial governments, adding that the PCB has asked the relevant governments to fix the stadium on their own or hand over control to the PCB. He said the PCB will start work immediately if the stadiums are handed over to the cricketing body.

About the hotel near the Gaddafi stadium, Naqvi said that the PCB has acquired a building for the hotel, but it is a bit complicated and time-taking matter as the building will have to be altered into a hotel first.

Tyson 'ready' for rescheduled Paul fight



NEW YORK (BBC): Mike Tyson says he is "prepared" for his bout with Jake Paul on 15 November after the fight's original date had to be postponed.

The pair were due to fight on 20 July but Tyson had an ulcer flare-up that forced the match with the YouTuber to be rescheduled.

The fight, which will be held at the 80,000 capacity AT&T stadium in Texas, is a professional fight with a string of conditions.

Tyson, 58, has not fought professionally since

2005 but says he is ready to knock Paul out.

"I had a small adversity. I got sick, but I feel good. I'm just ready," Tyson said at a joint news conference on Sunday.

"He [Paul] may have been in the ring with people who have the same intentions, but the actuality, no."

"As soon as I catch this guy it's going to be totally over, he is going to run. He is going to run like a thief."

Though Tyson fought in an exhibition against fellow veteran Roy Jones Jr in 2020, Paul is 31 years his

junior.

Asked what his motivation was, Tyson said: "Because I can. Who else can do it but me? We have a YouTuber fighting the greatest fighter ever to live."

Paul, 27, has a 10-1 record in his career.

"I love Mike and I respect him but we are not friends any more until 15 November," Paul said.

The fight will consist of eight, two-minute rounds and both fighters will wear 14oz gloves, rather than 10z gloves.

Time running out for Cristiano Ronaldo to add Saudi titles

RIYADH (Agencies): Cristiano Ronaldo's hunt for a first trophy in Saudi Arabia continues after defeat in the Super Cup final to Al Hilal.

The growing fear for the Al Nassr and Portugal forward is that it shows no signs of ending.

Ronaldo's goal to break the deadlock on Saturday was the one bright moment in an otherwise forgettable game as Hilal roared back with four unanswered goals to claim their first silverware of the season.

The striker's exasperation at Hilal's fourth goal, when goalkeeper Bento was dispossessed by Malcom trying to play out from the back, was visible for all to see. Ronaldo's gesture that his teammates had been "sleeping" was pretty accurate. Ronaldo stormed off the pitch in frustration, refusing to collect his silver medal alongside his teammates during the post-match ceremony.

And while losing the

match itself, the traditional curtain-raiser to the Saudi Pro League season, has few repercussions, it once again signaled that Hilal are again the team to beat in 2024/25.

The Riyadh giants swept all before them last season, winning the league at a canter ahead of Nassr, with 14 points the difference between first and second place, as well as the King's Cup.

Hilal went the entire league campaign unbeaten, knitting together a reported world record 34-match win streak in the process, broken only by Al Ain en route to the UAE club winning the Asian Champions League. Ronaldo may have set a new league record with 35 goals but his impact on his team paled in comparison to that of Aleksandar Mitrovic. The Serb striker scored at a clip of a goal a game for Hilal as they stormed the league, and ended the campaign with 40 in all competitions.



Hilal's record breakers were largely without Neymar, signed for a Pro League record 90 million from Paris Saint-Germain. A knee injury

sidelined the Brazilian forward for almost the entirety of 2023/24, reducing the former Barcelona star to only five appearances.

If Neymar's social media channels are any indication, the 32-year-old is close to full fitness and raring to go ahead of the new campaign. He

played no part in the Super Cup success, where a Mitrovic double was sandwiched between Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Malcom strikes. But

as one of the league's star attractions, Hilal coach Jorge Jesus will no doubt feel some obligation to make room for the world's most costliest player.

All of which would point to the fact that Ronaldo and his Nassr teammates have it all to do to reel in their cross-town neighbours.

Ronaldo, 39, is into the final year of his contract at Nassr, said to be the most lucrative in world football. The most prolific marksman the game has ever known has won trophies in every domestic league he has played in – Portugal, England, Spain and Italy – with only the Arab Champions Club Cup, an invitational tournament for teams from the Middle East and North Africa, his one trinket from his Saudi sojourn to date.

Only goalkeeper Bento and left-back Salem Al Najdi have been added to Luis Castro's squad, with the league as a whole

embarking on a much quieter transfer window than last summer when almost 1 billion was spent on players.

Ronaldo suffered disappointment with Portugal at Euro 2024, failing for the first time to score at an international tournament as they exited at the quarter-final stage on penalties to France.

There are few doubts Ronaldo can still deliver the goods and will again be in the mix to finish as the league's top scorer, but with few improvements to a squad that was second best last time out, coupled with Hilal again looking the country's dominant force and Ronaldo's contract up next June, points to the prospect of him ending his time at Nassr without a major trophy. Al Nassr begin their Saudi Pro League campaign on Thursday with a trip to Al Raed. Champions Al Hilal begin their title defence Saturday when they host Al Okhdood.



In brief

PWD directed to submit report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Housing and Works has instructed the Director General of Pak-Public Works Department (PWD) to review the rental ceilings for residential accommodations in six major cities. The PWD has been tasked with conducting a thorough survey of market rental rates in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta. The based on the survey results, the department will adjust or revise the rental ceilings as necessary. The department has been directed to submit the survey report to the Ministry within a week.

Tree plantation drive launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) has initiated a major tree plantation campaign to address climate change. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood inaugurated the campaign by planting a Moringa tree, emphasizing the university's commitment to environmental sustainability. Dr. Nasir Mahmood stated, "AIU is dedicated to the national tree plantation effort, with plans to plant trees across all the 54 campuses and engage our students in this crucial cause." Deans, Professors, and other officials joined in. Earlier, during a briefing on the monsoon tree plantation, Wajih ul Hassan, the Horticulture Officer from the Department of Agricultural Sciences, informed the Vice Chancellor that the university is planting 300 trees today, including Moringa, Pelken, Brighanzia, Sukh Chain, and Arjun trees.

Khan expresses grief over losses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate, Senator Syedaal Khan, on Monday, expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and property caused by heavy rains and floods in various parts of the country, particularly in Balochistan. In a message, he said that witnessing the devastation caused by the rains is heartbreaking, and he stands in solidarity with the victims in their time of grief. He prayed for the swift recovery of the injured and emphasized the need to accelerate rescue and relief operations. He also called on philanthropists to come forward and support the affected people during this challenging time.

