

TLP leader sends to jail
F.P. Report
LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday sent Maulana Muhammad Tahir Saifi, a leader of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, to jail on a 14-day judicial remand in a case of inciting people against the chief justice of Pakistan. Earlier, the Sheikhupura police produced the TLP leader before ATC Judge Irfan Haider at the expiry of his physical remand.



KYIV: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Ukraine.

Modi visits Kyiv amidst Ukraine conflict — a strategic diplomatic engagement

F.P. Report

KYIV: In a historic and strategically significant move, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Kyiv on Friday, becoming the first Indian leader to visit Ukraine since it gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Modi's visit underscores India's increasingly pivotal role in global diplomacy, particularly in the context of the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

The timing of Modi's visit is critical. It comes amidst heightened tensions in Ukraine, with Russian forces continuing their slow but steady advances in the east, and Ukrainian forces having recently crossed into Russia's western Kursk region. The war has reached a volatile stage, and Kyiv is keen to build

stronger diplomatic ties with influential countries in the Global South, including India, to bolster its position on the international stage.

Upon his arrival, Modi was greeted warmly by both the Indian community in Ukraine and Ukrainian officials. He expressed his intent to discuss pathways to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. This visit follows Modi's controversial trip to Moscow in July, where he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. That meeting drew sharp criticism from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who expressed disappointment at Modi's engagement with what he described as "the world's most bloody criminal" amidst a devastating Russian missile strike on a Ukrainian children's hospital.

Despite this tension,

Ukrainian officials view Modi's visit as a positive development. Mykhailo Podolyak, an advisor to the Ukrainian president, emphasized the significance of India's influence over Moscow. He noted that building effective relations with India is crucial for Ukraine, not only to secure a fair resolution to the conflict but also to garner broader international support.

India, traditionally aligned with Russia through deep economic and defense ties, has publicly condemned the loss of innocent lives in the conflict. Modi's visit to Kyiv signals a potential shift in India's diplomatic approach, highlighting its growing role as a mediator in global conflicts and its commitment to advocating for peace in a volatile international environment.

Taliban is not our partner in fight against ISIS: US

WASHINGTON: A Pentagon spokesperson stated that the US has international partners in the fight against ISIS. However, Sabrina Singh emphasized that the US does not view the Taliban as a partner in the fight against ISIS.

Previously, NBC News reported, citing its sources, that due to the growing global threat posed by ISIS, Biden administration officials are considering expanding cooperation with the Taliban regime to help track down ISIS-Khorasan. The US and other Western governments are working to counter the increasing threat of ISIS-Khorasan. Until earlier this year, US and Western officials believed that ISIS-Khorasan intended to carry out attacks outside Afghanistan but lacked the capability to do so.

However, this view changed after ISIS's attack on the Crocus Concert Hall in Moscow on March 22, which resulted in 130 deaths. The Taliban have had bloody confrontations with ISIS in recent years and claim that ISIS has been suppressed and no longer poses a threat to them or other countries.

Despite these claims, Taliban officials continue to deny the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan, even as ISIS-K carries out attacks, particularly targeting the Hazara community in the country. The ongoing violence and attacks by ISIS-K in Afghanistan highlight the persistent threat the group poses, challenging the Taliban's assertions of control and raising concerns about the broader security situation in the region. — Agencies

SBP injects Rs966.5b into market

F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs966.5 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on August 23, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 20 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs816.5 billion.

The central bank received 19 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs1,119.4 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.58 to 19.65 percent while 2 bids were received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs16.5 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.61 to 19.62%. The SBP accepted 18 quotes for 7-day tenor amounting to Rs800 billion at 19.59 % rate of return while 2 quotes for 28-day tenor amounting to Rs16.5 billion were accepted at 19.61% rate of return.

Hameed, Khan defended his demand for an open trial. He dismissed accusations that he had conspired with Faiz Hameed regarding the events of May 9, stating that he had built the party from the ground up and had been fighting constitutionally for 28 years. He called for an open trial if Faiz was indeed involved in May 9, emphasizing that this issue is neither a military nor an international secret.

Khan also remarked that if the Hamoodur Rahman report had been implemented, Pakistan would be in a better democratic state today. He argued that just like the benefits of enforcing that report, holding an open trial in this case would be equally valuable. Had the report been enforced, the country would have avoided three martial laws, and there wouldn't be an undeclared martial law today.

Islamabad rally postponed to avoid unrest: Imran Khan

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday disclosed that while in jail, he was informed that holding a rally in Islamabad could lead to national unrest, prompting the decision to cancel the event.

During an informal discussion with journalists at Adiala Jail, Imran Khan explained that the rally in Islamabad was called off due to concerns over the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat matter. He mentioned that he was warned that the topic was highly sensitive, with religious parties already protesting in Islamabad. Fearing potential chaos, the rally was postponed. He further added that had the rally taken place, there was a significant risk of a repeat of the May 9 incident.

The judicial inquiry into the previous May 9 event

still remains pending. Imran Khan cautioned that if permission for the rally is granted but authorities attempt to stop it, the government will be held accountable. He pointed out that the credibility of the courts is at stake, as the judiciary needs to decide whether they will allow the rally or if the administration will cancel the permit. He emphasized to his party not to tolerate any further disruptions regarding the September 8 rally.

He reiterated that this is the last time he is postponing the Islamabad rally. Khan urged party leaders to meet before September 8 to finalize plans for protests if the Supreme Court's decision isn't enforced. He instructed the leadership that this time, if anyone tries to obstruct them, they must not back down.

In response to a journalist's query about the trial of General (Retd) Faiz

The Frontier Post

Aliya Hamza moves IHC
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Aliya Hamza moved the Islamabad High Court to get protective bail in registered against her in Faisalabad and Sargodha. The PTI leader filed the petition through her lawyers Khaqan Mir and Ishtiaq A. Khan, requesting the court to hear her plea on Friday. Thursday, an Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Gujranwala had acquitted Hamza in a case related to May 9 vandalism.

PM orders setup of SMEDA, other vital institutions' Boards

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a meeting on matters related to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), emphasizing the crucial role of SMEs in Pakistan's economy. He said the small and medium enterprises act as the back bone of the country's economy.

Expressing dismay over the non-functioning of the SMEDA Board, the prime minister directed its immediate constitution, stressing that boards of all institutions vital for the country's economy, should be established without delay. Additionally, he called for promoting sub-contracting in industries and taking all possible measures to integrate Pakistani industries into the global supply chain.

The prime minister also ordered to take necessary steps to ensure appointment of the SMEDA's Chief Executive Officer. Additionally, he also directed to include the people from the private sector in the steering committee.

During the briefing, the prime minister was informed that for the first time, SMEDA Development Fund had been launched for which an amount of Rs 30 billion had been allocated for 6 years. Out of the total, Rs 5 billion have already been provided for the year 2024-25, the meeting was told. It was informed in the meeting that, there were currently 5.2 million small and medium enterprises in Pakistan, which account for 40 percent of the country's GDP whereas 31% of country's exports depend on the SMEs.

Apart from non-agricultural employment, SME sector provides 72% of employment while some Rs 491 billion have been provided in the form of bank credit for the SME sector so far, but the bank credit for the SME sector needs to be taken up to Rs 800 billion, the meeting was told. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana

Shehbaz seeks proposals to shut down Utility Stores

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sought proposals for shutting down the state-owned Utility Stores Corporation (USC) and replace it with a new system. The prime minister also called for proposals within two weeks for an alternative system in place of the Utility Stores.

The government was mulling to give cash amounts to BISP consumers of the Utility Stores. In the meanwhile, the Utility Stores have stopped sale of subsidized items to the BISP consumers. The Utility Stores Corporation is a state-owned enterprise that was founded in 1971 and which operates chain stores throughout the country that provide basic commodities to the general public at prices which are lower than the open market because the government subsidizes them.

It approximately has nearly 15,000 employees and 5,939 store outlets across Pakistan. It may be mentioned here that the government had already decided to abolish five federal ministries. The ministries on the chopping block were Information Technology, Kashmir Affairs, Science and Technology, Industry and Production, and Health Services.

Later, after having second thoughts, the government had decided not to abolish the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination. Some departments under the ministry will be merged instead and the ministry will be right-sized. The ministry will coordinate with international organizations and provinces to improve healthcare services. The government is also considering transferring employees of merged departments to other departments.

Utility stores' employees in jeopardy

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The federal government on Friday decided to completely shut down utility stores. The federal government gave two-week time to utility stores to shut down their operations across the country, sending a shockwave among 6,000 permanent employees as well as other daily wagers.

Speaking about the government's decisions, secretary of industries and production said that the government was closing utility stores, adding that the rightsizing committee had suggested closure of few other ministries also as the government didn't have financial wherewithal to sustain expenses. He further stated that the federal cabinet would give formal approval in this regard soon.

Pakistani nation stood with those who have lost loved ones, homes, and livelihoods in the floods, said a press release issued by the PM's Office.

He lauded the people of Bangladesh for their renowned bravery and courage, particularly in the face of adversity. The prime minister expressed confidence that Bangladesh's leadership will guide the country through this challenging period. He also affirmed Pakistan's readiness to offer any assistance, needed by Bangladesh.

Second case of Mpox confirmed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Director Public Health, Dr. Irshad Roghani, has confirmed the second case of Mpox in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The total number of Mpox cases in the province has now risen to 2.

While giving the details of the second Mpox case Director Public Health revealed that a 47-year-old man from Nowshera has tested positive for the virus. The patient was traveling from Dubai to Peshawar, when he was screened at the airport and showed symptoms. He was promptly isolated at Police Services Hospital.

Dr. Irshad Roghani stated that a detailed medical history was taken, and samples were sent to the Public Health Reference Lab. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Reference Lab confirmed the presence of Mpox through PCR. Further samples have been sent to the National Institute of Health in Islamabad for additional analysis. The report is expected within three to four days, and details will be shared with the media thereafter.

It is worth noting that the first case of Mpox in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was reported last week from Mardan, leading to the formation of district, and provincial level isolation wards, and response teams as directed by Provincial Outbreak Committee.

Another case of Congo virus reported in Quetta: Another case of Congo virus has been reported in Quetta on Friday. According to Health Department the patient suffering from Congo virus is undergoing treatment in the isolation ward of Fatima Jinnah Institute of Chest Diseases, Quetta. The 14-year-old patient belongs to Quetta whose blood test confirmed Congovirus, Health Department said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on matters related to Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority.

Child among 10 killed in Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP): Israeli airstrikes across southern Lebanon on Friday killed at least 10 Lebanese citizens, including a 10-year-old boy, before Hezbollah responded with artillery rounds and rockets across the border.

The intensified Israeli escalation coincided with a meeting between Lebanese Army Commander General Joseph Aoun and French Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations Gen. Thierry Garreta. Both parties "discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the two armies and developments on the southern border," said the Lebanese Army Command.

A security source said on Friday that the Israeli "focus seemed to be on targeting anything that moves in the field, whether on the front lines or the rear ones, regardless of the affiliations of those moving or their military positions in Hezbollah." The source also pointed to "the young ages of those targeted." At least eight Hezbollah members were killed in separate Israeli raids targeting the border area in southern Lebanon.

Some areas were targeted for the first time since the opening of the southern front and the beginning of hostilities between Hezbollah and the Israeli army on Oct. 8, 2023. At 8

a.m., Hezbollah announced "the launching of salvos of rockets toward Mount Meron in the Upper Galilee, targeting the espionage equipment at the headquarters of the Air Monitoring and Operations Management Unit at the Meron base with appropriate weapons, hitting it directly, which resulted in destroying it."

Israeli media reported that the alert level was raised in the north, noting "an interesting day ahead of us."

It indicated damage to the Meron air base caused by two rockets The Israeli army has opened an investigation into the incident. Israeli Channel 12 quoted an army spokesman saying that the military observed the launching of five rockets from Lebanon on Meron and intercepted some of them, without any injuries.

Israeli warplanes raided Tayr Harfa in the western sector about 10 a.m., killing three Hezbollah members. They were Hassan Wissam Harqous, 19, and Qassem Saleh Harqous, 20, cousins from Toura in the south, and Aqeel Qassem Gharib, 34, from Tayr Harfa. At noon, an Israeli drone launched an attack with two guided missiles on a car on the road to Aytal Al-Jabal in the Bint Jbeil district, killing a man called Mohammed Ahmed

Najm, a Hezbollah member, and his 10-year-old nephew Zulfikar Fadi Radwan.

The child was running toward his uncle's car to greet him when the missile struck. Aytal Al-Jabal has been shelled for the first time since the start of the war on Oct. 8. Israeli airstrikes hit the towns of Mays Al-Jabal and Dhour Kfarkela. Artillery shelling targeted the outskirts of the towns of Kfarchouba and Kfarhamam.

The heavy machine gun fire from the Israeli army also hit the town of Aita Al-Shaab in the central sector. A drone carried out an aerial attack on a motorcycle in Aitaroun in the Bint Jbeil district with a guided missile. The Health Emergency Center of the Ministry of Health announced that two people were killed and three were injured in the airstrikes that targeted Mays Al-Jabal and Aitaroun.

Sirens sounded in the settlements of Al-Malikiyah and Shatla in Western Galilee. Also on Friday, Hezbollah announced attacking the Israeli military site of Al-Malikiyah with artillery shells. According to its consecutive statements, it also targeted "Israeli soldiers positioned in the vicinity of Khazzan Hill with artillery shells," as well as "the Al-Abad military site."



Climate change impacts on urban areas need solutions

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Experts at a stakeholder dialogue advocating the importance of data for development, and resilience on Friday underscored that urban centers of the country are facing increasing risk of growing vulnerability due to climate disasters amid rising trends of urbanization and poor land use planning.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and Forman Christian College University (FCCU) organised a dialogue titled 'Data for Development (D4D) Climate Change, Mega Cities and Urban Floods.'

Chairman Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Punjab Assembly, MPA Ahmed Iqbal says that not only policymakers but every citizen is facing the brunt of climate change. "Climate change is a reality and it's a young people's issue as the more younger an individual is the more the impacts of climate change would be faced by him or her," he added.

Lahore, he said is the biggest mega urban center in Punjab and it's the center of policy making and decisions of the government. "Apart from that Lahore is facing massive risk of climate disasters whereas rural to urban shift is also increasing in the province. Many villages in the province have been drowned due to recent monsoon rainfalls," Ahmed Iqbal said. He suggested that the provincial government should think of innovative incentives like tax rebates for green roof surface households, and

enhanced funding for rain-water harvesting recharging wells to control urban flooding. But, without data, there is no possibility to achieve any outcome or objective in the realm of climate governance, he added.

Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI says plastic pollution is a crucial part of urban flooding as in developing countries plastic bags are choking the drainage systems leading to urban flooding. "We are living in unprecedented times and witnessing abnormal rain as many megacities across the world are receiving a year's rainfall in 3-4 days. The temperature in the Federal Capital is three degrees higher on average than the past 52 years average," Dr Suleri said.

Dr. Jonathan Addleton Rector, FCCU said data for development and decision-making is crucial amid climate change and urban flooding hazards. He mentioned that the urban flooding aspect in Lahore was common, and it was not a theoretical issue for Pakistan as it had received disastrous floods in the past.

Tania Durrani, Development Professional at UNFPA claimed that the institute is working on core areas of population management, reproductive health, ending child marriages and gender disbalance, and reaching out to the most vulnerable groups mainly women, children, and persons with disabilities. She underlined that the agency is working with diverse stakeholders and academia to generate data that can influence programs and policies in cross-sectoral domains as gender-segregated data is important

to ensure inclusive development initiatives.

Dr. Sajid Amin, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI while introducing the D4D initiative said no development is possible without efficient data and information, whereas the role of Federal and Provincial governments is very important in data development with the latter sharing the most burden of responsibility due to implementation prerogative enshrined under the constitution. He added that under the D4D initiative, the basic purpose was to build capacity of the public sector to develop the ability to create, use, and integrate data into policy designs.

Dr. Sana Bashir, Deputy Secretary, Environment Prediction Department provided a comprehensive presentation on the efforts of the department in generating and collating the data on climate and its implications on decision-making efforts.

Irfan Ali Khan, DG Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab in his keynote address said urban flooding has been a serious risk in the major urban centers of the country and the province. "Rapid urbanization in the last two decades and poor land use planning was the core of the issue of urban flooding. In 2022, Pakistan witnessed the most devastating floods of its history that inflicted massive life, property, and infrastructure losses. There were numerous cases of structural collapses due to 30% above normal monsoon rainfall this year," he said. He informed that at the PDMA level, urban flooding had emerged as a challenge, whereas the provin-

cial government is utilizing all available resources to enhance preparedness against monsoon rainfall.

Muhammad Omar Masud CEO, Urban Unit says, that the cities across Pakistan are mostly unplanned which would allow climate change to massively impact cities and a large population residing in it. There was data present in silos across various sectors of the country but there were issues of data coordination, sharing, and collation with a culture of resistance towards data sharing as a weakness, he said.

Dr. Rabiya Chaudhry Assistant Professor, CPPG, FCCU said urban flooding is a pluvial flood caused by rainfall and is independent of seas and rivers whereas

in Lahore it was because of heavy rainfall during monsoon season.

She underscored that average rainfall has not increased but the pattern has changed as Lahore can accommodate 40mm of rainwater per day and on 26th June 2024 there was 161.8 mm of rainfall which was four times more than the capacity of Lahore, in July 2023, there was a 206mm rainfall took place. "Due to more expansion of road infrastructure and tree cutting the city has become a heat sink, whereas the population statistics are surging with 25,000-30,000 people entering Lahore every month which is burdening the existing housing and municipal facilities in the mega city," she added.

TENDER NOTICE

- Director General Health Services Peshawar** invites sealed bids for the purchase of Stationery, Contingency / vehicle parts/ repair of machines/ furniture and other items under National competitive bidding from those firms who registered with Sales Tax and Income Tax Authorities and with their own vender Number & office in Peshawar.
- Bidding shall be conducted through single stage single envelope under Rule 6(2) (a) KPRA Rules 2014. The firms are bound to provide complete information of the bidding firms along with its postal as well as valid email address and phone number as incomplete bids will be rejected straightaway.
- The bids shall reach to this office on or before **09/09/2024 at 10:00 AM**. The bids shall be opened on the same day by the purchase committee of this office in the presence of representatives of the bidders at **11:00 Noon**. Bid submitted after due date and time shall not be entertained.
- The bid must be accompanied with bid security **Rs.100,000/-** with quotation in the shape of call deposit receipt (CDR) on the name of Director General Health Services Peshawar the CDR will be released after **30/06/2025**, Payment order (PO) and insurance guarantee shall be not acceptable as will lead to disqualification of the firms.
- The quotations will be submitted according to the list serial numbers and all the quoted rates by the firms will be valid up to **30/06/2025**.
- Bidders are required to offer most competitive lowest rates of quoted items according to specification or best quality items with inclusive of all the taxes.
- The detail specifications terms and conditions, can be obtained from the office of **Director General Health Services Peshawar** on any working day during the office hours before closing date. The same can be also download from official website of KPRA and health Department i.e **www.kppra.gov.pk** & **www.healthkp.com**.
- The under signed reserves the right to reject any or all the bids as per provisions contained in Rule 47 of KPRA Procurement Rules 2014.