CM's Advisor lauds facilities

RAWALPINDI (APP): Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab on Health, Major General (R) Azhar Mehmood Kayani on Monday termed Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC) an exemplary cardiology hospital having world-class medical standard. He appreciated the services rendered by the hospital management to the patients. "I appreciate the passion of the doctors, nurses and paramedical staff to serve the suffering humanity," he said while sharing his views during a surprise visit to RIC. The advisor instructed the medical officers to ensure attendance in their respective wards. He warned that carelessness committed by anyone would not be tolerated. The advisor said that CM Maryam Nawaz envisioned for provision of quality health facilities to the people. He maintained that treatment in RIC's emergency is completely free for all the patients. He further said that quality and timely treatment is the right of every patient for which all the staff should work as a team to improve the treatment services.

Senate body takes notice of alleged malpractices

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Functional Committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas has ordered an inquiry into widespread power theft across Pakistan and took notice of alleged malpractice by a NESPAK consultant involved in the Park Road Housing Scheme under the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA).

The meeting, chaired by Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani, scrutinized both the ongoing electricity theft concerns and the alleged corruption within the housing project.

During the session, the Committee reviewed the implementation of recommendations from previous meetings, particularly focusing on actions taken against corrupt officials of the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) over the past five years.

Senator Shahzaib Durrani highlighted discrepancies in QESCO's discipli-

nary actions, criticizing the seemingly inconsistent grounds for the termination of certain individuals.

He noted that while some individuals were dismissed for not showing enough interest in anti-theft initiatives, others received only minor penalties for more serious misconduct and corruption.

Despite the removal of these allegedly corrupt officials, power theft in QESCO's jurisdiction persists. Consequently, the Chairman directed the Power Division to conduct a thorough examination of QESCO's disciplinary actions and submit a detailed report within 30 days.

The Committee also received updates on ongoing projects in less-developed areas. Managing Director NESPAK, Muhammad Zarqam Eshaq Khan, briefed the Committee on NESPAK's supervision of the construction of 83 roads across 11 districts in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, including seven districts in the former FATA region. The total length of these roads is approximately 872.65 km, with an estimated cost of Rs. 25.7 billion. The Committee instructed NESPAK to provide comprehensive details of projects related to the rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The meeting also addressed allegations of malpractice by a NESPAK consultant in the Park Road Housing Scheme of FGEHA. MD NESPAK disclosed that a Fact-Finding Committee had been formed to investigate the allegations, resulting in show-cause notices being issued to three officers and the suspension of four others pending the inquiry's completion.

Senator Shahzaib Durrani questioned whether the Ministry of Housing had conducted an independent inquiry into the matter.

The Director General of

FGEHA informed the Committee that an internal investigation had been conducted, leading to the termination of the Project Director found guilty of the fraud. The case has since been forwarded to the Federal Investigation Agency.

Senator Shahzaib Durrani expressed concern that a single individual could orchestrate a fraud of Rs. 1.4 billion, suggesting that other officials might also be implicated. The Committee directed the Ministry of Housing to submit a full report of its internal inquiry.

The Committee expressed dissatisfaction with the briefing provided by the Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO) and instructed both SEPCO and the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) to present a detailed report on unannounced load shedding and power theft in their respective areas, along with a comprehensive plan to address these issues, at the next meeting.



ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshed Alam meeting with UNDP delegation.

Swedish ambassador arrived

ISLAMABAD (APP): Embassy of Sweden announced the arrival of the ambassador-designate to Pakistan, Alexandra Berg von Linde on Monday.

Alexandra Berg von Linde has officially taken on her role, starting from August 15th.

Before this appointment, Alexandra Berg served as Sweden's Ambassador to Bangladesh and has also worked at the Swedish embassies in Kabul and New Delhi.

Her experience includes various roles in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm.

She has also served as Deputy Head of the Minister's Office and Chief of Staff to two Ministers of International Development Cooperation.

Building plans approval to go online soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) will start approving building plans through online system by September this year to the convenience of the visitors.

It was decided in a meeting, chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Monday to streamline the approval process for residential and commercial building plans.

The online platform will enable citizens to submit and track their building plans from anywhere in the world, receiving real-time updates on the status of their applications.

Architects will also be registered on the system, ensuring a seamless and efficient process.

To ensure a smooth rollout, Chairman Randhawa directed that CDA officers and staff undergo necessary training and be equipped with required IT equipment.

This initiative is part of CDA's efforts to provide citizens with accessible services at their doorstep.

The authority is also launching a super app, offering over 150 services to the residents of Islamabad.

The Online Building Plan Approval System is a significant step towards e-governance and citizen-centric services in Islamabad.

World Humanitarian Day observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Like other parts of the World "The Humanitarian Day" was observed across the country here on Monday to honour the efforts of humanitarian workers.

The purpose of this day was to recognize and encourage the dedication of humanitarian workers and organisations committed to the welfare of humanity across the globe.

This day served as a reminder to cherish and share compassion, fidelity, and empathy towards others.

Under the guidance of the United Nations and with the support of various social organisations, this day is commemorated annually.

It emphasised that serving humanity was not limited to any specific person, organisation, or day; rather, each individual can contribute to this noble cause according to their ability.

The date, August 19, was chosen to remember the tragic deaths of 22 humanitarian workers who were killed in a bombing in Baghdad, Iraq, on this day in 2003.

ICT admin intensifies monkeypox screening at airport

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to the growing threat of monkeypox, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has intensified its efforts to ensure the safety of citizens.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon recently inspected the screening measures at the Islamabad Airport to prevent the spread of the virus, said the spokesman of the ICT administration.

The DC arrived at Islamabad Airport to review the current screening procedures for passengers arriving from abroad. After the inspection, the DC directed health officials to speed up the screening process, ensuring that no passenger goes unchecked.

On the occasion, the DC

expressed his satisfaction with health department staff who were actively screening every passenger coming from foreign countries.

He directed that if any symptoms of monkeypox were detected, the patient would be immediately isolated and transferred to PIMS Hospital for further care.

He said that the PIMS Hospital has been prepared to handle monkeypox cases, with special arrangements made to isolate and treat affected patients.

The hospital has also been declared an isolation management unit and a special focal person has been appointed to oversee operations related to the DC Islamabad unit.

These steps reflected the district administration's

proactive approach to controlling the spread of monkeypox and protecting public health, the spokesman added.

ICT admin cracks down on plastic bags; fines Rs 20,000

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has started a firm campaign against the use of plastic bags in local markets of the Federal Capital, with a clear message: violations will not be tolerated.

During a recent visit to the H-9 Sunday bazaar, Assistant Commissioner I-9 enforced the district's strict ban on plastic bags said the spokesman of the ICT administration.

During the market visit, the AC accompanied by district administration teams confiscated plastic

bags and the imposition of a Rs 20,000 fine on those found using them.

This action is part of a broader effort to eliminate the use of plastic bags in Islamabad, as highlighted by the Deputy Commissioner.

The district administration has adopted a zero-tolerance policy, meaning any violation of the ban would be met with strict legal action, the spokesman added.

On the occasion, the Assistant Commissioner emphasized that the ban was comprehensive, and enforcement would be consistent across all markets.