INF(P)2183/24

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DIRECTORATE GENERAL HEALTH
SERVICES K.P. PESHAWAR**
Phone 091-9210269 Fax-091-9210230
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Justice Iqbal recuses himself

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal has recused himself from hearing a case against internet suspension and firewall installation.

An application filed by Judicial Activism Panel (JAP) against internet suspension and firewall installation was due to be heard today. LHC's Justice Chaudhry Iqbal excused to hear the case and directed to move the case to Justice Shakeel Ahmad's court.

The court remarked that Justice Shakeel Ahmad has been hearing such cases and directed to fix the case for hearing today.

It is pertinent to note that

various applications were filed in LHC and IHC against firewall installation and internet and social media disruption across the country.

Petitioner contended that the disruption in the internet was wreaking havoc in online businesses and every field of life. They requested the court to direct authorities to not disrupt the internet.

However, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Chairman retired major general Hafeezur Rehman asserted that internet slowdown was caused by damaged submarine cable and VPN use. Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima also cleared the air about the issue and informed that there was no

internet slowdown and speed throttling by the government, instead excessive use of VPN exacerbated the internet connectivity issue.

Users across Pakistan are having difficulty accessing social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, and internet service on mobile data also is slow. They are having internet outages with limited and slow connectivity, and are unable to download and share files and data.

Freelancers have also voiced their concerns that they are unable to complete and deliver their projects on the respective websites, resulting in negative feedback by clients and tarnishing the image of Pakistani freelancers.

Sindh schools to remain closed on 26th

F.P. Report

KARACHI: All public and private schools across Sindh will remain closed on Monday (August 26) on account of the Chehlum of Imam Hussain (RA), the provincial government announced on Friday.

A notification issued for the announcement of the Chehlum holiday stated that the decision of educational institutes' closure was taken by a steering committee of the provincial education department.

The Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) will be observed on Monday across the province with religious zeal and reverence amid high security.

Girl strangled to death

F.P. Report

LAHORE: A little girl was kidnapped, murdered and then her body was thrown into a jungle in Lahore after the abductor could not receive ransom, police said on Friday.

The kidnapper, Kashif Raza, was a friend of five-year-old Fajar's father and also a neighbour, said the police. Kashif kidnapped Fajar from Batapur area of Lahore for ransom and when he could not receive any money he killed her by strangling her and threw her body in jungle.

OFFICE OF TEHSIL MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION GUMBAT E-TENDER NOTICE

TMA Gumbat (Executing agency) invites Tenders through E-tendering system of the following Developmental schemes from the registered Government contractors enlisted with Local Council Board, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & KPRA in the relevant category duly renewed for the current financial year 2024-25 as per following schedule.

C. CHANGE OF SCHEMES OUT OF SAVING AMOUNT OF 30% ADP FOR THE YEAR 2020-21

S#	Name of work	E/Cost Cost	Earnest Money	Last Date/Time of submission Forms	Date/Time Tender Opening
1	Family/ Public parks waiting shade & footpaths etc. (Shifting & removal of waiting shade/ repair of waiting shade.	0.64 Millions	2%	19/09/2024 1:00 PM	19/09/2024 2:00 P.M
2	M&R Municipal services & Infrastructure, repair of street, Drain and Culverts at Gumbat	1.28 Millions	-do-	-do-	-do-
3	Water & sanitation & Public toilets etc. (repair of street, drain, culverts and toilets)	1.28 Millions	-do-	-do-	-do-
4	Rehabilitation of PHE Kohat Tube-Well at Gandiyali Gumbat.	2.56 Millions	-do-	-do-	-do-

D. SCHEMES OUT OF LOCAL FUND TMA GUMBAT FOR THE YEAR 2024-25.

S#	Name of work	E/Cost Cost	Earnest Money	Last Date/Time of submission Forms	Date/Time Tender Opening
1	Construction of Causeway at Mohallah Bazar	2.0 Millions	2%	19/09/2024 1:00 PM	19/09/2024 2:00 PM

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Tender form alongwith BOQ and instructions to bidders etc may be downloaded on Local Government Website **ebidding.lcbkp.gov.pk** and KPRA (**www.kppra.gov.pk**) after publishing in the newspapers.
- As per Clause 37(A) of KPRA Rules, all bidders must be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority.
- All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in shape of call deposit equal to 2% of the estimated cost in the name of TMO, TMA Gumbat of scheduled banks. Document like enlistment copy of Local Council board, KPK and photo copy of CNIC, NTN and mail address etc. must be attached with tender form.
- Sealed Tender form must be sent through Registered Mail/Couriers Services that should reached on (19/09/2024) upto 1:00 PM and will be opened on the same date at 2:00 PM in the presence of bidders by the Tender Committee.
- The tender shall be processed according to 'Above/below system' based on the Market Rate System.
- The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security 2% only of Engineering Estimate and the contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineers Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineers Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security, then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineers Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and for required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the procuring entity, not convincing the head of Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof
- The procuring entity may offer the contact to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.
- Firm must have valid PEC registration and having specialized codes EE04, EE06, EE11 (Solar Energy) CE09 (water Supply).
- The work Order of all / any schemes shall be issued subject to availability of funds/ volume of funds.
- All the schemes/ scheme will be executed at site strictly in accordance with the approved specification, quality/ quantity and availability of funds as information/ directed by the site Incharge.
- The Competent authority under cogent reason will have an authority to accept or reject the bids on the recommendation of Tendering/Bidding Committee.
- All Federal and provincial duties/ stamp duty and taxes including sales tax will be recoverable as per directives of the government Notifications/ instruction issued from time to time.

INF(P) 2170/24

**Tehsil Officer (I&S)
TMA Gumbat**

**Tehsil Municipal Officer
TMA Gumbat**



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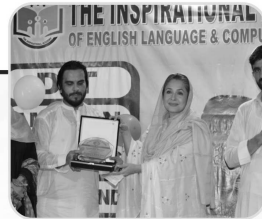
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KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA HOME AND TRIBAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Civil Secretariat, near MPA Hostel, Peshawar Cantt.
Phone No. 091-9214104, Fax No. 091-9210201

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The office of Home & Tribal Affairs Department invites sealed bids from reputed and authorized dealers/ firms/companies for the procurement of Stationery Items for the financial year 2024-25 through Single Stage, One Envelop bidding procedure under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of Goods, Works and Services Rules, 2014.

Terms & Conditions:

- Sealed bids should reach the office of undersigned on or before **10-09-2024** up to **11:00 AM** which will be opened on the same date at **11:30 AM** in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to be present.
- Each bidder is required to submit bid security at the rate of 2% of the total bid in the shape of CDR in the name of Section Officer (General) Home & Tribal Affairs Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which shall be kept in the bid.
- The specifications and the detailed tender documents can be downloaded from **www.kppra.gov.pk** or **hd.kp.gov.pk** or can also be obtained from the office of the Section Officer (General) Home & Tribal Affairs Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar, on presenting/ submitting a receipt for deposit of Rs. 500/- as tendering fee (non-refundable), on any working day during office hours.
- Sample of the Stationery Items must be presented at the time of opening of bids.
- The firm/ vendor should be registered with Sales Tax and Income Tax Departments and reflected on Active Taxpayer's List of FBR, valid documents of sales tax, income tax, NTN and professional tax must be attached with bidding documents.
- Incomplete bid shall not be entertained.
- The firm/ vendor on the panel will be bound to supply the items within 15-days after issuing the purchasing order/Contract Agreement.
- While submitting rates, the firm should include GST and all other applicable taxes in the offered rates.
- The firm will be bound to replace the Stationery Items damaged during supply.
- Approved tender rates will be valid till 30.06.2025 from the date of opening of bids and will not be changed.
- The competent authority reserves the right to accept/reject wholly or partially any proposal or cancel altogether at any stage under clause-47 of KPRA rules.

**SECTION OFFICER (GENERAL)
Home & Tribal Affairs Department**

INF(P)2141/24

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION AND WORK DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single stage single envelope E-Bidding System)

C&W Department (C&W Building Division Kohat) Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic Bids from the eligible firms/contractor (Register with PEC) in accordance with KPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage single envelope procedure for the following works.

S. N	Name of Work	Required category of PEC	Estima ted Cost	Bid Security I/e Stamp Duty	Bidding Entry Fee @ 0.03%	Period of Compl etion	Last date of submission and time	Date of opening and time
1.	Up-gradation of 100 Middle schools to High level (B&G) on need basis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. ADP No. 232/200027. S.H: GMS Ghurazandi Lachi. (MRS-2022 1 st Qtr)	C-5/P K-5 (CE-10, EE11)	44.281 (M)	Rs. 925620/-	Rs. 13285/-	As per work order	12-09-2024 at 12:00 Hours	On the same date at 12:30 Hours
2.	Reconstruction of 300 Govt School (100 Primary, 100 Middle & 100 High) (B&G) on need basis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. ADP No. 235/200131. S.H: Re-Construction of GPS Tilken District Kohat. (MRS-2022 1 st Qtr)	C-6/PK-6 (CE-10, EE11)	24.862 (M)	Rs. 537240/-	Rs. 7459/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
3.	Construction/ Rehabilitation of Worship Places and Residential Colonies of Minorities in K.P. ADP No. 52/210371 (2024-25). S.H: Construction of Public Hujra etc at Mohallah Sanghair Kohat	C-6 (CE-10)	3.50 (M)	Rs. 74000/-	Rs. 1050/-	-do-	-do-	-do-

- Bidding entry fees @ Rs. 0.03% of tender cost will be remitted by each participating contractor which is non-refundable.
- Bid documents and instructions to bidders can be seen or collect from the office of the undersigned on any working day or downloaded upto one day prior to the opening date from C&W web site (**www.cwd.gkp.pk**) and KPRA Website.
- The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below on Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate.
- The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer Estimate cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- [Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer's Estimate along with detailed rate analysis]. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and/or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.
- The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
BUILDING DIVISION KOHAT.
0922-860052**

INF(P)2143/24



Victims of the Iran accident Murad announces Rs5m compensation for deceased

F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has announced Rs. 5 million in compensation for the families of those who tragically lost their lives in the road accident in Iran, along with Rs. 1 million for the injured.

A statement issued from the CM House on Friday said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had given instructions to the Sindh Chief Minister to announce a compensation for the families of those who lost their lives and sustained injuries in a the road accident in Iran.

The chief minister announced Rs5 million in compensation for the families of those who lost their lives in the road accident in Iran and Rs1 million for the injured. Out of the 28 pilgrims who died in the road accident, 10 were from Larkana, six from Kashmore, four from Khairpur, three from Kambar-Shahdadkot, three from Karachi, and one each from Dadu and Jamshoro.

A total of 25 people were injured in the incident, with eight from Larkana, five from Kambar-Shahdadkot, four from Khairpur, three from Dadu, four each from N a u s h e r o f e r o z e, Shikarpur, Karachi, and Sehwan, and one from

Balochistan.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, at the request of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, sent a C-130 to Iran to bring back the bodies and injured individuals from a tragic road accident. The Sindh government has arranged air ambulances and ground ambulances to transport the bodies from the airport to their respective cities/towns and to shift the injured to hospitals via air ambulance if they are being transferred to Karachi. Shah sent Minister of Energy Nasir Shah to Sukkur/Jacobabad (airports) to finalise the arrangements and receive the bodies to shift them to their respective areas.

Karachi likely to receive rain from 25th

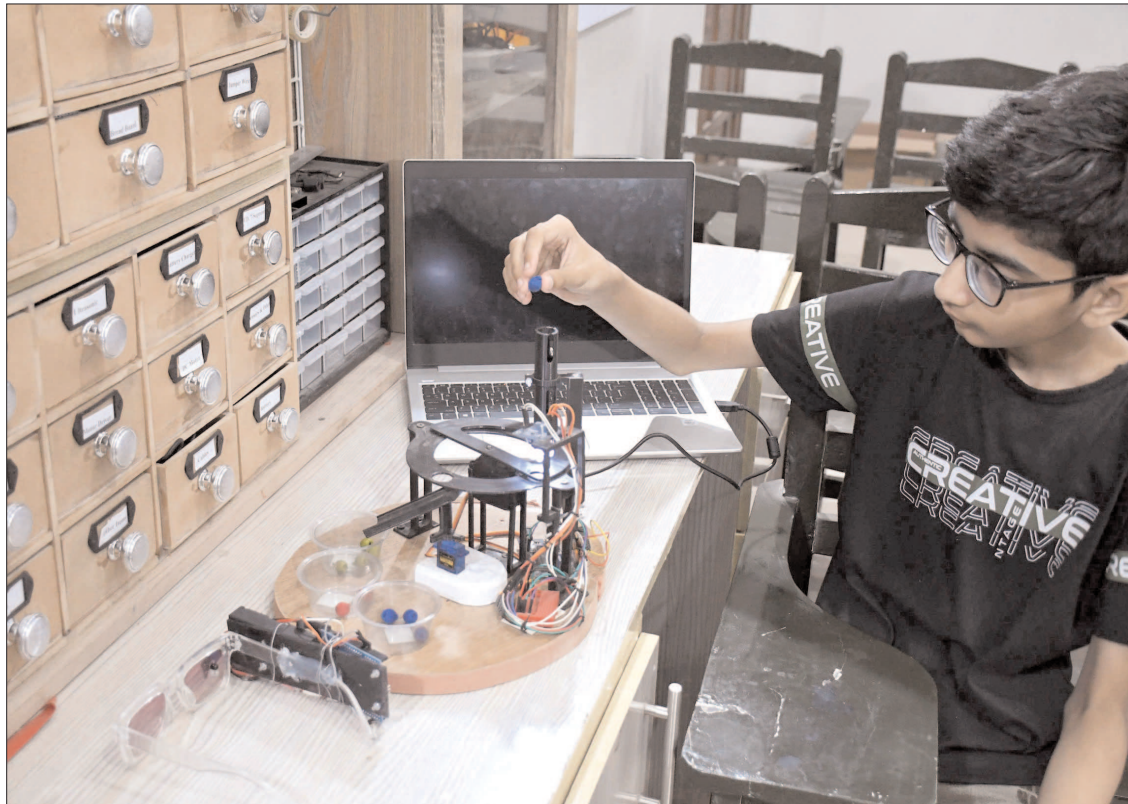
F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Met Office has forecast rainfall in Karachi and other districts of Sindh from August 25 to 29 under influence of low pressure in West Bengal. The monsoon currents likely to enter Karachi and other districts of Sindh from next days, according to the weather report.

This weather system is expected to bring heavy rainfall, the PMD said and added weather of Karachi will remain hot and cloudy for next three days. The temperature can reach maximum level of 36 degree Celsius in Karachi, the Pakistan Meteorological Department said.

Rain with wind and thundershowers also expected in other districts of Sindh Hyderabad, Thatta, Badin and other areas today. The recent monsoon rains in Sindh and Balochistan significantly increased the water level in Hub Dam, WAPDA sources said.

Following the heavy rains, the water level at Hub Dam has risen to over 335.5 feet, with the dam's capacity standing at 339 feet. The increased water level is attributed to heavy rainfall in the hilly areas of Balochistan's Khuzdar district and the catchment areas of the dam.



KARACHI: A student of Imam Hussain institute busy in his work of develop Laser system at IHI laboratory.

Jumbo Jump at Safari Park inaugurated

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said today that the promises made to the people of Karachi for a better and developing city are being repeatedly fulfilled.

He made these remarks on Friday after inaugurating the Jumbo Jump at Safari Park, alongside Deputy Mayor of Karachi, Salman Abdullah Murad. Among other personalities present at the event were the Mayor's spokesperson for political affairs, Karamullah Waqasi, Deputy Parliamentary Leader of the PPP in the City Council, Dil Muhammad, Jaman Darwan, and other elected representatives, as well as Senior Director of Recreation Iqbal Nawaz and other officials.

He emphasized that efforts are underway to ensure development in every area of the city, benefiting its residents. He criticized the negative propaganda about the city, which he claimed has no basis in reality. He highlighted the introduction of the latest Jumbo Jump recreational facility at Safari Park, provided to the public at very affordable rates. Wahab encouraged residents who

invest outside Karachi to consider investing in useful projects within their city. He stressed that public-private partnerships are the way forward now to advancing development and assured that the journey of development in the city would continue vigorously. The Mayor explained that there was a large tract of land available at Safari Park, which had previously been unused. The decision was made to utilize this land to provide quality and modern recreational facilities to the public. With the addition of the Jumbo Jump, which is now listed in the Guinness World Records and is popular worldwide, the park now offers zip lines, adventure facilities, horse riding, a playland, and a safari area for animals.

The Jumbo Jump is being offered at a significantly reduced price of 750 rupees instead of the market rate of 2,500 rupees, to ensure that even ordinary citizens can enjoy it with their families. Mayor Karachi noted the significant increase in visitors to Safari Park, with thousands now enjoying the park's amenities with their families. He described this as a realization of their dreams for the city and expressed a

desire to provide similar recreational facilities in every area of Karachi.

Addressing a question, he mentioned that the former Aladin Park, which was a popular recreational spot, had been demolished, but plans are underway to construct a City Council building and a beautiful public park in its vicinity. Replying to a question about the condition of roads following recent rains, he said that road restoration work would commence as soon as the current spell of rain ends. He assured that no excuses would be made regarding resources and that 110 billion rupees have been allocated in the current Sindh budget for the development of Karachi's infrastructure. He promised to spend every penny of this allocation with full integrity.

Wahab said in the past week, additional recreational facilities have been introduced at Karachi Zoo and Safari Park, with ongoing efforts to expand recreational options in parks and open spaces. He criticized past administrations for neglecting these areas and reaffirmed the PPP's vision for Karachi's development, including increasing recreational facilities in the city's suburbs.

Dharejo, Turkish Minister discuss issues

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Minister of Industries and Commerce, Jam Ikramullah Dharejo and Türkiye's Minister of National Defense Yasar Guler discussed issues of mutual interest during a short meeting.