The district's commitment to this policy aimed to ensure that plastic bags were completely removed from circulation in the city.

Body reaffirms commitment to addressing challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety, chaired by Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur Monday has reaffirmed its commitment to tackling the complex challenges facing the nation's poverty alleviation initiatives.

During its session, the Committee conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing projects under the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (MoPA&SS), reflecting a strong dedication to strengthening social safety nets and enhancing transparency in beneficiary programs.

In its broader discussions, the Committee assessed the performance of the Ministry's ancillary organizations, including the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and the Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO). The Committee was briefed on strategic initiatives aimed at consolidating pro-poor programs under a unified framework.

A significant portion of the deliberations focused on expanding the Ministry's efforts in underserved regions, particularly South Punjab and Balochistan. While Mobile Registration Vehicles (MRVs) have been effectively deployed in remote areas, the Committee stressed the need for further efforts to ensure equitable access across all provinces, especially in South Punjab and Sindh.

The Committee collectively endorsed the realignment of resources to prioritize these areas and urged the Ministry to expedite the deployment of additional MRVs as required.

Addressing concerns about external middlemen and corruption within beneficiary programs, the Committee emphasized the importance of transparency.

Several members advocated for enhanced surveillance mechanisms, including the use of technology to monitor service points.

While acknowledging the Ministry's progress, the Committee stressed the need for more stringent

measures to eliminate malpractices and ensure that the full benefits reach the intended recipients.

Concerns were also raised about allegations of mistreatment of beneficiaries by bank officials, with reports of deductions and other irregularities being highlighted.

On the organizational front, the Committee discussed the reliance on departmental staff within key departments of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), noting the lack of institutional memory due to the absence of permanent hires.

The Committee endorsed a proposal to create a dedicated cadre within BISP to foster a sense of

ICT police nab car theft duo in major crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant breakthrough, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Industrial Area team arrested two members of a notorious car theft gang. The suspects, identified as Roman and Ikramullah, were apprehended following a targeted operation that resulted in the recovery of valuable laptops and cash.

A Public Relations Officer from the ICT Police talking to this scribe on Monday said, under the specific instructions of Deputy Inspector General

(DIG) Syed Ali Raza, a crackdown on criminal elements has been launched to protect citizens' lives and property. Acting on these directives, the Industrial Area Police utilized both technical and human resources to successfully capture the accused.

The arrested individuals have confessed to a series of thefts involving laptops, cash, and mobile phones, committed by breaking vehicle windows. Their criminal activities spanned various locations, including Shifa Parking, Blue Area,

Sector G-9, and Faisal Masjid.

Malik Zahoor, the owner of Rajgan Motors and a vehicle dealer, praised the police for their recent success in apprehending the duo of car lifters who have been causing significant distress in the community. "This successful operation marks a notable step forward in combating vehicle theft and restoring a sense of security among residents," he remarked.

However, a citizen Akram Ali also highlighted the ongoing issue of high-value thefts from parked vehicles, citing his own experience where thieves stole equipment worth around 1.1 million from his Toyota Corolla parked in the G-11 sector. The recovery of which, he said, was still awaited.

He noted that thefts, including those of LCD batteries, have become increasingly a routine. Ali urged the police to build on their recent success by enhancing security measures and taking stricter actions to prevent such crimes in the future.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology Senator Kamil Ali Agha presiding over a meeting of committee.

ANF recovers 85 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 85 kg drugs worth Rs 25 million and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 1 kg ice was recovered from a parcel sent to Qatar at a courier office in Rawalpindi.

In second operation, 250 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Faisalabad Airport.

In third operation, 189 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain from Lahore Airport.

40 kg hashish and 14.4 kg ice were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near RCD Road Lasbela and an accused was arrested during the operation.

9.6 kg hashish was recovered from a woman arrested near M-1 Islamabad.

7.2 kg hashish was recovered from a motorcyclist rounded up on GT Road, Attock.

In two operations conducted in Torkham, 7.4 kg hashish and 900 grams ice were recovered from the possession of an accused.

3 kg heroin was recovered from 3 drug pushers arrested near UET Gate-3 in Lahore.

In 10th operation, 1 kg ice was recovered from an accused netted near Sher Shah Toll Plaza.

In 11th operation, 300 grams ice was recovered from a woman arrested near Daska, Sialkot Road.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against all arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

NCHR help-line receives 348 calls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Helpline '1413' for the Protection of Women's Marriage Rights has received 348 calls for legal assistance on marriage rights since November 2023.

The helpline was established by National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) in collaboration with Musawi in January 2023.

The calls received yet range from complaints about domestic violence, child custody, and forced marriages, to difficulties in pursuing legal cases. The calls also highlight the urgent need for legal representation and intervention in situations of domestic abuse, divorce, and child protection.

The helpline '1413' is housed in the NCHR office and is managed by two female helpline officers. The helpline is operational from 9am to 5pm every Monday to Friday, with the facility of voice messages being recorded after 5pm.

The objective of the helpline is to promote awareness on women's marriage rights as protected under the laws. It aims to improve access to quality legal information, advice and representation for women and girls, especially the underprivileged and illiterate women with mobility and resources constraints, in matters pertaining to marriage rights.

The helpline provides legal information and advice, as well as access to legal representation for marriage rights related matters, including: filling out and registration of the Nikkahnama; information

about marriage rights and clauses within the Nikkahnama; legal age of marriage and child marriages; dissolution of marriage; forced marriages; custody of children; and dowry, maintenance and dowry related issues.

Chairperson NCHR Rabia Javeri Agha said that the help-line provides legal advice and representation both through a network of lawyers in different regions. "The help-line has successfully connected callers (women only) with lawyers to file and represent suits on behalf of complainant."

She said that during the first phase (January 2023 – February 2024), the implementing partners provided legal information and assistance on women's marriage rights to callers from Punjab only. "In the second phase, the services of the help-line were expanded to other regions of the country in March 2024 and currently callers from across the country can access the help-line for legal assistance on marriage rights-related matters."

Chairperson said that the number of cases receiving legal representation has seen a notable increase from 24 reported cases in April, 2024 to 54 in June 2024. "This surge reflects a dedicated effort to ensure that more individuals have access to legal support and advocacy. By bolstering the availability of legal representation, the NCHR and Musawi aim to protect and uphold the rights of those in need, ensuring justice and fair treatment for all," she said.

380,400 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tarbela Dam on Monday attained its maximum water conservation level of 1550 feet. Indus River System Authority (IRSA) released 380,400 cusecs of water from various river stations with inflow of 417,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam has attained its maximum conservation level of 1550 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 256,400 cusecs and 235,600 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River

Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1213.80 feet, which was 165.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 25,800 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 289,800, 380,200, 381,000, and 371,000 cusecs respectively.

Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 66,400 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 45,400 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

12,000t dried fruits exported

KABUL (BNA): Over the past four months, 12,000 tons of dried fruits have been exported from Kandahar province of Afghanistan to various countries. Noorullah Noori, the spokesman for the Kandahar Chamber of Commerce and Investment, informed Bakhtar News Agency that a significant amount of these exports consisted of raisins. According to him the majority of Kandahar's dried fruits are exported to India.

Militants blind Bus driver

BAGHLAN (Khaama Press): A driver in Baghlan has reported that militants shot out one of his eyes at a checkpoint in Dushi. The driver shared details of the incident in a video. He stated that violence was inflicted upon him "without cause" and accused the "Police of abusing their position and mistreating him." This incident highlights ongoing issues with militant conduct. The individual, identified as Qudrat, was driving a passenger bus belonging to a private transportation company.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Official calls for
Irans cooperation
— to combat drug trafficking

KABUL (TOLOnews): Abdul Haq Akhund Hamkar, deputy minister of counter-narcotics of the Interior Ministry, said that drugs are being smuggled from Iran into Afghanistan and that Tehran should cooperate to prevent this. Abdul Haq Akhund said that the Islamic Emirate is fighting against drugs, and the international community should not forget Afghanistan in this area. He expressed these points during a meeting with an Iranian delegation. The Deputy Minister for Counter-Narcotics of the Ministry of Interior said: "We hope that the commitments they made to us will be fulfilled because the problems related to drugs

not only harm our youth but also affect our neighboring countries." The Iranian delegation that came to Kabul also welcomed the Islamic Emirate's efforts in combating drugs and emphasized joint cooperation. Mohammad Zarei, the Deputy Director of Iran's Counter-Narcotics Agency, said: "We hope that Almighty God will bless both countries and that both will progress under the guidance of the Quran and religion." Several experts emphasize the importance of joint cooperation in the fight against drug cultivation, smuggling, and trafficking. Abdul Hadi Quraishi, a military affairs expert, said:

"Both countries must be resolute in the fight against drugs because Iran is affected by Afghanistan, and Afghanistan is affected by Iran. Both countries must combat this together." Gol Mohiuddin Mohammadi, a political affairs expert, said: "It is necessary to impose severe punishments on them and introduce them to the judicial and legal bodies so that they become a lesson for others." Previously, the Deputy Ministry for Counter-Narcotics of the Ministry of Interior reported that after the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate, 1,250 large and small drug processing factories were destroyed in the country.

Uzbekistan
Products
Exhibition
organized

KABUL (TOLOnews): The second Uzbekistan Products Exhibition in Kabul has witnessed a strong turnout from citizens. Several Uzbekistani participants at the exhibition stated that visitors have shown significant interest in their products, and they hope to secure major agreements with the Afghan side. At this exhibition, around 200 Uzbekistani traders from 30 sectors have showcased their products over a three-day period. Asrar Bek, an industrialist, said: "Today, we have brought and displayed Uzbekistan's products in Kabul. Our main goal is to attract the attention of the Afghan people to our products." Industrialist, Rahmanov Dostanbek, said: "We are participating in this exhibition with the aim of securing major agreements with the Afghan side in the silk industry sector. The interest of visitors in Kabul towards our products is high. Our products are made 100% from natural silk, including fabrics, clothing, carpets, and other items."

Aman Farogh Bek, another industrialist, said: "In various sectors here, Uzbekistan's products, including electrical appliances, construction materials, furniture, carpets, and other items, have been displayed. This exhibition helps to develop economic cooperation between the two sides." Several citizens consider such exhibitions beneficial for familiarizing themselves with foreign products, particularly those from Uzbekistan. Maryam, another visitor, said: "We came to this exhibition to see the products and understand what kind of items Uzbekistan has brought and displayed for us."

The head of the Afghanistan International Exhibition stated that about 200 Uzbekistani traders from 30 sectors have displayed various products, including machinery, health products, electronics, and carpets, for three days.

Mohammad Saber Latifi, head of the Afghanistan International Exhibition, said: "Over 200 traders in 30 sectors and more than 80 of their various companies have participated here."

Iran reports
17% increase
in detentions
of foreigners

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Acting Director of Crime Prevention Management in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province has announced a 17% increase in the detention of foreign nationals in the region.

Gholamreza Baghshirin reported that since the beginning of the current year, a total of 29,902 foreign nationals have been detained.

ISNA news agency reported that Baghshirin stated, "621 foreign nationals are currently serving their sentences in the detention and correctional facilities of Sistan and Baluchestan."

According to this Iranian official, the detainees are accused of crimes related to security, drug offences, and theft.

However, no further details about the identities of the detainees were provided.

The Acting Director emphasized that housing and employment of foreign nationals in the province are prohibited.

He also noted that 56,356 foreign nationals had been expelled from Iran through the borders of Sistan and Baluchestan in the first four months of the current year.

Meanwhile, the increase in foreign detentions and expulsions highlights ongoing security concerns and the stringent measures being enforced by local authorities.

This trend underscores the need for continued vigilance and stringent immigration controls to address security issues in the region.

Baradar inaugurates
Palatuni dam project



KABUL (Pajhwok): Construction of the Palatuni Dam in southeastern Paktia province commenced on Monday. The project, which will take two and a half years to complete, is set to irrigate 2,500 hectares of land and generate 935 kilowatts of electricity once finished.

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund inaugurated the construction of the Palatuni dam in s Paktia province.

The Palatuni Dam, with a storage capacity of approximately 25 million cubic meters of water, will irrigate 2,500 hectares of land and generate 935 kilowatts of electricity. The project is anticipated to be completed within two and a half years.

The project, funded by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) and overseen by the National Development Corporation, is set to create both direct and indirect employment for hundreds of citizens, a statement from the deputy prime minister office said.

Once completed, the dam will enhance groundwater reserves in nearby areas, irrigate agricultural land, control floods, and contribute to environmental preservation.

At the inauguration ceremony, Mullah Baradar emphasized the importance

of agriculture to a strong economy and highlighted water as a critical element for agricultural development.

He told the inaugural ceremony that the IEA prioritizes water management and encourages investment in this sector.

He underlined the IEA's commitment to managing natural resources to achieve self-sufficiency and socio-economic development. Both domestic and foreign investors are invited to invest in this area.

Mullah Baradar also said that the IEA had reviewed large and medium-sized dams across the country, identifying those that are incomplete or yet to begin.

Comprehensive work plans have been developed to advance these projects, with practical work already underway on many, including the Palatuni Dam.

Mullah Baradar acknowledged the sacrifices made by the people of Paktika for the re-establishment of the Islamic system.

He stressed the government's responsibility to address their issues and complete projects that could alleviate their economic challenges.

He assured that resources would be allocated to ensure the Palatuni Dam's completion and urged the contracting company to execute their tasks with dedication and integrity.

Chahar Asyab district:
A historical hub in Kabul

KABUL (TOLOnews): Chahar Asyab district, one of the historical districts of Kabul, is located 11 kilometers south of the capital and is considered the most populous district of this province.

According to Kabul residents, this area was not originally a district, but the government later established it as Chahar Asyab.

Malik Shah Mahmood, a resident of Chahar Asyab district in Kabul, said: "Chahar Asyab district is one of the most populated districts in Kabul, with a population of over 150,000 and more than 123 small and large villages."

Chehr Asyab has several villages, including Chehel

Dokhtaran, Elyas Khil, Tangi Seydan, Rahmat Abad, Alokhi, Deh Kalan, Laghman village, Siah Joy, Satar Khan, Suriyond, Kate Sang, Miyakhil, Payindeh Khil, Haji Khil, Charsuq village, Ahangam, Qala Abdul Raof, Moein Khil, Seyd Khil, Qashlan, Abbas Qoli, Qala Kohna, Dashtak Alia Gurgab, Tajikia village, Golzar village, Qala Naem, Qala Rashid, and several other villages in Chahar Asyab district of Kabul.

Haji Aziz Ahmad, a resident of Chahar Asyab district in Kabul, said: "It wasn't called a district. In the passage where the government of Chardeh was located, this area was also under

the same Chardeh."

In Chahar Asyab, there is also an old mill that has given the area its name.

Abdul Latif, the caretaker of this mill, after unlocking it, told TOLOnews the historical stories related to Chahar Asyab and the reason behind its name.

Abdul Latif told TOLOnews: "This entire plain and mountain existed before, and the people who lived here at that time gathered together. A man named Haji Abdul Hai, a very wise elder in this area, told me the history of naming this place. It is not known to others, but I know. Well, when they gathered together, they said, 'We have made four mills out of our

necessities,' so they named it accordingly."

There are also local narratives that suggest two brothers named Ainuddin Khan and Hesamuddin Khan, who served as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance during the monarchy, lived in this area.

In Qala Naem village of this district, there is a shrine named Bibi Kouftapa, about which the local residents have the following tales.

A resident of Chahar Asyab district said: "This shrine is named Bibi Kouftape. She was a very brave and honorable woman."

Chahar Asyab district is located 11 kilometers south of Kabul city.

Iran deporting over 56,000
Afghan refugees in past 4 months

KABUL (Khaama Press): Iranian officials have announced that in the past four months, 56,356 Afghan migrants were deported through the Sistan and Baluchestan border alone.

Iranian media, citing Gholamreza Baghshirin, head of the Crime Prevention Management at the Sistan and Baluchestan Judiciary, reported that deportations from the Nimroz border have increased by 23% compared to the previous year.

Baghshirin also noted that the number of foreign nationals detained in the province has risen by 17%, with 29,902 foreign citizens arrested since the beginning of the year. He attributed these arrests to crimes related to "security issues, drug trafficking, and theft."

The report further mentions that Baghshirin has banned the housing and employment of foreign

nationals in the province. Amid these actions, the humanitarian crisis continues to worsen as Afghan refugees face severe conditions. Forced deportations from Iran and Pakistan have created a dire situation for many who are left without adequate support or protection.

International responses have yet to significantly alter the situation, highlighting the urgent need for

coordinated global assistance and intervention.

The continued deportation and detention of Afghan refugees underscore the critical need for comprehensive solutions and support systems. Humanitarian organizations and governments must address the immediate needs of displaced individuals and work towards sustainable solutions to alleviate the crisis.

122,000 drug addicts rehabilitated

KABUL (Pajhwok): About 122,000 drug addicts have been rehabilitated and reunited with their families, with 1,350 drug labs destroyed across the country since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's takeover.

Counter-narcotics Department Director at Ministry of Interior (MoI) Maulvi Hasibullah Ahmadi told Pajhwok Afghan News remarkable efforts had been made since the IEA leadership issued a degree combating drugs in the country.

He said drug cultivation, production and trafficking had been reduced to zero over the past three years or so. A large quantity of drugs had been seized and destroyed, poppy crops on thousands of acres of land

eradicated and many traffickers arrested during the period, he claimed.

About 1,350 drug-processing laboratories have been destroyed and 122,000 addicts reunited with their families after their rehabilitation, the official explained.

In response to a query, he said about 20,000 addicts were being rounded up and providing them with treatment facilities in every three months according to annual plan of MoI counter-narcotics department.

Although the director did not provide details, but MoI spokesman Mufti Abdul Matin Qane had shared on X some information on the occasion of International Day Against

Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

He said 47,879 operations had been conducted by counter-narcotics police across the country since the IEA takeover. In these operations, he revealed, about 17,240 suspects had been arrested 119 tonnes of various types of drugs seized.

Meanwhile, political analyst Moin Gul Chamkani told Pajhwok narcotics were an international issue and the interim government was committed to banishing the scourge.

Aziz Miraj, another political analyst, told Pajhwok drug cultivation, production and trafficking had been eliminated from the country after re-establishment of IEA.

The interim government had promised the United States in Doha on February 29, 2020 it would combat drugs in Afghanistan, he recalled.

He added the State Department, the United Nations and Russia had also acknowledged the IEA's campaign against narcotics.

Meanwhile, rehabilitated individuals who have rejoined their relatives are happy to have received care and attention from the authorities.

Hamid Rasouli, an addict, said he turned to drugs when his parents died three years ago. He is happy over being treated at a rehabilitation facility and reunited with his family.

Residents Punjab district
call for healthcare services

BAMIYAN (TOLOnews): Some residents of villages in Punjab district of Bamiyan complained about the lack of access to medical centers.

Due to the absence of healthcare centers in this district, some mothers lose their lives during childbirth, or their children die.

Ali Dad, a resident of Punjab district in Bamiyan, said: "Sometimes when childbirth issues arise or children get sick, it's very difficult for us to reach the clinics." According to the residents of this district, most of the time, they have to transport their patients to medical centers by traveling over 20 kilometers, often using donkeys.

Ibrahim, another resi-

dent of this district, said: "It's extremely difficult, especially in winter when there is snow and rain. The roads are far, and the clinics are very distant."

The mountainous nature of Punjab district, along with the lack of medical centers and healthcare facilities, pose serious challenges for the residents of these villages, particularly for pregnant women.

Najiba Nazari, a resident of Punjab district in Bamiyan, said: "In the area where we live, I remember that three women lost their lives because they couldn't reach a clinic in time."

The Bamiyan Public Health Directorate also confirms these challenges and reported a 30% reduc-

tion in World Bank financial support in the health sector of this province.

Jafar Zaki, head of Bamiyan Public Health Department, said: "We had 280 types of medicine in the BHS package, which stands for Basic Health Services. It's a specific package that should contain 280 types of medicine, but they have reduced it from 280 types to 140."