The provincial minister welcomed and hosted the Turkish minister upon his arrival and stop over at Jinnah International Airport Karachi. The Consul General of Türkiye in Karachi Cemal Sangu and other Turk diplomats were also present at the occasion, said a statement issued here.

Jam Ikramullah Dharejo presented the traditional gifts of Sindhi cap and Ajrak to the distinguished guests while both the ministers also discussed issues of mutual interest. The Minister of National Defense of Turkey, at the occasion, expressed his gratitude for the hospitality extended by the Government of Sindh. After a short meeting, the Turkiye National Defense Minister left for his homeland.

Saudi Naval Forces team visits Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A delegation of Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) visited Karachi. The delegation was led by the Commander Jeddah Naval Base, Rear Admiral Saleh bin Abdullah Al-amri.

According to PN information on Friday, the delegation discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral cooperation during their call on with Commander Coast Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz and Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi. The delegation also called on Commander 18th Destroyer Squadron, visited PN Ship SHAMSHEER and Pakistan Navy Tactical School.

Adil sees might is right system prevalent in country

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President and former Leader of the Opposition in the Sindh Assembly, Haleem Adil Sheikh, said on Friday showed concern over the deteriorating state of law and order situation in the country and the lack of respect for the constitution and the rule of law.

Talking to media outside the Anti-Terrorism Court in Central Jail Karachi, he emphasized that the current system could not function if it continued to operate on the principle of "might is right" and stated that the nation cannot progress

unless the will of the people was respected. Mr Sheikh pointed out that during the general elections, the public votes were allegedly stolen, leading to the rule of corrupt politicians who had destroyed the country's economy. He lamented the ongoing legal challenges faced by PTI members, particularly the cases from 2021, which he claimed were fabricated during a rigged bye-election of PS-88 Malir. Despite three years of court appearances, justice remained elusive, he added.

Sheikh condemned the recent killing of 12 police constables by bandits in the

Kacha area of Rahim Yar Khan, terming it a tragic incident. He extended his condolences to the families of the martyred police constables and questioned why these officers had to suffer when effective action against the bandits could have been taken earlier.

The PTI Sindh chief called on the Chief Minister and the Inspector General of Punjab to leave their social media activities and address the lawlessness in the kacha region. Sheikh criticized the police for focusing on arresting PTI workers instead of targeting the bandits, who continue to operate freely in Sindh and Punjab.

Governor's Initiative: 54,000 candidates pass Hyderabad IT test

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori to announced the results of the Hyderabad IT test during a press conference held at the Governor House. The test, conducted under the Governor's Initiative at Niaz Stadium in Hyderabad, saw participation from 80,000 youth aspiring for free IT courses. Out of these, 54,000 candidates passed the test.

The successful candidates will now pursue advanced IT courses in Artificial Intelligence, Metaverse, and Web 3.0 under the Governor's Initiative. Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori stated that those who did not pass the test would be given another opportunity. He further announced that registration for the IT course test in Sukkur would begin in a few days, with plans to expand the IT course program across the entire province, ultimately aiming to make the province an IT hub.

Highlighting the economic impact, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori mentioned that the trainees are currently earning between \$600 to \$800 per month,

with some who previously earned \$150 now making \$250. He emphasized that if one million youth start earning \$1,200 monthly, it would significantly boost the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori also acknowledged the inspiring impact of the Army Chief's address to the youth, which has motivated the IT students training at the Governor House.

The students have expressed their desire for the Army Chief to visit them as well. He extended his gratitude to philanthropists who have generously supported the IT initiative, including national hero Arshad Nadeem, FPCCI, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, and others who have donated 100 laptops to the IT students. Several philanthropists have also expressed interest in running IT campuses in different cities.

In two weeks, the Governor plans to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Google, aiming to provide Google certification to every IT student. Responding to a question, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori mentioned that youth from various cities in

the province are reaching out, expressing their desire for IT campuses in their areas. He emphasized that the IT courses are apolitical and focused solely on the nation's prosperity and urged other Governor Houses to take similar initiatives.

In response to another question, the Governor assured industrialists and traders not to lose hope, as significant investment and foreign orders are expected in the coming months. He also mentioned that export orders for rice from countries like Iran and Oman have already been received.

Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori further stated that it has been 22 months since they began distributing rations, and the number of people contributing to this cause continues to grow. He reiterated his commitment to strengthening Pakistan, with the mission to bury all hatred, starting with the Independence Day celebrations under the theme "Not an Individual, but a Nation." He concluded by stating that more groundbreaking initiatives under the Governor's Initiative are on the way.



PAKISTAN AIR FORCE

BASES NUR KHAN, LAHORE, RAFIQUI, MUSHAF, MALIR, SHAHBAZ, KORANGI CREEK AND SAMUNGLI

INVITATION OF TENDERS FOR SUPPLY OF RATION ITEMS (01 OCTOBER, 2024 TO 30 JUNE, 2025)

1. Sealed tenders (Technical (Without Price) and Financial (With Price)) are invited from reputable, well-experienced, financially sound and Income Tax Registered Pakistani Firms / Contractors for supply of Fresh Ration items for PAF Bases (AD sites). Locations can be confirmed from O i/c S&T at PAAK and Bases Nur Khan, Lahore, Rafiqui, Mushaf, Malir, Shahbaz & Samungli during the Financial Year 2024-25 (01 October, 2024 - 30 June, 2025). Fresh Ration Contracts would be concluded at respective PAF Bases. Firms / Contractors which are not registered with PAF can also participate in tendering process and approach the concerned Base for collection of Tender / Registration documents.

(a) **Local Contracts at Respective PAF Bases (AD Sites)**

(i) Meat Group (Mutton, Beef)

(ii) Poultry Group {(Chicken Dressed), Eggs & Fish}

(iii) Misc Group [Onion, Potato, Salt Iodized, Ginger (Fresh), Garlic (Fresh) and Fire wood, (Squash (Branded), Ice, (as required)]]

(iv) Fruit Group 'Citrus / Non-Citrus' (as per seasonal chart provided with guide lines)

(v) Vegetable Group (as per seasonal chart provided with guide lines)

(b) **Detail specifications of all items / Evaluation Criteria can also be downloaded from PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk).**

Tender Forms

2. **Local Contracts.** Tender Forms for **Local Contracts**, with complete specifications, special terms & conditions and other details of fresh ration items can be collected from respective PAF Base Catering Flights on submission of application for tender on letter head pad along with photocopies of NTN, GST, professional tax certificate & attested CNIC between **0800 Hrs to 1300 Hrs. Technical Tender** will be opened at **1330 Hrs** in the office of **O i/c Catering Flight / O i/c S & T Sqn (as applicable)** as per given schedule.

3. **Opening of Tender.** The Tender Forms are to be submitted as per **PPRA Rule 36 (b) single stage - two envelope** procedure {**Technical** (Without Price) and **Financial** (With Price)}. Separate envelope shall be marked as "**Technical Proposal**" and "**Financial Proposal**" in bold and clear letter to avoid confusion. After vetting of Technical bids, qualified bidders will be informed through Letters / Telephone about the venue, date and time for opening of financial proposal.

SCHEDULE FOR OPENING OF TECHNICAL TENDER				
S No	Base / Unit	Date / Time for Collection of Tender Forms	Technical Proposal Opening Date / Time	Contact Nos
(a)	PAF Base Nur Khan	24 Aug 09 Sep, 2024 (0800-1300 hrs)	09 September, 2024 (1330hrs)	Tel: 051-9523843 Ext : 051-9523845 Cell # 0323-9415721
(b)	PAF Base Lahore			Tel: 042-99220188 Ext: 5221-5223 Cell # 0323-9428721
(c)	PAF Base Rafiqui			Tel: 041-9505221/ 5225 Cell # 0323-9424721
(d)	PAF Base Mushaf			Tel: 048-3720050-4 Ext: 5221,5225 Cell # 03239421721
(e)	PAF Base Malir			Tel: 021-99533805 Cell # 0323-9436721
(f)	PAF Base Shahbaz			Tel:0722-650183- 5223 Cell # 0323-9439721
(g)	Airmen Academy, PAAK K/Creek			Tel: 021-99553845 Cell # 03239471721
(h)	PAF Base Samungli			Tel: 081-9505223 Cell # 0323-9437721

Note:-

- Any Firm / supplier whose contract has been terminated / Black listed by PAF / Defence/ Govt Organization due to poor performance / un-ethical practices will not be eligible for taking part in bidding process for contracts.
- The Contract will have to be signed by the **Owner** of the Firm.
- If any Firm / Contractor is not registered with PAF, then relevant documents / information for registration can also be collected from the above mentioned PAF offices.
- Any information, if found incomplete / false at any stage, will result in immediate rejection of the application for the Tender, on technical grounds.
- Rates of Vegetables and Fruits are to be quoted as per Seasonal Chart / Seasonal Schedule of Fruits and Vegetables which may be collected from Catering Flight.
- No of issues of Mutton, Beef, Chicken, Eggs & Fish can be modified (increase / decrease) in light of Air Headquarters policies.
- Interested Contractors / Firms are to deposit a bank draft of Five Lac / 2% of total Tender value as Earnest Money in favour of **Public Fund Account at respective Base**.
- OsC Support, Admin Wing, Admin & Supp, O i/c S&T Sqn, O i/c Logistics Squadron & O i/c Catering Flight of concerned Bases may ask for any further information and details, if required.
- For further information & queries O i/c S&T Squadron & O i/c Catering Flight may be contacted as per above mentioned numbers given in schedule.



LHC seeks response from Punjab govt on Section 144

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought response from the Punjab government and others, issuing notices to them on a miscellaneous application filed against Section 144 enforcement across the province.

The LHC's Justice Shakeel Ahmad heard the application filed by citizen Najjullah. The petitioner mentioned that PTI announced to hold a public gathering on August 22 in Islamabad but the Punjab government enforced Section 144 illegally.

Petitioner contended that Section 144 enforcement was undermining the fundamental rights of citizens. Applicant requested the court to annul the notification of Section 144 enforcement across the Punjab. It is pertinent to note that the Punjab government has imposed Section 144 for three days across the province since August 21. Any public gathering, rally and procession, protest and sit-in across the Punjab is banned. PTI has postponed the Islamabad public gathering to avoid chaos amid sit-in by religious party and would hold public

gathering on September 8.

Justice Iqbal recuses himself from internet suspension case: The Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal has recused himself from hearing a case against internet suspension and firewall installation.

An application filed by Judicial Activism Panel (JAP) against internet suspension and firewall installation was due to be heard today. LHC's justice Chaudhry Iqbal excused to move the case to Justice Shakeel Ahmad's court.

The court remarked that Justice Shakeel Ahmad has been hearing such cases and directed to fix the case for hearing today. It is pertinent to note that various applications were filed in LHC and IHC against firewall installation and internet and social media disruption across the country.

Petitioner contended that the disruption in the internet was wreaking havoc in online businesses and every field of life. They requested the court to direct authorities to not disrupt the internet.

However, the Pakistan Telecommunication

Authority (PTA) Chairman retired major general Hafeezur Rehman asserted that internet slowdown was caused by damaged submarine cable and VPN use. Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima also cleared the air about the issue and informed that there was no internet slowdown and speed throttling by the government, instead excessive use of VPN exacerbated the internet connectivity issue.

Users across Pakistan are having difficulty accessing social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, and internet service on mobile data also is slow. They are having internet outages with limited and slow connectivity, and are unable to download and share files and data.

Freelancers have also voiced their concerns that they are unable to complete and deliver their projects on the respective websites, resulting in negative feedback by clients and tarnishing the image of Pakistani freelancers. A known freelancing platform is said to have made several accounts in Pakistan unavailable due to internet disruptions in recent times.

Awam Express narrowly avoids accident

F.P. Report

LAHORE: A bogie of the Awam Express, traveling from Lahore to Karachi, derailed at Lahore Railway Station on Friday, causing damage to the platform but no injuries.

According to railway officials, the AC Business Class bogie derailed at platform number 5, resulting in significant damage to the track and platform. While no passengers were hurt, the incident caused a major delay.

The derailed bogie was removed and the train was moved to a different platform. However, a replacement AC Business Class bogie was not available, forcing passengers to board a different air-conditioned coach. The train finally departed for Karachi over three hours late. Railway officials have begun the process of restoring the derailed bogie to the track. More than 20 passengers were accommodated in the lower AC class.

Over 1.6m children to be administered anti-polio drops: The polio teams will administer anti-polio drops to more than 1.6 million children under five years of age in the district from September 9. As many as 5,000 fixed, transit and mobile polio teams have been constituted to achieve the goal. Presiding over a district polio eradication committee meeting here Friday, the DC took a briefing on the micro plan of anti-polio campaign which is going to start next month.



LAHORE: Heavy shipping containers placed on road due to security reasons during annual Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hajveri (RA).

Climate change impacts on urban areas need solutions

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Experts at a stakeholder dialogue advocating the importance of data for development, and resilience on Friday underscored that urban centers of the country are facing increasing risk of growing vulnerability due to climate disasters amid rising trends of urbanization and poor land use planning.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and Forman Christian College University (FCCU) organised a dialogue titled 'Data for Development (D4D) Climate Change, Mega Cities and Urban Floods.'

Chairman Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Punjab Assembly, MPA Ahmed Iqbal says that not only policymakers but every citizen is facing the brunt of climate change. "Climate change is a reality and it's a young people's issue as the more younger an individual is the more the impacts of climate change would be faced by him or her," he added.

Lahore, he said is the biggest mega urban center in Punjab and it's the center of policy making and decisions of the government. "Apart from that Lahore is facing massive risk of climate disasters whereas rural to urban shift is also increasing in the province. Many villages in the province have been drowned due to recent monsoon rainfalls," Ahmed Iqbal said. He suggested that the provincial government should think of innovative incentives like tax rebates for green roof surface households, and enhanced funding for rainwater harvesting recharging wells to control urban flooding. But, without data, there is no possibility to achieve any outcome or objective in the realm of climate governance, he added.

Dr Abid Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI says plastic pollution is a crucial part of urban flooding as in developing countries plastic bags are choking the drainage systems leading to urban flooding. "We are living in unprecedented times and witnessing abnormal rain as many megacities across the world are receiving a year's rainfall in 3-4 days. The temperature in the Federal Capital is three degrees higher on average than the past 52 years average," Dr Suleri said.

Dr. Jonthan Addleton Rector, FCCU said data for development and decision-making is crucial amid climate change and urban flooding hazards. He mentioned that the urban flooding aspect in Lahore was common, and it was not a theoretical issue for Pakistan as it had received disastrous floods in the past.

Tania Durrani, Development Professional at UNFPA claimed that the institute is working on core areas of population management, reproductive health, ending child marriages and gender disbalance, and reaching out to the most vulnerable groups mainly women, children, and persons with disabilities. She underlined that the agency is working with diverse stakeholders and academia to generate data that can influence programs and policies in cross-sectoral domains as gender-segregated data is important to ensure inclusive development initiatives.

Dr Sajid Amin, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI while introducing the D4D initiative said no development is possible without efficient data and information, whereas the role of Federal and Provincial governments is very important in data development with the latter sharing the most burden of responsibility due to implementation prerogative enshrined under the constitution. He added that under the D4D initiative, the basic purpose was to build capacity of the public sector to develop the ability to create, use, and integrate data into policy designs.

Dr Sana Bashir, Deputy Secretary, Environment Prediction Department provided a comprehensive presentation on the efforts of the department in generating and collating the data on climate and its implications on decision-making efforts.

Irfan Ali Khan, DG Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab in his keynote address said urban flooding has been a serious risk in the major urban centers of the country and the province. "Rapid urbanization in the last two decades and poor land use planning was the core of the issue of urban flooding. In 2022, Pakistan witnessed the most devastating floods of its history that inflicted massive life, property, and infrastructure losses. There were numerous cases of structural collapses due to 30% above normal

monsoon rainfall this year," he said. He informed that at the PDMA level, urban flooding had emerged as a challenge, whereas the provincial government is utilizing all available resources to enhance preparedness against monsoon rainfall.

Muhammad Omar Masud CEO, Urban Unit says, that the cities across Pakistan are mostly unplanned which would allow climate change to massively impact cities and a large population residing in it. There was data present in silos across various sectors of the country but there were issues of data coordination, sharing, and collation with a culture of resistance towards data sharing as a weakness, he said.

Dr. Rabiya Chaudhry Assistant Professor, CPPG, FCCU said urban flooding is a pluvial flood caused by rainfall and is independent of seas and rivers whereas in Lahore it was because of heavy rainfall during monsoon season.

She underscored that average rainfall has not increased but the pattern has changed as Lahore can accommodate 40mm of rainwater per day and on 26th June 2024 there was 161.8 mm of rainfall which was four times more than the capacity of Lahore, in July 2023, there was a 206mm rainfall took place. "Due to more expansion of road infrastructure and tree cutting the city has become a heat sink, whereas the population statistics are surging with 25,000-30,000 people entering Lahore every month which is burdening the existing housing and municipal facilities in the mega city," she added.

Dr. Waqas, Pro-Rector BUTEMS said Balochistan province has a scattered population, however, its mega urban center of Quetta is facing similar challenges like that of faced by Lahore and Karachi. "It is facing plastic pollution, no waste management, and urban issues. However, there is a lack of planning, reliability, and authenticity of data, and integrated platforms that demanded data collection, integrated data set with availability to all departments to ensure development through data," he said. Dr. Sikandar Hayat Dean, Social Sciences in his vote of thanks said climate change-induced challenges are becoming increasingly urgent and demanding prompt action from all stakeholders to address the risks.



PAKISTAN AIR FORCE BASES NUR KHAN, LAHORE, RAFIQUI, MUSHAF, MALIR, SHAHBAZ, KORANGI CREEK AND SAMUNGLI

INVITATION OF TENDERS FOR SUPPLY OF RATION ITEMS (01 OCTOBER, 2024 TO 30 JUNE, 2025)

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(a) Local Contracts at Respective PAF Bases (AD Sites)

- (i) Meat Group (Mutton, Beef)
- (ii) Poultry Group ((Chicken Dressed), Eggs & Fish)
- (iii) Misc Group [Onion, Potato, Salt Iodized, Ginger (Fresh), Garlic (Fresh) and Fire wood, (Squash (Branded), Ice, (as required))]
- (iv) Fruit Group 'Citrus / Non-Citrus' (as per seasonal chart provided with guide lines)
- (v) Vegetable Group (as per seasonal chart provided with guide lines)

(b) Detail specifications of all items / Evaluation Criteria can also be downloaded from PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk).

Tender Forms

2. **Local Contracts.** Tender Forms for **Local Contracts**, with complete specifications, special terms & conditions and other details of fresh ration items can be collected from respective PAF Base Catering Flights on submission of application for tender on letter head pad along with photocopies of NTN, GST, professional tax certificate & attested CNIC between **0800 Hrs to 1300 Hrs. Technical Tender** will be opened at **1330 Hrs** in the office of **O i/c Catering Flight / O i/c S & T Sqn (as applicable)** as per given schedule.

3. **Opening of Tender.** The Tender Forms are to be submitted as per **PPRA Rule 36 (b) single stage - two envelope** procedure (**Technical** (Without Price) and **Financial** (With Price)). Separate envelope shall be marked as "**Technical Proposal**" and "**Financial Proposal**" in bold and clear letter to avoid confusion. After vetting of Technical bids, qualified bidders will be informed through Letters / Telephone about the venue, date and time for opening of financial proposal.

SCHEDULE FOR OPENING OF TECHNICAL TENDER

S No	Base / Unit	Date / Time for Collection of Tender Forms	Technical Proposal Opening Date / Time	Contact Nos
(a)	PAF Base Nur Khan	24 Aug 09 Sep, 2024 (0800-1300 hrs)	09 September, 2024 (1330hrs)	Tel: 051-9523843 Ext : 051-9523845 Cell # 0323-9415721
(b)	PAF Base Lahore			Tel: 042-99220188 Ext: 5221-5223 Cell # 0323-9428721
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(d)	PAF Base Mushaf			Tel: 048-3720050-4 Ext: 5221,5225 Cell # 03239421721
(e)	PAF Base Malir			Tel: 021-99533805 Cell # 0323-9436721
(f)	PAF Base Shahbaz			Tel:0722-650183- 5223 Cell # 0323-9439721
(g)	Airmen Academy, PAAK K/Creek			Tel: 021-99553845 Cell # 03239471721
(h)	PAF Base Samungli			Tel: 081-9505223 Cell # 0323-9437721

Notes:-

- Any Firm / supplier whose contract has been terminated / Black listed by PAF / Defence/ Govt Organization due to poor performance / un-ethical practices will not be eligible for taking part in bidding process for contracts.
- The Contract will have to be signed by the **Owner** of the Firm.
- If any Firm / Contractor is not registered with PAF, then relevant documents / information for registration can also be collected from the above mentioned PAF offices.
- Any information, if found incomplete / false at any stage, will result in immediate rejection of the application for the Tender, on technical grounds.
- Rates of Vegetables and Fruits are to be quoted as per Seasonal Chart / Seasonal Schedule of Fruits and Vegetables which may be collected from Catering Flight.
- No of issues of Mutton, Beef, Chicken, Eggs & Fish can be modified (increase / decrease) in light of Air Headquarters policies.
- Interested Contractors / Firms are to deposit a bank draft of Five Lac / 2% of total Tender value as Earnest Money in favour of **Public Fund Account at respective Base**.
- OsC Support, Admin Wing, Admin & Supp, O i/c S&T Sqn, O i/c Logistics Squadron & O i/c Catering Flight of concerned Bases may ask for any further information and details, if required.
- For further information & queries O i/c S&T Squadron & O i/c Catering Flight may be contacted as per above mentioned numbers given in schedule.

Security arrangements for Chehlum reviewed

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Capital City Police Officer Bilal Siddique Kamyana presided over a meeting here on Friday to review security arrangements for the Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and the Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh. Senior police officers briefed the CCPO on the planned security measures.

During the briefing, it was informed that for the Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh, as many as 6 SPs, 22 DSPs, 79 SHOs, 297 upper subordinates and more than 3,800 police personnel will be deployed for security duties. Similarly, for the Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) as many as 10 SPs, 25 DSPs, 85 SHOs, 407 upper subor-

dinates and over 4,000 police personnel will be on duty.

The meeting was informed that 72 Majalis and 34 mourning processions will take place on the eve of Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS). Special security arrangements have been made for the main procession, including 6 Elite teams, 12 Police Response Unit (PRU) teams and 17 Dolphin teams for patrolling at the 11 entry points. Lady police officials will be deployed for the security of women mourners and visitors. A three-tiered checking mechanism will be in place to thoroughly screen mourners and visitors before allowing them into the procession and shrine areas. Additionally, snipers

will be stationed on buildings along the procession routes and around the shrine and the surrounding streets will be completely sealed off.

Addressing the meeting, CCPO Lahore emphasized that foolproof security arrangements have been made for both the Chehlum processions and the Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh. He instructed the use of walk-through gates, metal detectors, barriers and barbed wire to ensure thorough checking and security.

Senior police officers were directed to maintain continuous contact with the organizers of the Chehlum processions and the Data Darbar shrine and to personally review the security arrangements at the Imam Bargahs along the procession routes.

Neighbour kidnaps girl

F.P. Report

LAHORE: A little girl was kidnapped, murdered and then her body was thrown into a jungle in Lahore after the abductor could not receive ransom, police said on Friday.

The kidnapper, Kashif Raza, was a friend of five-year-old Fajar's father and also a neighbour, said the police. Kashif kidnapped Fajar from Batapur area of Lahore for ransom and when he could not receive any money he killed her by strangling her and threw her body in jungle.

The police have recovered the remains of Fajar's body from jungle and have also arrested the accused. Fajar's father Arshad had already loaned Rs1 million to Kashif Raza for doing business.

Kashif had kidnapped Fajar on August 10 and kept demanding ransom from her father but murdered her in the evening on the same day, said his statement which he gave to the police. The police recovered Fajar's clothes and hair, after getting information from the accused, and sent them for forensic.

Four of family found dead: Four members of a family were found dead in a car, in the jurisdiction of Bhera police station on Friday. Motorway police received a call about a suspected car (LEF-7339) at Bhera motorway interchange.

Maryam Nawaz meets German minister

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister on Friday met the German minister for economic coordination and development. The duo discussed cooperation in economic and trade spheres

and vowed to deepen bilateral and trade relationship between Pakistan and Germany.

Punjab CM thanked the visiting minister for doling out 91.1 million euros to help people affected from floods. Partnerships in clean

energy and climate friendly projects was also agreed upon. CM Maryam said that economic relations between Pakistan and Germany were improving. She also appreciated Germany's help in extending GSP+ status to Pakistan.

HEC sends off 257 students to study in Hungary

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan hosted on Friday a send-off ceremony for 257 students who have been awarded scholarships for study at different levels in top Hungarian universities under the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme.

Being a symbol of Pakistan-Hungary bilateral cooperation, the Stipendium Hungaricum is a fully-funded scholarship programme for Bachelor's, Master's, One-Tier Master's, and PhD studies across various disciplines including Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences.

Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, was chief guest on the occasion while Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Hungary in Islamabad, Dr. Dora Gunsberger, was the guest of honour. The ceremony was attended by Member Research & Innovation HEC, Dr. Bushra Mirza, Adviser Scholarships HEC, Muhammad Raza Chohan, HEC's senior management as well as students who have been awarded the scholarship.

Making the students excited with her speech in Urdu, Deputy Head of Mission Dr. Gunsberger congratulated to the scholarship winners for their meritorious accomplishment. She said that Hungary received over 18,000 applications from Pakistan which is the highest number of applications received worldwide.

She asserted that the students' experience in Hungary will be a means to their personal and professional development, as

studying in foreign countries is an incredible experience of learning and exposure. She advised them to seize the opportunity to fully benefit from it and come back to serve Pakistan.

Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, expressed gratitude to the Government of Hungary for the continuous support and partnership that turned the initially agreed scholarship seats of 80 to 400. He said that Pakistan's population consists of 64 percent youth having huge potential and talent. He said that Pakistan has, for the third consecutive year, been ranked first in the world for the number of scholarships awarded under the Erasmus Mundus scholarships. He advised the students to stay focused and acquire knowledge and experience. He said that it will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience and will pay back in their personal and professional lives.

Congratulating the scholarship recipients, he offered valuable advice to the scholars, encouraging cultural sensitivity, fostering compatible friendships, and reminding them of their role as ambassadors for their homeland on the international stage.

In his welcome address earlier, Adviser Scholarships HEC, Muhammad Raza Chohan, shed light on the significance of the scholarship programme launched in 2015 as an outcome of collaboration between HEC and the Government of Hungary. He said that the first cohort of students was sent to study in renowned Hungarian universities in 2016, adding that the number of scholarships have since been increasing owing to the partnership between the two sides.

Awareness session held

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in collaboration with the Society of Actuaries (SOA) US, on Friday organized an awareness session with an aim to enhance knowledge of its employees.

The SOA, one of the largest global actuarial bodies, educates, develops, and regulates over 60,000 members worldwide. Actuarial professionals were pivotal in assessing, measuring, and mitigating financial risks and uncertainties, both short-term and long-term.

The SOA's Regional Director for the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, Mr. Zain Ibrahim delivered an in-depth presentation to SECP officers. He highlighted the diverse roles actuaries play across various sectors, including (re)insurance, pensions and retirement planning, health and care, investments, banking, risk management, government and regulatory bodies, data science, climate risk, and sustainability. He also detailed the pathways to SOA accreditation and the current technical certification programs available. The presentation was followed by an engaging Q&A session.

SECP Commissioner Abdul Rehman Warriach concluded the session by emphasizing the importance of the actuarial profession and the need to develop actuarial and insurance expertise within Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Jemal Beker cutting cake at Ethiopian Embassy.

Senate Body constitutes sub-body to analyze country's EV policy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Committee Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production has constituted a three-member Sub-Committee to analyze the EV policy of Pakistan.

A meeting to the Senate Body held here on Friday with Senator Aon Abbas in chair deliberated on the inclusion of cold storage in the industrial sector and the provision of affordable electricity rates. The matter was referred by the Chairman Senate. Officials informed that the ECC approved the matter and forwarded it to the Cabinet for their approval to declare 'Cold Storage' an industrial sector.

The committee was briefed on Pakistan's Auto Policy. Officials informed that 13 automobile companies are currently operating in the country. Initially, there were 3 companies, but as a result of the 2016-21 Auto Policy, 8 new players entered the market. These companies have installed production capacity of 500,000 units annually in more than 40 models with over 100 variants. They contribute 4% to GDP, pay Rs. 300 billion in taxes, and generate over 2 million jobs in the country. Under the 2021-26 Auto Policy, the Ministry has introduced WP-29 safety regulations for auto manufacturers. These safety standards have been adopted by all manufacturers except Suzuki for 6 variants. Suzuki has decided to discontinue 3 variants and

redesign the remaining three to comply with WP-29 safety regulations.

Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee stated that no car manufacturer should be allowed to produce cars that do not follow WP-29 regulations, questioning who would be responsible for the lives lost in such vehicles. Officials from the Ministry of Industries and Production explained that the government has set an export target of 7% for auto manufacturers for the year 2024-25. However, companies have obtained a court stay order claiming they will not be able to meet the target.

Senator Saleem Mandviwalla opined that cars majorly produced in Pakistan are not up to international standards and that it is impossible to find suitable export markets for these vehicles.

Senator Aon Abbas highlighted the issue of reimbursement by auto manufacturers to customers in case of delayed vehicle delivery beyond 60 days. He stated that eight major car manufacturers, including Honda Atlas Cars, Indus Motor, Pak Suzuki, Hyundai Nishat Motors, and Kia Lucky Motors, have paid around Rs. 5.32 billion in compensation to customers. Officials informed that the Competition Commission of Pakistan is the concerned forum for checking malpractices by car manufacturers.

Senator Aon Abbas directed that a detailed bifurcation of the amounts paid, along with the models of cars

and the extra days for which the amount has been paid, be provided to determine if the compensation justifies the delay. The Committee also recommended that a universal mechanism be devised so that consumers and concerned departments can conduct real-time checks on car manufacturers.

Moreover, the Committee discussed the country's EV policy. Officials stated that the government has introduced the EV policy to combat the climate crisis and diversify the automobile sector. Under the policy, there is a 1% customs duty on EV vehicle parts compared to 30% on traditional vehicles. The tariff for EV vehicles is also around 5-10% compared to 25-30% for traditional vehicles. These steps were taken to attract global EV manufacturers. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla opined that there is a dire need to build EV-friendly infrastructure; otherwise, the EV sector will not sustain. The Committee constituted a three-member Sub-Committee, under the co-chairmanship of Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee, to analyze the country's EV policy.

The meeting was attended by Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan, Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee, Senator Khalil Tahir, Senator Mir Dostain Khan Domki, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Secretary for Ministry of Industries and Production Saif Anjum and other senior officials of concerned departments.

Govt to setup Teachers Training Center

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal has announced that the government within two years will establish a state-of-the-art Teachers Training Center for improving quality of education and to produce manpower meeting contemporary needs.

Speaking during the launching ceremony of the District Education Performance Index-2023 here on Friday, he said the incumbent government led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had initiated this project during its last tenure but due to political instability it remained incomplete.

Ahsan Iqbal said that in collaboration with provincial education departments, the Center would be the best in South Asia, where students could get quality education focusing on improving their critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and team learning skills. He said it would be a paradigm shift from memorization-based education adding that the initiative would also reform the existing examination system.

The minister planning said that memorization-based education was irrelevant in the modern era, where innovation and creativity derived development. He believed that the country could not achieve the required goals of progress and prosperity without improving the education standard and developing human resources. "The development of infrastructure alone cannot be useful."

Ahsan Iqbal citing examples from the world said no single country has attained development and prosperity without achieving at least a 90 percent literacy rate. "Development is not possible without achieving the universal primary enrollment education target."

The minister also mentioned some other challenges, including the lack of an export-led economy and political instability.

‘Pakistan wants to be a part of Asian Century’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan is against a regional situation similar to witnessed during Cold war years and disagrees with joining camps to counter any country, especially against its trusted friend China". This was stated by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed as a keynote speaker at an event titled, "US' Asia-Pacific Strategy: Implications for Pakistan-India Relations", organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).

Another keynote speaker, Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi stressed that the change of nomenclature Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific for a containment strategy by the US had placed India in a central role fancying targeting China. But China was unlike the former Soviet Union, and could not be challenged and defeated, by no means through empowering India. He stressed that to avoid a dangerous global conflict, Pakistan must stay clear of any part in such hostile endeavours. He also emphasized that China had never projected itself as a super power but only emerging global power.

Earlier, in his opening

remarks, President IRS, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, brought out how the emerging 'Cold War' was fraught with grave risks for global peace and stability. He also underlined that India was misusing the western support being extended to build it as a counterweight to China to instead pursue its hegemonic policies in South Asia, and undermine Pakistan. The West was mistaken in seeing India as a reliable partner, since India was adept at playing all sides in the name of so called strategic autonomy.

Ambassador Zameer Akram, adviser SPD, pointed out that under the so called Indo-Pacific strategy, many analysts believed that the US intended to act as a full-spectrum dominant power, with evident control of sea lanes to counter China's rise. For this objective, the US had even expanded the scope of NATO from Europe to Middle East and Asia, so to contain China. He also highlighted that the US backing had emboldened India which was emerging as an aggressor in the region.

Professor Zafar Jaspal stated that India and the US already have a threshold

alliance. In view of the aggressive policies of Prime Minister Modi, capacity building of India by the US as a non-NATO ally posed a serious challenge for Pakistan. However, while India was ostensibly working for American interests and receiving assistance accordingly, its regional challenges were multiplying because of its aggressiveness which was exposing its limitations and duplicity.

Prominent security expert, Syed Muhammad Ali noted that China doesn't seek regional and global hegemon status; rather China was economically countering US influence in regions all over the world by building mutually beneficial partnerships. It was also noted that within the region, India's act of aggression was witnessed in case of Pulwama, Galwan, and in IIOJ&K. Exploiting US support, India had been getting away with its aggressive actions on foreign lands, including targeted terrorism. The event was attended by a large number of diplomats, academicians, researchers, journalists and students.

RWMC conducts anti-dengue awareness campaign

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The communication teams of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) on Friday carried out its cleanliness and anti-dengue awareness campaign in the mosques of Dhoke Kashmirian area Union Council-23 to raise awareness about the life-cycle, prevalence, treatment, and prevention of dengue.

According to the RWMC spokesman, the teams asked the Masjids Imams/Khateeb of the area to play their part in educating the people about the importance of cleanliness in the light of Islamic teachings in the sermons

of Friday prayer. The objective of the activity was to reach out to a maximum number of people to educate the general public about the precautionary measures for dengue to get rid of it, the spokesman said.

The teams also distributed waste bags and leaflets among the faithful and educated them about the importance of cleanliness and the prevention of dengue.

In a message, RWMC has requested the people to keep an eye on junkyards, schools, and under-construction buildings which lead to the spread of dengue larvae, and also make sure to leave no place wet or with stagnant

water. Meanwhile, RWMC continuously carried out the cleanliness of the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium during the Pakistan-Bangladesh cricket test series match. The RWMC had deployed staff members, including sanitary workers and supervisors, in two shifts at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium while the areas inside and outside the stadium, including the double road, were being cleaned daily and workers were also present during the match till the end of the game. The waste bins placed from Faizabad to Double Road were also cleaned daily to ensure cleanliness.



PAKISTAN AIR FORCE

BASES NUR KHAN, LAHORE, RAFIQUI, MUSHAF, MALIR, SHAHBAZ, KORANGI CREEK AND SAMUNGLI

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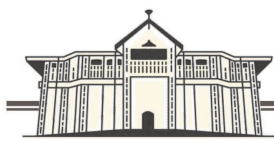
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Torrential rains claim 22 lives in Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The recent torrential rains in Balochistan have claimed 22 lives, including 11 children, and injured 13 others, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Friday.

According to a report by the PDMA, the rains have affected 5,448 individuals and damaged 158 homes, with 622 partially damaged. Additionally, 102 acres of crops and 35 kilometers of roads have been affected by the flash floods.

The PDMA report also stated that seven bridges have been damaged, and 131 livestock have perished due to the heavy rains. It is pertinent to mention here that Chief meteorologist Sardar Sarfraz at the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) predicted season's strong monsoon spell from August 26-30, which was expected to impact Balochistan, entire Sindh and southern Punjab where citizens were advised to take necessary precautions to ensure their

safety. Sardar Sarfraz, said, "Another monsoon spell is expected to hit Sindh from August 26, bringing with it a renewed wave of rainfall." As the monsoon season was still ongoing, Sarfraz cautioned, "The intensity of the rainfall is likely to remain between mild and harsh, potentially causing disruptions in daily life."

Sarfraz's warning came as a reminder to citizens to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety. "The expected monsoon spell is likely to bring heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and strong winds, which may lead to flash flooding, landslides, and power outages. By staying informed and taking proactive measures, citizens can minimize the risks associated with this weather event," he mentioned.