Along with concerns over the shortage of medical centers and healthcare facilities, patients from seven districts of Bamiyan, as well as from the provinces of Daikundi, Ghor, and parts of Baghlan, Parwan, and Maidan Wardak, also come to the Bamiyan provincial hospital.

3 killed, as many hurt in
Ghazni flash floods



GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Flash floods in southern Ghazni province have claimed the lives of at least three people and left three others injured, an official said on Monday.

Mullah Hamidullah Nisar, Director of Information and Culture, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the flash floods, triggered by heavy rains, hit parts of Deh Yak district on

Sunday night. The victims include a woman and two children, while the injured are receiving treatment.

In addition to the human toll, the floods have caused financial damage, though the exact extent of the losses is still being assessed. Aid organizations have mobilized to provide immediate relief to those affected.

Saleh Mohammad, a resident of Sherboz area, said that the floods inflicted severe financial losses on local residents.

Meanwhile, officials from the Disaster Preparedness Department have confirmed the occurrence of the flash floods and are working to determine the full impact in terms of both casualties and financial damage.

King Amanullah's role
in uplift of economy

KABUL (TOLOnews): King Amanullah Khan, who declared Afghanistan's formal independence on August 18, 1919, made significant contributions to the growth and development of Afghanistan's economy.

Modernizing the country's economic structure, developing agriculture, and establishing new industries to advance infrastructure were among the most important actions taken by the former king.

Officials of the current interim government, 105 years after King Amanullah Khan's reign, said that during his rule, he made efforts to bring progress to Afghanistan.

Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy, said: "Amanullah Khan tried to modernize Afghanistan's economic structure and sought to create new industries and develop infrastructure. Additionally, the development of agriculture, strengthening of trade and commerce, and especially technical and vocational education were other actions that contributed to Afghanistan's economic growth."

Economic experts also said King Amanullah Khan's efforts in the field of Afghanistan's economic development were beneficial. "Building roads, railways, establishing land and

air terminals, regional connectivity, working on mines, and land distribution were among his achievements," said Mohammad Asif Nang, an economic affairs expert.

"Unfortunately, due to interventions, even after a century, we have not yet achieved the necessary self-sufficiency," said Abdul Zuhor Mudaber, an economic affairs expert.

Since King Amanullah Khan's reign, Afghanistan has experienced various economic and political systems; however, despite its rich mineral resources and other capacities, the country is still recognized as one of the poorest in the world.

Provinces should follow Center, Punjab to ensure relief to masses: Tarar

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Monday brushed aside the undue criticism about relief initiative of Federal and Punjab governments in power bills, and called upon other provinces to follow suit for ensuring instant relief to the masses during summer season.

Talking to the media, he said it was the foremost priority of the government to provide substantive relief to the masses, reduce price of the electricity and bring down the inflation in the country. "Provision of the relief to the people by the federal and Punjab governments during the summer season is a good move which should be welcomed by all," he added.

He said the federal government had already given upto Rs 5 per unit relief to all the protected and non-protected consumers in three months'

electricity bills (June to August) with a generous allocation of a subsidy of 50 billion rupees. Tarar pointed out that all those consumers who used upto 200 units of the electricity per month, had already received the relief across the country.

Likewise, the Punjab government allocated Rs 45 billion from its own funds to give subsidy to those who were using 200 units to 500 units per month. Cumulatively, the relief initiatives of both the governments did provide the much-needed relief to the masses, he said, adding now it was up to other provincial governments to take identical steps to ensure relief for the masses.

He said these relief steps ought to be fully appreciated and called for discarding criticism to work together for collective welfare and betterment of people. He said the federal government had taken optimum measures to pass on substantial relief to the masses in the given circumstances and available resources. Similarly, it was

prerogative of the Punjab government to take relief initiative for its residents, he added.

The minister said the government was fully committed to improving the living standards of people, citing the recent significant reduction in the petroleum prices on the eve of August 14 on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said advertisements have been published in the newspapers to privatize the electricity distribution companies while a crackdown against the power theft was already underway. A Task Force has been formed to find out a long-term solution for reducing the electricity prices, he added. Substantive steps and measures had been taken to contain the inflation, he said, highlighting its marked reduction from 23 per cent to 11 per cent. He expressed the confidence that the government's pragmatic approach and people-friendly policies would further curb inflationary trend in the country.



QUETTA: Locals trying to reach their destination as full area was swept away by flash floods in Qilla Abdullah.

One case of Mpox virus detected

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: One case of the mpox virus has been detected in Pakistan of the clade 2 variety, the country's ministry of health said on Monday, adding that no cases of the clade 1b strain of the disease have been diagnosed.

Clade 1b has triggered global concern because it seems to spread more easily though routine close contact. A case of the variant was confirmed last week in Sweden and linked to a growing outbreak in Africa, the first sign of its spread outside the continent. "As of now, there have been no reported cases of clade 1 in Pakistan," said Sajid Hussain Shah, spokesperson for the ministry of national health services.

Following the detection of a mpox case in the country last week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered effective screening at all airports, seaports, and borders, and asked border health services to maintain comprehensive surveillance. He also directed the National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) to remain alert, conduct daily evaluations and ensure the availability of necessary equipment and kits for mpox assessment.

The World Health Organisation declared the recent outbreak of the disease a public health emergency of international concern after the new variant was identified. The WHO last week sounded its highest level of alert over the outbreak in Africa after cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo spread to nearby countries. There have been 27,000 cases and more than 1,100 deaths, mainly among children, in DR Congo since the current outbreak began in January 2023.

Global health officials on last week confirmed an infection with the new strain of mpox in Sweden and linked it to a growing outbreak in Africa, the first sign of its spread outside the continent. The WHO did not urge any travel restrictions to curb the spread of mpox. The disease presents with flu-like symptoms and pus-filled lesions. It is usually mild but can kill, and children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of complications.

Landsliding damages houses in GB

E.P. Report

GILGIT: Multiple landslides in Ghizer district, Gilgit-Baltistan, have left dozens of homes damaged and the Karakorum Highway closed at three locations.

According to the Deputy Commissioner of Ghizer, 15 houses were completely destroyed and 59 partially damaged in the village of Yangal in Gupis due to a massive landslide. The landslide also affected 45 cattle sheds completely and 20 partially. The administration reported that 11 homes were damaged in Ishkoman, Haim, and Yasin due to landslides, with further damage to cattle sheds. Heavy rains and flash floods have destroyed standing crops and uprooted trees.

While the roads in Gilgit, Ghizer, and Shandoor affected by the rains and floods have been reopened to traffic, the Karakorum Highway has been closed at three locations due to landslides triggered by heavy rains and strong winds in Hunza.

Gaza talks maybe last chance for truce: US

TEL AVIV (AFP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in Israel to push for a Gaza truce, said on Monday ongoing negotiations were "maybe the last" chance to reach an agreement to end the war.

"This is a decisive moment — probably the best, maybe the last, opportunity to get the hostages home, to get a ceasefire and to put everyone on a better path to enduring peace and security," Blinken said as he met Israeli President Isaac Herzog. The top US diplomat said President Joe Biden had sent him "to get this agreement to the line and ultimately over the line."

"It is time for it to get done. It's also time to make sure that no one takes any steps that could derail this process," Blinken said. "We're working to make sure that there is no escalation, that there are no provocations, that there are no actions that in any way could move us away from getting this deal over the line, or, for that matter, escalating the conflict to other places, and to greater intensity."

Blinken, on his ninth visit to the Middle East since Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, is scheduled to meet later on Monday with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The visiting secretary of state said it was a "fraught moment" in Israel and warned against any moves that could heighten regional tensions, following threats from Iran and Lebanese armed group Hezbollah to avenge the recent killings of two militant leaders.

Herzog, who holds a largely ceremonial role, said Israelis wanted to see the return "as soon as possible" of hostages still held in Gaza since the October 7 attack that triggered the war. "There is no greater humanitarian objective, and there's no

greater humanitarian cause, than bringing back our hostages," Herzog told Blinken.

Meanwhile, the armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility on Monday for a bomb blast near a synagogue in Tel Aviv that Israeli police and the Shin Bet intelligence agency described as a terrorist attack.

A man who was carrying the bomb was killed and a passerby was injured in the incident late on Sunday, according to police at the scene. In their statement the Brigades added that their "martyrdom operations" inside Israel would return to the forefront as long as the "occupation's massacres and assassination policy continue" — an allusion to Israel's offensive in Gaza and the July 31 killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Israel has neither claimed nor denied responsibility for Haniyeh's death in the Iranian capital. The war in Gaza began on Oct. 7 last year when Hamas gunmen stormed across the border into Israeli communities, killing around 1,200 people and abducting about 250 hostages according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's military campaign has since levelled wide swathes of the Gaza Strip and killed at least 40,000 people, according to the enclave's health authorities. Sunday's explosion in Tel Aviv came about an hour after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv to push for a ceasefire in Gaza to end the 10-month-old war between Israel and Hamas. There has been increased urgency to reach a ceasefire deal amid fears of an escalation across the wider region. Iran has threatened to retaliate against Israel after the assassination of Haniyeh.

US House release impeachment report on Biden

WASHINGTON: Republicans in the United States House of Representatives have released a report alleging Democratic President Joe Biden committed impeachable offences, but it is unclear whether they would push for a vote following a probe that the White House has long dismissed as politically motivated.

A 291-page report by three House committees alleged that Biden profited from an influence-peddling scheme to enrich himself and members of his family through foreign business dealings beginning in 2014 when Biden was vice president. Jim Jordan, head of the Judiciary Committee, said the investigation showed "conclusively" that Biden had "abused his public office for the private financial benefit of the Biden family and Biden business associates."

"President Biden's legacy is marked by abuse of public office, corruption and obstruction. The evidence produced by our impeachment inquiry is the strongest case for impeachment of a sitting president the House of Representatives has ever investigated," said James Comer, head of the House

Committee on Oversight and Accountability. But the nearly yearlong inquiry released by the Republicans on Monday, stops short of alleging any criminal wrongdoing by the president, who decided last month not to run for re-election this year.

Instead, the report, also released on the opening day of the Democratic National Convention, covers familiar ground, asserting the Biden family traded on its "brand" in business ventures in corrupt ways that rise to the US Constitution's high bar for impeachment. Republicans have for years used Biden's son Hunter's foreign links and chaotic personal life as a recovering drug addict to try to embarrass his father. They have alleged the Biden family and its associates received about \$27m in business payments from partners or clients in Russia, China and other countries.

They alleged an additional \$8m in loans, including some from Hunter Biden benefactor Kevin Morris, a Hollywood attorney, and question the purchases of the son's artwork.

The report said it is "inconceivable" that President Biden did not understand what was going on. "President Biden partic-

ipated in a conspiracy to monetize his office of public trust to enrich his family," the report alleged. Biden — set to deliver a swan song speech at the Democratic convention and pass the political torch to his vice president, Kamala Harris — has repeatedly denied helping his son's business ventures, including in Ukraine and China.

The White House has dismissed the House impeachment inquiry as a "stunt" and encouraged House Republicans to "move on". Many also see the Republicans' report as a bid for revenge over the two impeachments of Republican Donald Trump when he was president. Trump, who survived both trials in the Senate, is his party's presidential candidate for a third time and will face Harris in the November 5 election.

Meanwhile, with President Biden no longer running for re-election, the next steps are uncertain. House Republicans have not had support from their own ranks to actually impeach the president, and removal by the Senate, which Democrats control with the help of a few independent members, is even further afield. — Aljazeera

Turkish Minister arrives

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Turkish Minister of National Defense Yasar Guler has arrived at Jinnah Terminal Karachi for a short period. Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharejo welcomed the Minister of National Defense of Turkey. Turkish Consul General and Turkish Ambassador were also present on this occasion.

Both the ministers discussed matters of mutual interest. Provincial Minister Jam Ikramullah Dharejo told the Turkish Minister of National Defense about investment opportunities in Sindh province. On this occasion Turkish Minister of National Defense Yasir Guler invited Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharejo to visit Turkey. After a short meeting, the Turkish Minister of National Defense left for his destination.

Tribunal probes cases against Hasina

DHAKA (AFP): A Bangladeshi war crimes tribunal set up by ousted premier Sheikh Hasina has launched three "mass murder" probes into its founder over the unrest that forced her to flee the country, its investigator said Monday. More than 450 people were killed — many due to police fire — during a month of student-led protests against Hasina's 15-year autocratic rule, before she quit as prime minister and fled to India on August 5.

"We are collecting preliminary evidence at this stage," said Ataur Rahman, deputy director of the tribunal's investigation cell, adding the cases were related to "mass murder." "After this, we will go to the site of the crimes," Rahman told AFP. All three cases were brought by private individuals, and several of Hasina's former top aides have also been named in the cases, he said. The cases relate to violence in suburbs or nearby districts of the capital Dhaka, in Mirpur, Munshiganj and Savar.

In addition, local police units across the country have filed at least 15 cases against Hasina, according to local media reports. Some relate to cases that predate the recent unrest, and charges include murder and "crimes against humanity." Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) was set up by Hasina in 2010 to probe atrocities during the country's liberation war against Pakistan.

Under Hasina, the ICT sentenced more than 100 people to death, including several of her political opponents. The court was often criticized by rights groups for not following international conventions. Hasina's government was accused of widespread human rights abuses, including the extrajudicial killing of thousands of her political opponents. The United Nations said Friday there were strong indications that the Bangladeshi security forces used unnecessary force in tackling the student-led uprising.