Meanwhile, Frontier Corps Balochistan has launched a massive rescue operation in flood-hit areas of the province, where recent rains caused widespread damage and displacement. The floodwaters, which

affected districts including Dera Bugti, Suhbatpur, Sui, Dera Allah Yar, and nearby areas, left many local residents stranded and without shelter. In addition to these efforts, the Frontier Corps also organized a free medical camp for flood victims, providing them with essential medical care.

The Frontier Corps provided tents and ration to the affected families in Sui and Dera Bugti besides distributed free ration packages to needy families, ensuring their access to basic necessities. Meteorological Department Quetta Regional Center has forecast that partly cloudy conditions with chances of light rain are likely in Ziarat, Dera Bugti, Khuzdar, Barkhan and Musa Khel districts.

Partly Cloudy conditions with chances of light rain are also predicted in Zhob, Sherani and Labella. Dust blowing strong gusty winds are predicted in Chagai (Dalbandin, Taftan and Nokkundi), Washuk, Panjur and Kech districts during the next 24 hours.

APPMSF flays all shapes of privatisation

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Provincial President, All Pakistan Paramedical Staff Federation, Haji Fazal-ur-Rehman said that autonomous body and public private partnership were all different shapes of privatisation and privatisation was not acceptable to paramedics at any cost.

Addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club, he said APPMSF was against appointment on contract basis and privatisation of Health Department Balochistan, adding that Health Department was being driven through experiences to introduce reforms in the department but all experiences proved futile and the reason for the failure was that stakeholders of Health Department had not been taken into confidence. Instead of addressing the problems of Health Department, authorities were bent upon selling the department, he said.

He called on the authorities to provide medicines and medicines to all Tertiary care and district headquarters hospitals of the province on urgent basis. He said that angiography, CT Scan and X-ray facilities were not available in hospitals of the province. He demanded to set up one another trauma centre in Quetta instead of shifting the present trauma centre.



HUB: Chairman Benazir Income Support Program, Rubina Khalid addressing BISP beneficiaries.

Scope of BISP to be further expanded

F.P. Report

HUB: Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) arrived on one day visit at HUB. The invitation for this visit was given by senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, Spokesman of President Asif Ali Zardari and Provincial Adviser on Industry and Crafts of Balochistan Mir Ali Hassan Zehri.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, General Secretary Sharif Palari and other leaders and workers welcomed Senator Rubina Khalid. On this occasion, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri dressed the Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program Rubina Khalid in a traditional chaadar. While senator Rubina Khalid and Mir Ali Hassan Zehri were briefed by the officials of Benazir Income Support Program in HU. Both the leaders appreciated the performance of BISP and said that the Benazir Income Support Program's mobile registration service will be further improved in the HUB.

On this occasion, Benazir Income Support Program Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid while addressing the event said that President Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's special instructions and Mir Ali Hassan

Zehri's invitation, I have come to HUB today. She said that I am happy to see that Mir Ali Hassan Zehri have started the many projects for the people of HUB and this series is going on rapidly from which the people of HUB and other areas will benefit. We appreciate Mir Ali Hassan Zehri's public-friendly initiatives and hope that Mir Ali Hassan Zehri will continue his efforts to implement public interest projects for the people here with the same dedication and zeal.

She said that, today in this event, with his personal efforts, we are starting mobile registration service and handing over 4 mobile registration vans to BISP, which will speed up and facilitate the work of BISP. Benazir Income Support Program Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid and Pakistan Peoples Party elected Member of Assembly and Provincial Advisor for Industry and Crafts Mir Ali Hassan Zehri handed over the mobile registration van to Benazir Income Support Program officials.

On this occasion, Provincial Adviser for Industry and Crafts, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, while addressing the ceremony, said that today is a happy day for the people of HUB and it is proof of Peoples Party and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's love for the

people of HUB and on our special invitation, Benazir Income Support Program Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid is present among us. He said that the process of registering the poor and deserving people here under the Benazir Income Support Program is going well and in a short period of time many needy families have been registered under the BISP and today the mobile registration service has started.

After this, the process of registration of the people of remote areas will become easier and the registration of needy families will be done at their doorstep. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that we would hope that no deserving family would be left out of registration. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further said that expanding the scope of the Benazir Income Support Program for the unemployed youth here.

Employment opportunities will also be made available, which is a good initiative, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri while addressing the ceremony said that we have come to work and InshaALLAH, under the prudent thinking of President Asif Ali Zardari and the enthusiastic leadership of young Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, we will do our best to provide every facility to the people of HUB which is their right.

Medicines handedover to MS of JGQH

F.P. Report

HUB: Assistant Commissioner (AC) Hub Muhammad Ali Durrani handed over necessary medicines to Medical Superintendent (MS) of Jam Ghulam Qadir Hospital (JGQH) on Friday.

The medicines, including ringolact drips 1000 ml and 500 ml slime infusion and injection 18 cottons of 500 ml, were provided for JGQH by Otsuka Company. The Assistant Commissioner Hub visited different wards of the Hospital. The MS briefed the AC about the provision of the health facilities to the patients in the hospital and other issues of it. He informed that the work of restoring the solar system of the hospital has also been started.

He said that these medicines would help in timely first medical aid in casualty section of the hospital. The MS thanked the AC and the Otsuka Company for provision of the medicines to the hospital.

The AC said that measures were being taken to provide health facilities to people in the areas saying that it was duty of doctors to give treat patients in a better way. He also assured the MS that he would take all possible measures to improve quality of health facilities.

Resolution of Kashmir dispute key for peace

F.P. Report

QUETTA: It is very important to make possible the resolution of the conflicts of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine for sustainable peace in the world. These views were expressed by the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri in her statement.

Senator said that for sustainable peace, it is very important to resolve conflicts like Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine. Until the conflicts are resolved, sustainable peace cannot be established in the world. It is the responsibility of international institutions to resolve conflicts and play their sure role. She said that turning a blind eye to the ongoing persecution in Kashmir and Palestine by powerful countries, criminal negligence and silence on the incidents of terrorism and violent extremism and failure to resolve the conflicts have led to the spread of conflicts.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri further said that the international strategy for resolving conflicts is not visible to the oppressed, but in this regard, it is largely ineffective, ineffective and unsatisfactory. On the other hand, patronage of powerful countries for the power-

ful and oppressors is a reflection of double standards.

She said that the problems arising from the illegal occupied of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine and the results of the atrocities of the occupying forces are clear, but the international organizations have not taken any effective measures to stop the ongoing persecution in these areas, which is a question mark on the performance of these institutions. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri stressed on international human rights organizations and the Security Council, saying that it is their responsibility to end Israel's genocidal war in Gaza.

It is the responsibility of the Security Council to play its effective role for the resolution of conflicts. She said that such incidents of cruelty and violence and genocide are happening in Kashmir and Palestine that the soul trembles. Is the global conscience dead? Where are those who have to ensure the provision of basic human rights worldwide for world peace are sleeping? What are the interests of those who are unable to take effective action against the oppressor? How long will powerful countries and institutions continue to support the powerful instead of the oppressed? When will the

oppressed get justice? Unfortunately, it has to be said that neither the United Nations Security Council nor other major organizations raised a strong voice against the ongoing oppression in Palestine, nor the ongoing Indian oppression in Kashmir.

On the other hand, the United States and Israel is stubbornly unwilling to stop the self-inflicted war against the innocent and innocent Palestinians and this process is still going on.

It is a pity for the Islamic countries, which should have played their full role to solve this problem and to stop the ongoing Israeli and Indian brutality, but the international human rights organizations keep turning a blind eye and the aggression of Israel and India continues.

Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, said that for lasting peace, it is very important to resolve conflicts like Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine, otherwise it might be correct to say that the world is standing on the verge of a huge and terrible disaster and these conflicts should be resolved as soon as possible. Sustainable peace cannot be established in the world without resolving these conflicts.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhel in a group photo with Jamat-e-Islami delegation.



PAKISTAN AIR FORCE BASES NUR KHAN, LAHORE, RAFIQUI, MUSHAF, MALIR, SHAHBAZ, KORANGI CREEK AND SAMUNGLI

INVITATION OF TENDERS FOR SUPPLY OF RATION ITEMS (01 OCTOBER, 2024 TO 30 JUNE, 2025)

1. Sealed tenders (Technical (Without Price) and Financial (With Price)) are invited from reputable, well-experienced, financially sound and Income Tax Registered Pakistani Firms / Contractors for supply of Fresh Ration items for PAF Bases (AD sites). Locations can be confirmed from O i/c S&T at PAAK and Bases Nur Khan, Lahore, Rafiqui, Mushaf, Malir, Shahbaz & Samungli during the Financial Year 2024-25 (01 October, 2024 - 30 June, 2025). Fresh Ration Contracts would be concluded at respective PAF Bases. Firms / Contractors which are not registered with PAF can also participate in tendering process and approach the concerned Base for collection of Tender / Registration documents.

(a) Local Contracts at Respective PAF Bases (AD Sites)

- (i) Meat Group (Mutton, Beef)
- (ii) Poultry Group ((Chicken Dressed), Eggs & Fish)
- (iii) Misc Group [Onion, Potato, Salt Iodized, Ginger (Fresh), Garlic (Fresh) and Fire wood, (Squash (Branded), Ice, (as required)]]
- (iv) Fruit Group 'Citrus / Non-Citrus' (as per seasonal chart provided with guide lines)
- (v) Vegetable Group (as per seasonal chart provided with guide lines)

(b) Detail specifications of all items / Evaluation Criteria can also be downloaded from PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk).

Tender Forms

2. **Local Contracts.** Tender Forms for **Local Contracts**, with complete specifications, special terms & conditions and other details of fresh ration items can be collected from respective PAF Base Catering Flights on submission of application for tender on letter head pad along with photocopies of NTN, GST, professional tax certificate & attested CNIC between **0800 Hrs to 1300 Hrs. Technical Tender** will be opened at **1330 Hrs** in the office of **O i/c Catering Flight / O i/c S & T Sqn (as applicable)** as per given schedule.

3. **Opening of Tender.** The Tender Forms are to be submitted as per **PPRA Rule 36 (b) single stage - two envelope** procedure (**Technical** (Without Price) and **Financial** (With Price)). Separate envelope shall be marked as "**Technical Proposal**" and "**Financial Proposal**" in bold and clear letter to avoid confusion. After vetting of Technical bids, qualified bidders will be informed through Letters / Telephone about the venue, date and time for opening of financial proposal.

SCHEDULE FOR OPENING OF TECHNICAL TENDER

S No	Base / Unit	Date / Time for Collection of Tender Forms	Technical Proposal Opening Date / Time	Contact Nos
(a)	PAF Base Nur Khan	24 Aug 09 Sep, 2024 (0800-1300 hrs)	09 September, 2024 (1330hrs)	Tel: 051-9523843 Ext : 051-9523845 Cell # 0323-9415721
(b)	PAF Base Lahore			Tel: 042-99220188 Ext: 5221-5223 Cell # 0323-9428721
(c)	PAF Base Rafiqui			Tel: 041-9505221/ 5225 Cell # 0323-9424721
(d)	PAF Base Mushaf			Tel: 048-3720050-4 Ext: 5221,5225 Cell # 03239421721
(e)	PAF Base Malir			Tel: 021-99533805 Cell # 0323-9436721
(f)	PAF Base Shahbaz			Tel:0722-650183- 5223 Cell # 0323-9439721
(g)	Airmen Academy, PAAK K/Creek			Tel: 021-99553845 Cell # 03239471721
(h)	PAF Base Samungli			Tel: 081-9505223 Cell # 0323-9437721

Note:-

- Any Firm / supplier whose contract has been terminated / Black listed by PAF / Defence/ Govt Organization due to poor performance / un-ethical practices will not be eligible for taking part in bidding process for contracts.
- The Contract will have to be signed by the **Owner** of the Firm.
- If any Firm / Contractor is not registered with PAF, then relevant documents / information for registration can also be collected from the above mentioned PAF offices.
- Any information, if found incomplete / false at any stage, will result in immediate rejection of the application for the Tender, on technical grounds.
- Rates of Vegetables and Fruits are to be quoted as per Seasonal Chart / Seasonal Schedule of Fruits and Vegetables which may be collected from Catering to Flight.
- No of issues of Mutton, Beef, Chicken, Eggs & Fish can be modified (increase / decrease) in light of Air Headquarters policies.
- Interested Contractors / Firms are to deposit a bank draft of Five Lac / 2% of total Tender value as Earnest Money in favour of **Public Fund Account at respective Base**.
- OsC Support, Admin Wing, Admin & Supp, Oi/c S&T Sqn, O i/c Logistics Squadron & O i/c Catering Flight of concerned Bases may ask for any further information and details, if required.
- For further information & queries O i/c S&T Squadron & O i/c Catering Flight may be contacted as per above mentioned numbers given in schedule.



PESHAWAR: Passengers are being screened for MPox on their arrival at Bacha Khan International Airport fro abroad.

Steps being taken for industrial uplift: Muzamil

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to KP CM on Finance and Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), Muzamil Aslam has said that urgent steps are being taken to make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa an industrial province, saying a Transmission and Grid Company has been established for the direct sale of hydropower to the industrial sector at cheap rates.

Addressing a function of Roadshow organized under the auspices of the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) here on Friday, he said that a long transmission line is being laid at Chakdra while a NEPRA model, provincial regulatory authority is also being established for the development of the energy sector in the province.

Besides, Secretary Energy Nisar Ahmad Khan, representatives of the business community associated with the industrial sectors across the province participated in the event.

Under the model power plants in the province beside the public sector will also be installed by the private investors as well and the province will now determine the rates of electricity generated.

He expressed concern over power load shedding and supply of expensive electricity to the province despite generating 600 mega-watt cheap hydropower, and termed it as injustice. He said policy guidelines have been drafted for provision of facilities to the investors of energy sector and development of the industrial sector.

The implementation of the new policy guidelines will begin a new era of development and creation of new employment opportunities in the province.

The participants were told that Pakistan currently Pakistan has the hydropower generation capacity of 60,000 MW, of which 30,000 MW is in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa.

Similarly, the country currently generates 10,625 MW of hydropower while 6,000 MW which is 60% of the hydropower production is being generated from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while construction work is going on hydropower projects of 771 MW capacity including 40.8 MW of Koto Hydropower Project in Dir district and 11.8 MW of Karora Hydropower Project in Shangla are in the final stages of completion.

The completion of these ongoing hydropower projects will earn another receipt of Rs.2.5 billion per annum for the province.

On this occasion, the representatives of the industrial sector expressed their keen interest in direct purchase of electricity at cheap rates and various suggestions and concerns were discussed at length.

During the question-answer session, Chief Engineers PEDO Habibullah Shah and Aziz

Meeting of Chitral Mines and Minerals Association held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An emergency meeting of the Chitral Mines and Minerals Association was held in the association's office, chaired by President Mr. Liaquat. The meeting was attended by 15 core committee members.

The meeting undertook detailed deliberations on the ongoing ban on mining in the Ursoon (Lower Chitral) area, the enforcement of forced sworn statements from leaseholders not to do mining, and the resulting challenges these actions have caused.

Members expressed concerns that despite the prolonged regional conflict, Chitral has historically remained free from terrorist activities. They highlighted that the border area is now secure, and actively guarded by our strong forces.

Closing business and employment opportunities in otherwise peaceful areas could bolster the ambitions of adversaries. Despite the Cold War between Afghanistan, Russia, and America from 1979 to 2020, which lasted 40 years, Chitral remained peaceful despite its proximity to the conflict. The emergence of a stable government in Afghanistan now highlights the region's capacity to remain unaffected by prolonged regional tensions.

Currently, a peaceful and sustainable government has been established in Afghanistan, where mining activities are proceeding smoothly. Chinese investors have invested millions of dollars in the Afghan mining sector and are actively overseeing the operations.

The current situation in Chitral, with the non-renewal of EL-04 licenses under the guise of security risks, has led to significant apprehensions within the mining community. Leaseholders and investors are deeply concerned, and there is widespread public anxiety due to the resulting business closures.

In Chitral's history, there has never been an incident of explosives being smuggled to Afghanistan or elsewhere. Given this track record, banning mining on the grounds of security, along with the non-issuance of NOCs and cancellation of gunpowder licenses, is seen as incomprehensible.

Crackdown on illegal medical laboratories

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A surprise inspection of medical laboratories in Peshawar conducted today by the district administration in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission and sealed laboratory and impose corruption charges. The inspection, carried out in accordance with the provincial government orders, targeted those laboratories which is approved by the Gulf Coordination Council, including i.e Inam Medical Center, Alameer Medical Diagnostic Center, and Medical Diagnostic Center. These laboratories provide medical testing facilities to workers traveling to Gulf countries.

PMC Students visit Hamza Foundation Thalassemia Center



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Third year MBBS students of PMC (Peshawar Medical college) visited Hamza Foundation welfare Thalassemia Center and blood transfusion services Peshawar KP . Medical Director Hamza

Foundation Dr. Tariq khan and WMO of Hamza Foundation Dr. Kashmala shah gave detail briefing about the different activities of the organization.Students visited different departments of HF and observed all heam-atological procedure, especially management of

Thalassemia Heamophila and other blood disorder .Dr Anila and Dr Hafsa professors of PMC , appreciated the welfare services of the organization and they requested from the management of the organization that kindly also allow other students of MBBS for the visit of HF.

Governor gratitudes PM in construction of Dera-Rajanpur road

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for National Highways Abdul Aleem Khan, and the officials of the National Highway Authority (NHA) for their support in the construction of 329 kilometers Dera Ismail Khan to Rajanpur road.

In a video message, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that the construction work on this vital road will begin this year.

He said that the road will be upgraded from a two-lane to a four-lane highway with the support of the Asian Development Bank, holds immense importance for both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

Tenders for the project have already been issued

that would ushr new era of development, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi added.

The Governor also highlighted that construction work on the Ramak to Tibba Qaisarani section of the road will start within this year. The project is divided into four phases, with the Dera Ismail Khan to Ramak to Punjab Tibba Qaisarani section covering 96 kilometers.

Additionally, Kundi mentioned that tenders for the Dera Ismail Khan Chashma Lift Canal project will soon be issued. The Prime Minister has allocated 19 billion rupees from the federal budget for this project. Kundi thanked Federal Minister Musadiq Malik and the Chairman of WAPDA for their roles in this initiative.

The Governor also revealed that the No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Dera Ismail Khan International Airport

has been issued, with construction expected to start next year.

Kundi emphasized that these mega projects will significantly contribute to regional development, highlighting that practical steps are being taken rather than just making promises.