Kyiv hails Kursk success as Russia rules out talks

KYIV (AFP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday hailed his forces' success in their surprise offensive into Russia's territory, an advance that triggered the Kremlin to rule out entering peace talks with Kyiv. Ukraine sent troops and tanks over the border on August 6, piercing several kilometers into Russia's Kursk region, where they are holding onto a chunk of territory.

The biggest attack on Russian soil since World War II has rattled Moscow and taken Ukraine's Western allies by surprise. Zelensky on Monday said the incursion was achieving Kyiv's objectives, which officials have previously said include stretching Russian forces, creating a "buffer zone" and bringing the war "closer" to an end on "fair" terms. But Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said Kyiv's attack had pushed the prospect of peace talks further away.

"At the current stage, given this escapade, we will not talk," he said Monday. He called entering a negotiating process "completely inappropriate" and said future talks "depend on the situation on the battlefield, including in the Kursk region." Moscow, intent on not letting the offensive affect its own advance in eastern Ukraine, claimed another village in the war-battered Donetsk region on Monday. And bracing for a further assault, Ukraine ordered the evacuation of families from the key city of Pokrovsk as Moscow's forces inched closer to the logistics hub.

In Kursk, Zelensky's troops have set up administrative offices and published previously unthinkable footage of Ukrainian soldiers patrolling Russian streets. "We are achieving our goals. This morning we have another replenishment of the (prisoner of war) exchange fund for our country," Zelensky said, referring to more Russian troops being taken captive. On Sunday, he said the push into Russian territory was designed to create a "buffer zone."

The prospect of peace talks appeared distant even before Ukraine launched its incursion into Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin had demanded Ukraine cede swathes of territory if it wanted a ceasefire. Zelensky, who has ruled out direct talks with the Kremlin, demands Russia's full withdrawal from Ukrainian territory, including Crimea, and reparations. Seeking to give impetus to a possi-

ble settlement, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Ukraine on Friday, officials in New Delhi and Kyiv said. Modi recently visited Moscow, is close with Putin and has made no secret of his desire to bring about an end to the conflict. Meanwhile, Ukraine was pushing on Monday with its Kursk offensive.

A third bridge over the Seym river inside Russia was hit over the weekend, a Russian military investigator said in a video published by high-profile pro-Kremlin TV commentator Vladimir Solovoyov. It has left Russia with limited supply options, according to Russian military bloggers. Moscow's defense ministry said Russia had thwarted Ukrainian attacks on three more villages.

The incursion has visibly worried Russians, prompting some in Kyiv to hope that sentiment could turn the country against the Kremlin's more than two-year war. "Accustomed to seeing the war as a television show, Russians are now seeing it up close and personal," Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said on X. "If you don't want to see the war, you have to end the war by forcing your 'leadership' to make peace on fair terms."

In eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, Moscow said it captured the town of Artemovo, which is called Zalizne in Ukrainian. Zalizne had a population of around 5,000 at the start of 2022 — making it one of the largest places captured by Russian troops in recent weeks. Ukrainian artillery fired on a bus stop in the city of Donetsk, which is under Russia's control, killing a pregnant woman and wounding 10 including two children, said Denis Pushilin, the Russian-installed governor.

Ukraine said Russian attacks killed four people in frontline towns, with a 71-year-old woman killed in her garden in Toretsk and three civilians in their 60s and 70s killed in the village of Zarichne. As the front moved further west toward the city of Pokrovsk, Ukrainian officials announced the compulsory evacuation of families with children. More than 53,000 people still live in the area, including almost 4,000 children. Filashkin called the decision to evacuate "necessary and inevitable." Russia has long tried to capture Pokrovsk, which lies on the intersection of a key road that supplies Ukrainian troops.

Modi to visit Ukraine

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Ukraine later this week, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Monday ahead of his first trip to the war-torn country since Russia's invasion and about a month after he met President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Modi will be the first Indian premier to visit Ukraine since the Eastern European country declared independence in 1991. He is scheduled to leave New Delhi on Aug. 21 for Poland, before visiting Kyiv.

"This landmark visit of course takes place against the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which will also form part of discussions. As you are aware, India has consistently advocated for diplomacy and dialogue to reach a negotiated settlement," Tanmaya Lal, secretary West at the ministry, told a press conference in Delhi. "India is willing to provide all possible support and contribution required to help find peaceful solutions to this conflict."

New Delhi has abstained from publicly criticizing Russia over the Ukraine war and did not join the slew of international sanctions slapped on it, despite pressure from Western countries, especially the US. Since the escalation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Modi has met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on several occasions, including on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Italy in June.

When Modi visited Moscow in early July for

the annual India-Russia summit, the trip and his embrace with Putin then were met with criticisms from the international community, including Washington and Kyiv. While Modi's upcoming trip to Ukraine is partly seen as a form of damage control following his trip to Russia, it is also Delhi's attempt at diplomacy, said Amitabh Singh, an associate professor at the Center for Russian and Central Asian Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University.

"This is a significant visit in the sense that the hope of diplomacy is still alive ... Going to Ukraine will put some diplomatic pressure both on Ukraine and Russia," Singh told Arab News. "It would be unfair to say that Modi is visiting Ukraine just to offset the criticism he got for visiting Moscow. India always maintains that it has a certain level of strategic autonomy. It's an effort to show to the international community that we are not only talking to Moscow, and we are also talking to Kyiv."

Modi is likely trying to show the international community that diplomacy is key to ending the war, Singh added. "Diplomacy is the only alternative — that is the message probably Modi is trying to convey to Ukraine also, and Russia too." Aditya Ramanathan, a research fellow with the Takshashila Institution in Bengaluru, said the visit is "of considerable significance."

He told Arab News: "The unsympathetic will see it as

an attempt at damage control that is too little too late. However, seasoned observers of India will understand that the visit is a costly signal from Delhi to demonstrate the independence of its foreign policy." Russia's missile strike on a children's hospital in Ukraine during Modi's visit to Moscow "created a terrible impression for India," Ramanathan added, saying that the timing "added to the impetus" of his visit to Kyiv this week. The trip is part of India's attempt to navigate the complex world of ever-changing geopolitics, while also maintaining relations with old partners.

"Indian and Russian interests have been diverging and Delhi is keenly aware that Russia's global significance is likely to decline," he said. India's ties with Russia span over seven decades, and Moscow is its biggest crude oil supplier and the main source of its military hardware. But in the last two decades, India's partnership with the West has been growing, and it is a member of the Quad, the four-state strategic security dialogue, comprising also the US, Japan and Australia, that was established to counter the increased regional economic and military influence of China. "While India is not going to abandon one of its closest partners just yet, there's no harm in parlaying with Russia's adversaries," Ramanathan said. "If Moscow can court Islamabad and Beijing, Delhi can court Kyiv and Washington." — Arab News