The road and canal projects are set to be inaugurated later this year, while the airport project will commence in the coming year.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has announced the establishment of the province's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center aims to advance digital technology in the province and promote modern technological trends.

The announcement was made following a meeting with the world's first digital senator, Senator Mian Atiq, at the Governor House Peshawar. Principal Secretary to the Governor

Mazhar Irshad, renowned educationist Professor Mullah Khan Haidri, and IT expert Talha were also present on this occasion.

During the meeting, discussions focused on the latest trends and benefits of digital technology.

Governor Kundi revealed that the new AI Center will be established at the Governor House Peshawar to promote digital technology in the province.

The Governor emphasized that the center will play a crucial role in the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, aligning the province with global standards and contributing to its progress.

The AI Center is expected to be a milestone in efforts to empower women and engage youth, and it will be linked with various universities in the province, said Governor Faisal Kundi.

Improving governance through Access to Information Law Training for Local Government Public Information Officers held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The use of the Access to Information Law can significantly enhance governance, enabling citizens to play their part in ensuring their rights are met.



Under this law, government agencies are accountable to the public, and therefore, Public Information Officers (PIOs) in these institutions must be well-versed in the law to provide timely and accurate information in response to public requests.

This was emphasized by Syed Saadat Jehan, Deputy Director of Communication at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission, during a training session at the Local Governance School in Peshawar.

The session, held in collaboration with GIZ and CGPA, was aimed at Local Government's Public

Information Officers (Assistant Directors of Local Government and Tehsil Municipal Officers, who were appointed as PIOs in accordance with the November 8, 2022 notification).

The training included participants from various districts, including Peshawar, Swat, and Abbottabad. Addressing the attendees, Syed Saadat

Jehan stated that under the law, government agencies are required to maintain records related to government affairs.

It is the responsibility of the PIO to ensure that requested information from these records is provided to the public in a timely manner.

In response to participants' questions, Syed Saadat Jehan highlighted

that it is also the PIO's duty to assist illiterate and disabled citizens in writing their information requests.

At the end of the program, Sadaf Shaheen, Good Governance Advisor at GIZ, invited the PIOs to participate in women's open court sessions, which are organized in collaboration with GIZ and district administration in specific districts.

Workshop organized on improving standards of Category 1 hospitals

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission, in collaboration with the USAID-funded Building Healthy Families (BHF) program, organized a two-day consultative workshop on 21-22 August 2024 in Swat, with the support of Pathfinder International and Chemonics International. The purpose of this workshop was to review the Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS) for Category 1 hospitals, with active participation from healthcare professionals, administrators, policy-makers, and community representatives.

The workshop included in-depth discussions on key topics such as patient care, hospital management, infection control, and quality improvement,

aiming to align these standards with the healthcare needs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dr. Ikram Ghani, Chairman of the Board of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and inaugurated the workshop with insightful remarks that set a clear direction for the discussions.

Mr. Muhammad Hamayun, a

member of the Board of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission, was the Guest of Honor at the event.

Through this workshop, the Khyber aPakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing healthcare standards and providing high-quality medical services to the public. All stakeholders involved expressed their dedication

to continue working together to bring further improvements in the healthcare sector.

The mission of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission is to improve healthcare facilities in the province and ensure that every citizen has access to quality and affordable medical services. Such activities are a vital step toward achieving this goal.



Addiction to naswar: a growing threat to public health

PESHAWAR (APP): The rising prevalence of drug addiction, particularly hashish, ice, smoking, and naswar, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is increasingly affecting public health.

Many individuals suffering from drug addiction attribute their plight to socioeconomic issues such as poverty and unemployment, suggesting that improved economic policies and job opportunities for youth could address these challenges effectively.

One such case is Umar Khayam, a 30-year-old resident of the Nowshera district, who recently experienced severe dental pain due to his naswar addiction.

Umar, in excruciating agony, was rushed to a private dental hospital, where he was quickly transferred to the Oral and Maxillofacial department at Sardar Begium Dental College in Peshawar for emer-

gency surgery.

Upon examination of his teeth, Dr. Tahir Khan, senior surgeon and principal of the hospital, found that Umar's molar was severely decayed, leading to a critical gum infection.

The decay was attributed to years of naswar use. Due to the extent of the damage, the molar was extracted as root canal treatment was deemed unfeasible.

Dr. Tahir Khan noted that Umar began using naswar in 2010 while in a hostel, initially as a way to cope with the stress of his MA exams.

Despite numerous attempts to quit, Umar has been unable to break free from the addiction, which has caused significant dental issues, including the loss of a tooth. He expressed frustration over the negative impact of naswar on his personal and professional life, including the unpleasant

habit of spitting that affects his social image.

Dr Tahir Khan, said the severity of naswar addiction could result in severe gum infections, jaw complications, and the loss of multiple teeth.

"Naswar's harmful effects extend beyond oral health, potentially causing bone loss, stomach disorders, and facial disfigurement.

Additionally, it may contribute to increased heart rate with cardiac vascular complications, and in some cases can lead to more severe conditions like mouth and oral cancers."

Referring to a report from the Global Cancer Observatory, Dr Tahir pointed out that Pakistan faces a significant burden of lip and oral cavity cancers, with about 11,000 new cases in males every year, making it the most common cancer among men.

"Poor dental hygiene, tobacco use, and viral infec-

tions besides fake quack doctors contribute to these alarming statistics," he informed.

Approximately 10,000 people die of cancer of the lips and oral cavity annually in the country, the doctor said, adding the main reasons for such cancers were chewable and non-chewable tobacco and poor dental hygiene practices, oncogenic viral infections and genetic predispositions.

Despite grave health risks, he said that naswar remains prevalent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where approximately 70 percent of the population uses it without knowing its serious consequences on their health.

Besides Charsadda, Swabi and Mohmand, the super quality naswar of Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and Mardan were mostly exported to Punjab and Sindh provinces while its demand in Karachi was high due to presence of a large

number of migrants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The history revealed that naswar was introduced to the world in 15th century in Europe when a French ambassador used it to treat her son's migraines. Initially it was used for medicinal purposes but gradually it was consumed as an alternative to tobacco and later came to Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

Zahurul Haq, who is associated with naswar business for the last 12 years said that people aging between 18-50 years prefer to consume Mardani, Charsadda and Bannu's naswar.

"The price of smoke-free tobacco varies in the open market as Rs30 per snuff packet was being charged per 100gram," he said.

Regarding its preparation, he said that first tobacco was dried in the sun, then ground into powder and later water is

added to this green powder along with calcium hydroxide and artificial colour, then plant ashes, species or oils are used to give a flavor and finally the mixture was rolled into fine balls to give it a proper shape.

He explained that there were two types of naswar, one is dried and other is moist, adding that people in the province mostly keep moist naswar inside the mouth under the lip and swallow the saliva as a craving while dried naswar is mainly inhaled through the nasal cavity.

Dr Sirzamin Khan, principal officer of government hospital Pabbi Nowshera said that naswar was mostly made of fresh tobacco leaves, calcium oxide, and other ingredients that may cause different types of cancers including lung, oral, stomach and mouth besides causing bronchitis, kidney, heart, and other diseases.

He said the smokeless

tobacco contains nicotine and other chemicals, which may have caused side effects on brain and ultimately oral cancer.

Syed Imran Shah, Director, Social Welfare Department said 12 detoxification and rehabilitation centres were established in different districts for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

These centers were established at Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Nowsehra, Swabi, DI Khan, Karak, Kohat, Malakanad, Swat, and Dir Lower. Under drugs-free Peshawar programs, he said addicts of Niswar were also rehabilitated.

Imran underlined the need for mass awareness campaigns through electronic, print, and social media besides the active role of religious scholars and civil society to protect people from the hazardous effects of naswar.



In brief

PPP elects new cabinet Muhammad Ilyas

PABBI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) elected unopposed president Salim Ullah Khokhar, Saeed Ullah Khan as Senior Vice President and Hidayat Ullah Khan Khattak advocate as General Secretary, on Friday. According to details, a meeting of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) workers was held in Nowshera Cantt in which large number of workers from Nowshera district, including members from Pabbi, Nowshera, and Jehangirah tehsils were present. The newly elected unopposed cabinet comprising of president Salim Ullah Khokhar, Senior Vice President Saeedullah Khan, Vice Presidents including Maulana Muhammad Usman Ali Shah, Muhammad Rafiq, General Secretary Hidayatullah Khan Khattak, Deputy General Secretary Yousaf Shabab, Finance Secretary Shahid Khan, Information Secretary Muhammad Farooq Khattak, Deputy Information Secretary Khalid Hamid, Office Secretary Fahim Khan and Coordination Secretary Amir Zaman Khan. The elections were held in a peaceful and democratic manner, with all office-bearers being elected unopposed, reflecting the unity and consensus among PPP workers in Nowshera district.

DC visits DHQ hospital F.P. Report

BUNER: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Buner Kashif Qayyum visited District Headquarter Hospital Daggar and directed for immediate removal of garbage and provision of car parking facility for the hospital staff and visiting patients. The DC ordering the immediate removal of the garbage laying there also ordered for placing a dumper there permanently for dumping the waste and to transport it to major dumping site twice a week. He ordered making access path way to delayed under construction portion in the hospital so as to make it usable for car parking. The TMO Daggar Zahoor Ahmed immediately put the TMA staff to work and moved the garbage to the dumping site away from the hospital and placed a dumper at that place to dump the garbage daily and transport it twice a week. TMA also make a path way with a tractor blade for car parking, where hundreds of vehicles of the hospital staff and patients can be parked very easily, and the problems caused by the parking of vehicles in the hospital can be overcome. On the visit of the Deputy Commissioner to the Daggar Hospital and the directives for cleanliness and parking facilities and the immediate implementation of these directives by the TMO Daggar, the hospital staff, admitted and visiting patients and their companions while commenting, have expressed satisfaction and hoped that with the joint efforts of the district administration and Daggar Tehsil Municipal Administration, the people will get ease and the people will breathe a sigh of relief.

2 real brothers among 3 killed F.P. Report

SHIKARPUR: Three people including two real brothers were shot dead over property dispute here on Friday, police said. According to details, the incident took place at Shahi Bagh road in Lakhi Dar police station jurisdiction in Shikarpur where armed men of Lehar community sprayed bullets at rivals with whom they were in dispute over ownership of a piece of land leaving them critically injured.



SHANGLA: Activists of Aman Pasoon holding peace march at Alpuri. — F.P. photo

Apex court review verdict celebrated in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl local chapter on Friday celebrated the review decision of the Supreme Court of Pakistan regarding the Muabarak Sani case and distributed sweets among shopkeepers and local residents at Timergara.

The JUI-F tehsil emir Maulana Shamsul Arifeen, general secretary Qari Muabarak Syed and others expressed pleasure on the apex court verdict and termed it a big success of religious parties in the country. Talking to local journalists at the Timergara press club, they said there would be no compromise on the finality of the Prophethood as it was a part of the Muslims' faith.

Meanwhile the Lower Dir chapter of Jamaat-i-Islami also appreciated the Chief Justice of Pakistan for expunging the controversial clauses in the Mubarak Sani case. Talking to local journalists and addressing the Friday prayer sermon at Timergara the JI district general secretary Hafiz Yaqubur Rehman said the efforts of religious parties brought fruits and the nation had the right to celebrate the success.

He said that the Chief Justice admitted his mistake in the Mubarak Sani case and expunged the controversial clauses in his verdict. "We pay tribute to all other religious parties including Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan for pursuing this issue", he remarked, adding

the Ulama supported this decision and demanded action against the Ahmadis under the Constitution of Pakistan.

Store gutted: A general store turned to ashes when a fire broke out due to unknown reasons at Shehzadi village in the jurisdiction of Balambat police station here on Friday. According to one Anwar Khan, brother of the store's owner Islamullah, the fire flames engulfed the whole store within no time that turned everything into ashes. He said the incident had inflicted a loss of Rs 700,000.

The residents demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and district administration to compensate the shopkeeper as his family depended on that store.

More than 75 employees deprived from salaries

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: More than 75 employees of a private company, including security guards and sweepers, working at the District Headquarter Hospital in Shangla's Alpuri area, have not received their salaries for over a year. Despite repeated requests to the hospital administration and other forums, their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

The employees, who were hired by the company 'Babar Umar and Company', have been working at the hospital for over a year, but the company has only paid them for three months. The

employees, including Omar Ali, Shamsher Ali, Rahmat Ali, Azmat Ali, Kabir Ahmed, Shah Nawaz, Sameeullah, Muhammad Ilyas, Fazal Rahim, Omar Rahman, and others, claim that they are extremely poor and helpless.

They have been regularly performing their duties at the hospital, but the private company has disappeared after paying them for only three months. The hospital administration claims that they have no involvement in the matter, and the agreement and appointment of the employees were made with the company.

The affected employees

have appealed to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Provincial Minister of Health, Provincial Secretary of Health, Director General of Health Services, and other authorities to intervene and direct the hospital to pay their salaries. They have also requested that the company's officials be contacted to resolve the matter.

The employees have also demanded that the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provide them with government jobs in phases, as they have been deprived of their right to work due to political reasons.

Qaumi Jirga to secure Pakhtun rights: Malik

F.P. Report

BANNU: Chief organizer Pakhtunkhwa Qaumi Jirga Malik Adnan Wazir said that protecting the rights of Pakhtuns from oppression and oppression is one of our top priorities while living within the framework of the country's constitution and law. Peaceful struggle will continue to give them their right. Pakhtun is the only nation that wants the solution of all problems on the path of peace, but no one has asked for the rights of Pakhtuns.

All kinds of illegal and unconstitutional in southern districts He expressed these views while addressing the reception ceremony at the place of Kohat, Karak and Bannu Mangal Mela during his visit to the

southern districts in the light of the directives of the central leader Khalid Ayub Khan. On this occasion, the senior officials and workers of Pakhtun Qaumi Jirga welcomed Chief Organizer Malik Adnan Wazir and showered flowers.

The people here are peacefully fighting for their rights, but due to the lack of basic facilities, the people are forced to live a miserable life. The givers are the Pakhtun people who are the peace of the Pashtun tradition and hospitality. There is a field of action to get rid of the basic resources and the current problems, but unfortunately no one has paid attention to the development and the problems here, due to which the problems have piled up in

the southern districts.

He said that the Pakhtun National Jirga is the only platform to solve the problems and problems faced by the other ethnic groups living in the southern districts including wazir Banuchi Khattak Mehsud, which is solving the problems of the Pakhtuns without any discrimination. He said that the struggle is going on under the leadership of the central leader Khalid Ayub Khan for peace and order and to give the people their rights over the resources here, so all the Pakhtun people and the leaders here should participate fully in the ongoing organization of the Pakhtunkhwa Qaumi Jirga for the nation. Play your role in redressing the deprivations.

Implementation of Urdu as academic language urged

F.P. Report

BARA: Urdu language should be a teaching and spoken of the learners of the educational institutions as the national language will be a bridge of communication in future for them. The views were expressed by the Director General Idara-e-Farog-e-Qaumi Zaban (The National Language Promotion Department), Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar during his visit to Afridi School and College, Bara on Friday.

Flanked by Director General Iqbalayat Dr Abdurrauf Rafiqi he said

that it was the core responsibility of the concerned ones to appraise the new generation of the importance of the national language. He maintained that the nations weighed their mother language, led the developed World besides their culture and norms preserved.

If the countrymen desired to conserve their heritage and rich civilization, they should make their national language, Urdu teaching and communication language, he added. He applauded the management and teaching staff of the institution for conveying knowledge in Urdu and

schooling the students in unfavorable prevailed conditions.

Qualifying record of maximum number of the institution students in pre-admission tests of professionals' colleges proved its efficiency and hopefully it would become bacon of knowledge in the near future in the area, he opined.

Earlier, the visiting guests inspected various sections of the institution and the Managing Director of Afridi School and College, Bara Muhammad Jamil Afridi presented them with the annual report of the institution.

BISP is ray of hope for deserving people

F.P. Report

HUB: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Senator Rubina Khalid, has said Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is a ray of hope for the deserving people of Balochistan.

Chairing a meeting in Hub, she said instructions have been issued to all officers to make the payment of financial assistance to BISP beneficiaries as easy as possible. In this regard, measures are being taken to ensure card issuance and timely payment.

Senator Rubina Khalid said the government is committed to ensuring transparency and good governance in BISP. The BISP coverage in Balochistan has been expanded, with seven new zones being established. The meeting was informed that two million deserving people in Balochistan are benefiting from the Benazir Income Support Programme. It was also informed that twenty billion rupees are being distributed among beneficiaries in Balochistan under various initiatives, including Taleemi Wazaif, Benazir Kafaalat Programme, Benazir Nashonuma Programme, and other welfare programs.

DC Karak holds Khuli Katchery

F.P. Report

KARAK: Deputy Commissioner Karak Shakeel Ahmed Jan has held Khuli Katchery in Dhand Eidal Khel, a remote area of Union Council Sabirabad of District Karak under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda" which besides the police, district administration and officers of government departments and institutions was also attended by the local elders and common people in large number.

Deputy Commissioner listened to the problems of the people. Most of the minor problems were solved on the spot while other were sent to the authorities concerned for solving with a deadline. Most of the problems of the people are related to education, health, revenue, drinking water, electricity, gas and irrigation sectors.

Deputy Commissioner Karak assured that all the problems presented here will be solved on priority basis and it is not the first Katchery but it will be held again and again until the problems of the people are solved, because our aim is to solve the problems of the people at the local level.

Local elders thanked the administration including line departments and others for taking interest in solving the problems of the area. They hoped that positive and better results will be obtained from the Katchery.

Cop martyred

F.P. Report

KABIRWALA: A policeman was martyred and a robber killed in exchange of fire here on Friday. The encounter took place during raid of police in Jodhpur area of tehsil Kabirwala of district Khanewal for arrest of a proclaimed offender.

Police brutally beaten transgenders in Mardan

Anees Takar

MARDAN: The transgender community in Mardan has staged a strong protest against the alleged police brutality. The protest was held against the SHO of Par Hoti police station, Dawood Khan, who has been accused of subjecting the transgender community to violence.

Madam Annol, the focal person of the transgender community said that the Par Hoti police led by SHO Dawood Khan, have been harassing and torturing the transgender community. She alleged that despite government laws the transgender community is not

being allowed to live freely and is being constantly harassed by the police.

The transgender community chanted slogans against the police and vowed to continue their protest until their rights are protected. They said that those who are supposed to protect the law are themselves violating it, making their lives miserable.

The transgender community has demanded that the DPO of Mardan take immediate notice of the incident and take action against SHO Dawood Khan otherwise they will be forced to take more severe measures. The police spokesperson has clarified that during a

music program, some youths were reported to be harassing the transgender community within the limits of Par Hoti police station. The police immediately arrived at the scene and arrested the youths. According to the police, the transgender community then attacked the police station, vandalized property and demanded that the arrested youths be handed over to them. The police claimed that they had to use batons to control the situation. Later, the District Police Officer (DPO) called the transgender community to his office and suspended SHO Dawood Khan to defuse the situation.

Residents demand removal of encroachments

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The residents of Bakhshali Bazar area, the business community and the passenger vehicles are facing serious problems due to the number of encroachments on the roadside, the movement of trucks and trolleys and the traffic system is disrupted.

Traffic officials who were on duty at Bakhshali Bazaar have been absent from duty for many days due to unknown reasons due to which the daily traffic flow has been disturbed and disorderly. Due to the road closure in the evening, leaving the Bakhshali Bazaar for pedestrians is no less than an ordeal. Trucks and trolleys often get stuck on Main Chowk, Bakhshali Dubai Adda Road, causing long queues of vehicles including pedestrians and blocking the road for hours.

The people here demanded DPO Mardan through the media that since the traffic of vehicles has increased on Bakhshali

Bazar, traffic officials should be appointed immediately to remove the encroachment so that they can play their role in bringing the situation back to normal routine.

AWKUM announces Board of Trustee polls result: Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) announced the results of the recent election for the Board of Trustees Dr Ali Khan participated election under the auspices of the All Employees Association (AEA).

Employees saw a resounding victory for Dr. Ali Khan, who secured his seat with a commanding lead of 460 votes. Dr. Ali Khan's overwhelming support from the university's employees highlights his popularity and the trust placed in him by the university community.

Dr. Ali Khan, along with Mumtaz Khan, both candidates representing All Employees Association, was elected to the Board. Mumtaz Khan secured his

seat with a strong showing of 368 votes. Their victory is seen as a significant endorsement of their vision and commitment to the development and welfare of AWKUM.

In contrast, the other candidates, Ishfaq Habib and Changaiz Khan, received 194 and 226 votes, respectively. Following his victory, Dr. Ali Khan expressed his gratitude to the university community, especially the voters who placed their trust in him. "I am deeply honored by the support and confidence shown by my colleagues and the university staff."

I am committed to work tirelessly for the betterment of our institution and ensuring that the voices of all employees are heard and respected," Dr. Khan said. The election results mark a new chapter for AWKUM, with the newly elected members of the Board of Trustees poised to contribute to the continued growth and success of the university.



HYDERABAD: Gypsy people were scavenging for valuable items amidst the garbage in Latifabad.

Wildlife recovers six valuable wild animals

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Wildlife recovered six valuable wild animals from a cargo vehicle near Sang-e-mar mar police check post on Swabi Road. Animals including a leopard cat, hyena, Parkoupin, an Indian civet, an Asian civet, and a jackal were found in cages and seized by authorities.

According to the details, under the leadership of Range Officer Tahir Sajjad, Wildlife Range Mardan conducted the operation under the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Wildlife and Biodiversity Act 2015 and as per the instructions of DFO Muhammad Ayaz Khan.

Animals were being smuggled from the circus to Punjab (Lahore) at Younis Stadium. DFO Mardan emphasized that these wild animals are national assets and their protection in their natural habitat is a top priority.

MS plants sapling at DHQ: Medical Superintendent District Headquarters Teaching Hospital Mardan Dr. Javed Iqbal planted saplings at different places of the hospital on the occasion of Green and Green Pakistan tree planting campaign to prevent the increasing pollution in the academic field so that our country will be green and

green.

Dr. Syed Muhammad Tariq, Dr. Taj Khan Paramedical Association President, Taj Muhammad General Secretary Ajmal Khan and other hospital staff participated on this occasion. Medical Superintendent District Headquarters Dr. Javed Iqbal said that tree planting charity is ongoing. Trees not only provide shade but also help reduce environmental pollution. Trees are an important means of preventing flood damage. One of the causes of global warming is the cutting of trees.

Due to the indiscriminate cutting of trees, oxygen and carbon dioxide are increasing in the atmosphere. Since trees use carbon dioxide as food, if the erosion of trees continues, the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will reach a dangerous level for human health and the effect of global warming in Pakistan will be very high. Because there is no remarkable technology to save it in our country therefore, more trees should be planted. Dr. Javed Iqbal added that there is no other opinion that forests have a key role in improving and changing the environment.

He appealed to people from all walks of life to take full part in the plantation drive and together shape the

future of future generations. The best time to plant trees in Pakistan are the months of February, March, August and September.

Three injured in firing: Unidentified motorcyclists opened fire on a moving Chingchi rickshaw on Lund Khwar Road in Takhtbhai area. As a result, two women, widow Muhammad Nawaz, her daughter-in-law, wife of Muhammad Alam, and a young child, Qasim, son of Muhammad Alam, were injured.

As soon as the incident was reported, the medical team of Rescue 1122 reached the spot the injured were immediately shifted to MMC Mardan. However, the injured Bushra Bibi, wife of Muhammad Alam, died in the hospital due to her injuries. Lundkhwar police registered a case on the report of injured Zahida, widow of Muhammad Nawaz, and started investigating the case closely to find out the real facts. The injured Zahida, widow of Muhammad Nawaz resident of Sangha Lund Khwar Tehsil Takhtbhai, while filing a report, told the police that a relative was going for Umrah and I was going to say goodbye to him along with my daughter-in-law and young grandson in a Chingchi rickshaw.



Zelenskyy makes first visit to border area

KYIV (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made his first visit to the border area where his forces launched their surprise offensive into Russia, saying that Kyiv's military had taken control of another Russian village and captured more prisoners of war.

While in Ukraine's northern Sumy region, Zelenskyy said the new POWs from the Russian region of Kursk would help build an "exchange fund" to swap for captured Ukrainians. "Another settlement in the Kursk region is now under Ukrainian control, and we have replenished the exchange fund," Zelenskyy wrote on the social media platform X after hearing a report from his country's top military commander, Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi.

Zelenskyy did not name the newly captured village and did not cross over into Russia, which would be regarded by Moscow as a provocation. He previously has said that Ukraine has no plans to occupy the area long term but wants to create a buffer zone to prevent further attacks from that area into Ukraine. Zelenskyy said the Kursk operation launched Aug. 6 has reduced Russian shelling and civilian casualties in the Sumy region.

In another example of Ukraine's intensifying attacks on Russia, emergency authorities in Russia's Krasnodar region said a Ukrainian strike hit a cargo ferry loaded with fuel tanks at the port of Kavkaz, sparking a blaze. The port is on the Kerch Strait linking the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Russian Telegram channels posted videos purportedly showing a huge fire caused by the strike. The daring Ukrainian foray has rattled the Kremlin, showing Russia's vulnerability and shattering President Vladimir Putin's efforts to pretend that the country has been largely unaffected by the 2 1/2-year war.

Ukraine's push into Russia marks the first capture of Russian territory since World War II, but it comes as Kyiv continues to lose ground in eastern Ukraine. Authorities in the city of Kursk, the capital of the Kursk region, began to put up concrete shelters at bus stops and other locations to protect against shelling. They plan similar work in Zheleznogorsk and Kurchatov, where a nuclear power plant is located, the region's acting Gov. Alexei Smirnov said on his



Telegram channel. Putin has ordered the creation of self-defense units in Russian regions bordering Ukraine, the Russian leader said in a video call with officials.

Smirnov reported to Putin that over 133,000 people have left areas affected by the fighting in the Kursk region, while more than 19,000 have stayed. The governor of Bryansk, another Russian region bordering Ukraine, said authorities there have conducted training for emergency evacuation as a precaution. Separately, the Russian Defense Ministry reported repelling Ukrainian attacks near the villages of Komarovka, Malaya Loknya, Korenevka and several other settlements in the Kursk region. Education Minister Sergey Kravtsov said 114 schools in Russia's border regions will start teaching remotely when the school year begins at the start of September.

Elsewhere, the Defense Ministry said that its military has claimed control of the Ukrainian village of Mezhoze in Donetsk, part of the industrial Donbas region that Moscow seeks to take entirely. Both sides in the war have been using drones to attack deep behind enemy lines. Ukraine attacked Russia overnight with 28 drones, the Defense Ministry said. Thirteen were shot down over the Volgograd region, seven over the Rostov region, four over the Belgorod region, two over the Voronezh region, and one each over the Bryansk and Kursk regions, the ministry said. Andrei Bocharov, governor of the Volgograd region, said that a military facility caught fire after being attacked by drones in the

area of Marinovka, where Russia has a military air base. He did not specify what was damaged.

Videos shared on Russian social media showed an explosion in the night sky, reportedly near the base. Marinovka is about 300 kilometers (185 miles) east of the Ukrainian border. Ukraine claimed responsibility for the attack. Ukraine's security service and its special operation forces conducted the drone attack, striking the Marinovka airfield, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly. The Baza Telegram channel, which is close to Russian law enforcement, said one drone was taken down several kilometers (miles) from the airfield near Marinovka and that wreckage from another fell on a trailer near the air base, causing it to catch fire. Data from NASA fire-watching satellites, which monitor Earth for forest blazes, showed fires breaking out around the air base's apron, where fighter jets were previously seen parked. Another fire burned in Russia's Rostov region, where firefighters struggled for a fifth day to put out flames at an oil depot following a Ukrainian attack in the town of Proletarsk. State news agency Tass said 47 firefighters have been injured while putting out the blaze.

Satellite photos from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press showed the fire at the oil depot still intensely burning. Storage tanks at the facility appeared engulfed in flames. Flames could be seen in the images, with a thick black smoke cloud drifting west over the city of Proletarsk.

Yemen arms dealers selling machine-guns on X

SANAA (BBC): Weapons dealers in Yemen are openly using the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, to sell Kalashnikovs, pistols, grenades and grenade-launchers. The traders operate in the capital Sana'a and other areas under control of the Houthis, a rebel group backed by Iran and proscribed as terrorists by the US and Australian governments.

"It is inconceivable that they [the weapons dealers] are not operating on the Houthis' behalf," said the former British Ambassador to Yemen, Edmund Fitton-Brown, who now works for the Counter Extremism Project. "Purely private dealers who tried to profit from supplying, [for example] the government of Yemen, would be quickly shut down." An investigation by The Times newspaper found that several of the Yemeni accounts bore the blue tick of verification.

Both The Times and the BBC have approached X for comment, but have not so far received any response. Most of the platform's content moderators were laid off after the new owner Elon Musk bought the company in 2022. The advertisements are mostly in Arabic and aimed primarily at Yemeni customers in a country where the number of guns is often said to outnumber the population by three to one. The BBC has found several examples online, offering weapons at prices in both Yemeni and Saudi riyals. The words beside the weapons are designed to lure in the buyers. "Premium craftsmanship and top-notch warranty," says one advertisement. "The Yemeni-modified AK is your best choice." A demonstration video, filmed at night, shows the seller blasting off a 30-round magazine on full automatic. Another offers sand-coloured produced Glock pistols for around \$900 each.

Germany to held rescue a troubled cruise ship maker

BERLIN (AP): Germany's government will help rescue a major German shipyard that has solid orders for new cruise ships but has run into financial difficulty, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said. Meyer Werft employs more than 3,000 people in Papenburg on the Ems river in northwestern Germany, near the Dutch border. The company has built 58 cruise ships so far, according to its website.

Its customers include Disney Cruise Line, with which it announced an agreement earlier this month to build another four ships. Even before that, the company said it had full order books through to 2028. However, it has run into financial trouble because it has had to pay much of the cost of building cruise ships up front. Scholz cited the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as one factor in its troubles and said the company is "systemically relevant" to shipbuilding in Germany, Europe's biggest economy.

Scholz, who traveled to Papenburg to speak at a staff meeting, praised the company's ships as "state of the art" and told employees that "what you build here are actually little cities," according to remarks released by his office. He said 17,000 jobs across Germany depend in one way or another on Meyer Werft. He said there had been "great progress" in negotiations with management, banks and the state of Lower Saxony, but "there's still a bit of detailed work to do." The federal government "will contribute its part to the solution, and I have the clear expectation that all other participants join in," he said.

German media reported that the planned solution would involve the federal and state governments temporarily taking a stake in the company and financing a capital increase for the shipyard. "If the federal government and the state government now come on board for a certain time, they they will not do that to remain partners for ever - we are not shipbuilders - but to lay the foundation for a good future on a private-sector basis," Scholz said in a later statement to reporters.

Trump lashes out as DNC attacks throw him off message

WASHINGTON (BBC): Donald Trump isn't in Chicago but his presence hangs over everything and he is clearly following events here. A couple of aides told me, a little implausibly, that the former president is not tuning into the Democratic National Convention because he has no interest in watching a Democratic Party "infomercial".

But one senior campaign official confirms, anonymously, that Trump is watching and is irritated by the attacks against him. In the view of one ally who speaks to the former president every week, Trump wins in November if he sticks to talking about the economy, the border and crime. At the start of this week, that looked possible. Trump scheduled a string of rallies, in Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina and Arizona - each was themed to focus on exactly those political and economic topics.

But with night after night of anti-Trump speeches here in Chicago, staying on message has gone out the window. And it's not what his supporters tell him they want anyway. The North Carolina event was vintage Trump - and it became a referendum on his own team's strategy.

"They always say, 'Sir, please stick to policy, don't get personal'... and yet [the Democrats are] getting personal all night long, these people. Do I still have to stick to policy?" Trump asked. Then he polled the crowd: more policy or go personal? His fans roared, they wanted the Trump show, not a list of boring economic proposals. "My advisers are fired!" he joked. Then he said he'd stick to policy but couldn't let the attacks go unanswered. So the campaign strategy now seems to be at the whim of the candidate and the feedback of his crowds. That makes life difficult for his campaign advisers who repeatedly tell me their single biggest concern in this election campaign is whether they can keep Trump focused on issues and off the controversial personal attacks. There have been a couple of those this week already. Trump took to social media to criticise the Democratic Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, who had given a rousing speech earlier in the evening. Trump clearly didn't like what he heard.

The highly overrated Jewish Governor of the Great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Josh Shapiro, made a really bad

and poorly delivered speech," Trump wrote. "I have done more for Israel than any President...Shapiro has done nothing for Israel, and never will." The fact that he singled out Mr Shapiro as Jewish has not gone unnoticed. It was picked up on the US morning shows as an example of a racial dog whistle. After the Obamas criticised Trump at the DNC, he responded during his rally in North Carolina, and, again, there was a similar racial innuendo. "Did you see Barack Hussein Obama last night," Trump said. "He was taking shots at your president. And so was Michelle." It's true that they did take pretty personal shots at him, but the use of Mr Obama's middle name has long been used to stoke racial animosity towards him. The problem for the Trump team is that their candidate thrives on controversy which then dominates headlines, and this distracts from their attempts to point out weaknesses in his opponent's policy positions. "It doesn't matter what he talks about for 45 minutes," one adviser told me on the condition of anonymity. "One comment or answer to a question gives the left all they need to change the subject."

South Africa's 'favourite teacher' dies aged 85

CAPE TOWN (BBC): South Africans are paying tributes to their "favourite teacher", William Smith, who has died aged 85. The beloved maths and science teacher and innovator died after a short battle with cancer, his family said. The renowned teacher hosted a learning programme on state broadcaster SABC for years, which is said to have touched the hearts of many South Africans.

He received many accolades in his life for innovation in learning, including a national award in 2019 given by President Cyril Ramaphosa for his contribution to "teaching and demystifying mathematics and science". President Ramaphosa described the "favourite teacher" as "an education and cultural icon to our nation". "William Smith's passion for his curriculum and for the success of those he taught in classrooms, at matric camps and on TV benefited millions of young South Africans even before our transition to democracy and the dawn of a new dispensation of equal education," he said. He is hailed for making maths and science education available for free to millions of children through the ground-breaking 1990s

TV programme Learning Channel, which he convinced SABC to air. The presidency describes the programme as "essentially an open South African school teaching physical science, mathematics, biology and English". It gave disadvantaged pupils access to free extra classes, said to be the only high-quality instruction some received at the time.

One of the children watching was Johan Ferreira, now a professor at the University of Pretoria statistics department. He told the BBC that Mr Smith had an "astounding effect", adding that "the inspiration that he elicited [showed] that anyone is able to or can understand science". He said that nowadays children have access to lots of material to help them learn but Mr Smith was ahead of his time. "I like to think of William Smith as the original science content creator of South Africa." Some people have taken to social media to laud Mr Smith as the reason they were successful in the subjects. "William Smith got me through high school maths and science. What a legend and national treasure," said Wendy Verwey Bekker on X.

"It felt like we knew this man personally. Thank you, Mr William Smith for all those very narrow passes in Maths that would not have been passes at all without you. Sorry we never paid you any school fees," said Roy Petzer. Zola Hashatsi ka Motsiri said Mr Smith "guided countless of us through high school maths with his TV lessons, leaves behind a legacy cherished by many South Africans". During his life he also earned the national "Teacher of the Year" award as well as being voted one of the top three presenters on South African television in 1998 for his teaching programme. In 2004 he was voted 86th on the list of the Top 100 Great South Africans. After retiring, he moved with his family to Australia where he died. He was surrounded by his family during his final moments, his daughter Jessica Smith told South African news outlet News24. She said the family was mourning him but also celebrating his legacy, adding that it was inspiring to see how other people were celebrating him. He is survived by his wife, Jenny, his three daughters and five grandchildren.

Venezuelan court upholds Maduro's disputed victory

CARACAS (BBC): Venezuela's highest court has upheld the re-election of Nicolás Maduro as president following accusations of widespread voter fraud in July's poll. The decision by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (TSJ) comes as the United Nations warned that the court lacked independence and impartiality.

The TSJ said it had reviewed material from the country's election authority, which said Mr Maduro had won just over half of the vote, and agreed he had been victorious. Mr Maduro hailed court decision as a "historic and forceful ruling". Announcing the court ruling, TSJ head Carylisa Rodríguez said: "The electoral material assessed is certified unobjectionably and the results of the presi-

dential election of 28 July released by the National Electoral Council (CNE), where Nicolás Maduro was elected president of the republic, are validated." The decision could not be appealed, she said. Marta Valiñas, chair of the fact-finding mission organised by the UN Human Rights Council, said the government had "exerted undue influence over TSJ decisions" through the use of "direct messages to judges and public statements".

Francisco Cox Vial, another member of the UN's fact-finding mission, said Ms Rodríguez was a member of Mr Maduro's ruling party and had held elected positions within it. Mr Maduro has led the country since 2013 and his re-election means he can serve another six-year term.

At least 23 protesters have been killed at anti-government demonstrations since last month's election and approximately 2,400 more have been arrested, the UN says. Protests erupted after the CNE declared Mr Maduro the winner on election night without publishing detailed voting tallies. The opposition says the tallies prove that its candidate, Edmundo González, won comfortably and they have published copies collected by their election observers on the internet.

These documents, which have been reviewed by independent experts and media, suggest Mr González won 67% of the vote compared with Mr Maduro's 30%. Several Western countries have urged the Venezuelan authorities to publish the

voting tallies in full while others, including Russia and China, have congratulated Mr Maduro on his victory. As well as the deaths and arrests of protesters in the last few weeks, the Maduro government has also started an investigation into opposition leaders for allegedly inciting the country's military to commit crimes. They have also started passing a law through the National Assembly which would tighten rules on non-governmental organisations and forced the resignations of state employees who allegedly declared pro-opposition views. The presidential contest in 2018 was widely dismissed as neither free nor fair after opposition candidates were jailed, barred from running or forced into exile.

Ten migrants drown in river on Serbia-Bosnia border

LONDON (BBC): At least 10 migrants - including a mother and her baby girl - have drowned after their boat capsized while trying to cross the Drina River, which separates Serbia and Bosnia, Serbia's Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said.

Authorities said at least 18 other migrants, including three children, arrived safely on the Bosnian side of the border. It is unclear how many people may be missing. Bad weather halted search efforts, with officials in both countries now planning to resume the operation on Friday morning. Parts of the river are up to 200m (656ft) wide.

Local media also reported a search was under way for a smuggler who took the migrants across the river. Bosnia's border police confirmed the incident took

place, without providing any further details. Serbian officials also confirmed that an incident had taken place near the border town of Ljubovija, with police adding that the majority of the migrants were people from Morocco. Serbian Interior Minister Dacic later said the "lifeless body of a baby, approximately nine months old" was discovered by members of the internal affairs ministry. "Unfortunately, this baby is the tenth victim of the boat capsizing", he said in quotes cited by AFP news agency. The baby "was with its mother, whose body was recovered from the river earlier", the ministry said. Vladan Rankic, the head of Bosnia's water rescue team, said a search and rescue operation had to be halted because of bad weather. "So

far we have found 10 drowned people. We do not know the exact number of people we are looking for, but the search will continue tomorrow in the early hours of the morning," he told the Association Press Television News. Serbia and Bosnia are among the main transit countries on the route through the Western Balkans into the European Union.

In September 2023, according to the EU's border police organisation Frontex, the route overtook the Central Mediterranean route through Italy in numbers of irregular border crossings, with many migrants crossing through Bulgaria. The Serbian government says over a million people from Asia and Africa have crossed into the country since the refugee crisis of 2015. More than one million

migrants entered Europe that year, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

According to government data, the majority attempting to cross into Serbia in recent months came from Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey, Morocco and Pakistan. But the number of migrants transiting through Serbia has decreased significantly over the years. Serbian police recorded 10,389 illegal entries in the first half of 2024, which is nearly 70% less than the previous year. Serbian officials have credited the drop to tighter cooperation with Austrian police and with Frontex. Many migrants use smugglers to enter Serbia from Bulgaria and North Macedonia and then try to cross into EU members Hungary or Croatia.

Two die jumping to escape fire after air mattress fails

BUCHEON (BBC): Seven people were killed and a dozen injured after a fire broke out at a hotel in the South Korean city of Bucheon. Two people died after jumping out the windows onto an air mattress provided by the fire department, after the mattress flipped.

Other victims were found in rooms on the eight floor, where the fire is believed to have started because of an electrical fault. Although the fire did not spread throughout the building, the damage was extensive as the rooms were not equipped with sprinklers. The nine-storey hotel was built in 2003,

before the requirement for sprinklers was written into law, according to the city's fire department. The fire was first reported at 19:39 local time (11:39 GMT) and was extinguished by 22:26, the department said. Police are investigating whether the hotel's managers were in any way negligent. The fire

department's use of the air mattress is also being investigated. Reports said a female victim caught the corner of the mattress as they landed, causing it to flip as a second male victim jumped. Those injured are being treated in hospital with serious injuries, some caused by inhaling the smoke.

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Is Modi's Ukraine visit an 'Orban Lite' peace mission?

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi will arrive in Ukraine on Friday following a two-day trip to Poland commemorating the 70th anniversary of Indo-Polish bilateral ties. But while Modi's visit could be seen as a gesture of support for Kyiv as it defends against invading Russian forces, it's worth remembering that he visited Moscow in early July after being re-elected for a third term - a move widely seen as him thumbing his nose at the free world. His bear-hug embrace of President Vladimir Putin, even as the largest children's hospital in Kyiv was under attack, was described by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as "a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts."

Interestingly, Modi is traveling to Kyiv not as a mediator but as a messenger. His "perspective-sharing" agenda is being telegraphed to tamper expectations among Western allies who have urged India to use its cordial relationship with Russia to help end the conflict. Besides his high-wire, Orban-esque shuttle diplomacy making waves domestically, Modi is trying to come across as even-handed by showing up on the territory of both warring sides within a matter of months. That said, the 20-hour train journey he is set to embark on suggests that his meeting with Zelensky is not solely about optics.

Whether by design or unwittingly, India, the world's largest democracy, remains one of the key enablers of Putin's "special military operation." Despite reducing its dependence on Russian-made artillery - which now accounts for 36% of its total arms imports, down from 65% before 2020 - India shows little interest in disrupting its purchase of discounted Russian hydrocarbons. In fiscal year 2023, India became the second-largest consumer of Russian fossil fuels, spending \$37 billion on crude oil - roughly 13 times its pre-war expenditure. And last month, India surpassed China as the top importer of Russian oil, Reuters reported.

India has also doubled its diamond purchases from Russia in the first quarter of 2024, openly defying the United States and the European Union. Admittedly, middle powers like India have been afforded significant leeway to navigate between the Western bloc and the Eurasian nexus under the guise of "strategic autonomy." Putin, in pursuing his vision for a "new world order," is keen to deepen the partnership between Moscow and New Delhi beyond the latter's defense and energy needs. However, Russia has little to offer its "dear friend" other than heavily discounted commodities and sub-par weaponry. Having joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in mid-2017 at Russia's behest, India is beginning to question what benefit it has gained from full-fledged membership in the regional bloc. Modi's no-show at the 24th SCO summit in Astana this summer speaks volumes about his disillusionment with the Sino-led group that includes arch-rival Pakistan.

India is experiencing a similar case of buyer's remorse with BRICS+, where an expected intake of predominantly Muslim nations at the upcoming summit in Kazan this October could leave India, led by a Hindu nationalist who has moved closer to Israel during the Gaza war, isolated if the bloc shifts toward an anti-Israel stance by admitting aspirants such as Turkey and Malaysia. Additionally, ongoing challenges in "de-dollarization" efforts have led to payment issues and mutual distrust between India and Russia in transactions using local currencies.

India's foreign policy under the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been driven by an inferiority complex of sorts toward its vastly wealthier and more resource-rich neighbor, China. Even in its "time-tested" relationship with Moscow, New Delhi understands that it will always play second fiddle to Beijing in the Kremlin's eyes. The Chinese-brokered détente between longtime foes Iran and Saudi Arabia in March 2023, along with the recent Fatah-Hamas unity agreement, has put pressure on India to achieve a diplomatic breakthrough of equal or greater magnitude.

Putin's refusal to engage in direct negotiations with Zelensky, especially after the recent Kursk incursion, underscores the need for Modi to take a more proactive role in pursuing peace. Leaving Kyiv empty-handed will lead the international community to question the sincerity of India's commander-in-chief, who has previously stressed that "no solution can be found on the battlefield" and famously told his Russian counterpart that "this is not an era of war" in Samarkand in 2022. As the leader of a rising, nuclear-armed power, Modi cannot afford to rely solely on rhetoric and political posturing.

Failure to deliver meaningful results will only fuel speculation that Modi is throwing his hat in the ring for self-serving purposes. His tenure has been marked by significant democratic backsliding and disregard for the rule of law. According to the latest press freedom index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), India ranks 159th out of 180 countries. Its abysmal human rights record on Modi's watch has not gone unnoticed in the West either. Much like Hungarian strongman Viktor Orban, Modi is masquerading as a force for good to rehabilitate his global image and score brownie points with the pro-Ukraine camp.

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What happens if Ukraine seizes Kursk nuclear power plant?

Dmitry Gorchakov

FROM the very beginning of Ukraine's offensive into Russia's Kursk region on Aug. 6, there has been much discussion about the possible objectives of this operation. Simply glancing at the map begs the question of whether one objective of the Ukrainian incursion might be the seizure of the Kursk nuclear plant, located just 60 kilometers from the border.

It is a scenario the Russian side is taking seriously. Already Rosatom, Russia's state nuclear corporation, had begun withdrawing staff from the plant and Russian troops are hastily digging trenches around it.

The mere possibility of a nuclear plant being seized during a war is a nightmare scenario for any nuclear and radiation safety specialist. But after the almost two-and-a-half-year-long Russian occupation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant and the seizures (again, by Russia) of the Chernobyl exclusion zone and the research reactor in Sevastopol during the occupation of Crimea in 2014, such scenarios have become more possible. The longer Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, the more common the threat of an accident will become.

While we do not know how events will unfold, our analysis at Bellona and recommendations from the IAEA make clear that should nuclear plants be enveloped by war, every effort should be made to avoid a direct assault on them with heavy weapons. The defending side should not deploy troops at nuclear plants, which would turn them into military targets. Should a nuclear plant be surrounded, it is better to surrender it through negotiations rather than have the facility be attacked or used as a staging ground for attacks.

Having considered these principles, there are a few hypothetical plans that Ukraine could have for the Kursk nuclear plant as its incursion into Russia continues. These scenarios have repeatedly surfaced in the media, and it makes sense to address them in detail. One theory is that Ukraine may connect the Kursk nuclear plant to its own energy system. I think this is the least likely objec-

tion. Should the plant be seized, the safest course of action for its operators would be to put all of its reactors into cold shutdown mode, which stops electricity generation.

Secondly, to direct power toward Ukraine would require a functioning infrastructure of substations and high-voltage power lines. Two power lines - one at 330 kV and the other at 750 kV - currently run from the Kursk plant through Ukrainian-controlled Sudzha towards Sumy in Ukraine. But the state of these lines is questionable, especially on the Ukrainian side given Russia's intensive bombing of the country's energy infrastructure. Thirdly, the energy systems of Russia and Ukraine are not currently connected or synchronized. Since Ukraine

Russia's state nuclear corporation, is carrying out modernization work to allow them to function for another five years. But these efforts could be halted due to the Ukrainian incursion. To replace these retiring reactor units, Rostom is building the Kursk NPP-2, equipped with two VVER-TOI power units, near the existing Kursk nuclear plant. The first of these units is expected to be operational as early as next year unless the war causes delays. Such a delay would certainly cause Rosatom some pain, given the outsized role this reactor project plays in Rosatom's self-image - but it wouldn't offer much advantage to Ukraine.

Some have also speculated that Ukraine is trying to deprive Russia of a vital energy source - hopefully

the unified energy system of Russia. The plant's loss could indeed cause energy problems to the Kursk region itself - especially since the plant serves as a central distribution hub in its energy system.

But the loss of the plant would not put pressure on neighboring regions, which can easily compensate from other sources. To put this into perspective, within the unified energy system of central Russia, which includes 18 regions around Moscow, the Kursk nuclear plant accounts for just 2 GW out of a total 50 GW capacity, and it is currently the smallest nuclear plant when compared to three others in this area of the country - the Smolensk, Novovoronezh and Kalinin nuclear plants. The most rational objective for seizing the Kursk nuclear plant would be to use it in exchange for the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in any upcoming negotiations.

When we consider that Ukraine's army is not only advancing in the Kursk region, but is also fortifying its position by bringing in reserves and other defenses, it appears that Kyiv intends to hold its gains - possibly until the end of the war and the start of negotiations. The presence of a nuclear power plant within the captured territory would significantly increase its leverage and would confirm the strategic nature of this operation. Nevertheless, as a representative of an environmental organization, I sincerely hope that we do not see any attack or attempt to seize the Kursk nuclear plant. There is simply no safe way to do it. Any attempt to do so carries risks of a nuclear or radiation accident, to say nothing of damaging the political support Ukraine enjoys from its Western allies.

Ukrainian troops are not doing anything that Russia has not done to Kyiv's territory. Ukraine has the right to defend itself against Russian aggression by any means it deems effective and acceptable - so long as they do not involve committing war crimes. But if ending this war on terms acceptable to Ukraine involves fighting around nuclear plants on both sides of the front, such a process must proceed with minimal risk of a nuclear disaster.

Taking a long-term view of the Kursk nuclear plant, we must consider that its two Chernobyl-style RBMK reactors - units 3 and 4 - are nearing the end of their 45-year operational lifespan and are due to be shut down within the next 4 to 6 years. Rosatom, Russia's state nuclear corporation, is carrying out modernization work to allow them to function for another five years. But these efforts could be halted due to the Ukrainian incursion.

switched to the European energy system in the first months of the war in 2022, connecting a generating facility on Russian territory to the Ukrainian energy system would require not only functioning infrastructure on both sides of the front, but possibly the installation of additional equipment to integrate part of Russia's energy infrastructure into the Ukrainian system. It is unlikely that this could be done in wartime conditions in a frontline zone.

Taking a long-term view of the Kursk nuclear plant, we must consider that its two Chernobyl-style RBMK reactors - units 3 and 4 - are nearing the end of their 45-year operational lifespan and are due to be shut down within the next 4 to 6 years. Rosatom,

by shutting it down safely rather than a nuclear accident. But the numbers do not support this. One would like to believe that if such a plan exists, it does not involve the loss of the facility due to a nuclear accident, but rather involves its shutdown through standard procedures.

The Kursk nuclear plant is the largest energy source in its eponymous region, providing nearly 90% of its total power generation capacity. In 2023, it produced 19.1 billion kWh of electricity (before the shutdown of Unit 2 in January), which is over twice the 8.9 billion kWh per month the region's inhabitants consume. As a result, most of the electricity generated by the plant is supplied to neighboring regions and to

Starmer has yet to prove

Andy Beckett

ALL governments dis-appoint us in the end. Some policies fail, divisions open up, ideological dead-ends are reached and national problems are left unsolved. The big question is at what point widespread disillusion sets in: after a few months, a few years, or longer. The answer has decisive consequences for a government's sense of itself and for its electoral fate.

You might think this government, only seven weeks old, the first entirely new Labour administration for a quarter of a century, with a huge majority and ministers working hard while much of the country is on holiday, will be safe from voter disdain for quite a while. Yet that assumption may be optimistic. Not just because of Labour's thin total vote at the election, or the immense national problems it has inherited, but for other, less examined reasons. Ruling from the centre-left is particularly difficult, as Labour governments have regularly demonstrated. And changes in the media and in how voters think have made that task even harder.

Centre-left government, as its name suggests, is an awkward compromise: between a degree of leftwing radicalism and wherever ministers and their policy advisers and electoral strategists think the political middle ground is. Such governments typically try to find a balance between boosting capitalism and regulating it, between redistributing wealth and keeping economic elites content, between making foreign policy more ethical and accepting existing power arrangements. In theory, a government that both reforms and leaves things alone, according to "what works", as Tony Blair put it during his long premiership, ought to appeal to a broad range of voters. As when he took office in 1997, today's Britain is a country in deep difficulties and one where powerful interests, such as property owners, don't want the status quo to be too upset.

For his first half dozen years as premier, Blair used easy-to-justify reforms such as the introduction of a minimum wage and devolution for Scotland and Wales to persuade voters that Britain was being successfully modernised. Yet as soon as he tried to combine this mildly progressive project with more rightwing policies such as the privatisation of public services and participation in American wars, the credibility and coherence of his government were fatally damaged. For many people who stopped voting Labour, it was as if his earlier reforms had never happened. Too rightwing for some but too leftwing for others, he ended up pleasing fewer and fewer people, as the shrunken total Labour vote at his last election as prime minister in 2005 demonstrated - significantly lower than in even its 2019 defeat. The party has tried and failed to rescue his government's reputation ever since.

At last month's election, Keir Starmer barely bettered Blair's 2005 vote, and governments rarely gain in popularity. Starmer also faces a more impatient electorate than Blair did. Digital media have accelerated politics, including the speed with which new demands and expectations can spread. Meanwhile, over the past decade, many voters have also experienced a dramatic expansion of what politics can encompass: the 2014 Scottish independence cam-

paign, Brexit, Corbynism, even the big, populist promises of Boris Johnson and Liz Truss. The centre-left can argue that these experiments all failed. But whether voters prefer what Starmer calls a politics that will "tread more lightly on your lives" is not yet clear. So far, Labour's energetic start in office has not lifted the party's poll ratings.

The new administration has already done quite a few good things: settling public sector pay disputes, conducting diplomacy in more judicious language, getting rid of the Rwanda scheme and the Conservatives' draconian "minimum service" anti-strike law. But the government has also repeatedly said it will have to make difficult choices - usually centre-left code for spending less money on the disadvantaged than they need or many Labour supporters would like.

If Starmer's premiership does produce the usual centre-left patchwork of enlightened policies, lost opportunities and reactionary measures, then Labour will need to find a way to make sense of and justify its mixed record: a clear, overarching government project or narrative. Simply not being the Conservatives will only get the party so far. As the election showed, the anti-Tory vote is fragmenting in unprecedented ways. Left-leaning Britons, too, will have to work out what they think about a Labour government, day by day and overall - not something they have had to do for at least 14 years. Successes, failures, omissions, betrayals: all will have to be weighed. Meanwhile the Green party, Plaid Cymru, the SNP, the growing number of independent MPs, and perhaps even the Liberal Democrats may well offer more radical alternatives.

Some socialist thinkers have always believed that worthwhile centre-left government is impossible: a contradiction in terms. In his scathing, still relevant 1961 book Parliamentary Socialism, Ralph Miliband, father of the energy secretary Ed Miliband, dismissed the great bulk of Labour MPs as "bourgeois politicians with, at best, a certain bias towards social reform". The working-class backgrounds of many new ministers may make the first part of that description seem out of date, but the rest of Miliband senior's critique of Labour's habitual caution in power will only be disproved by a major change in Starmer's style of leadership.

It could conceivably happen. Labour governments are rare, so looking at past examples to predict how a new one will act is less reliable than Labour-watchers like to make out. Our politics is also in a state of unusually intense flux. Starmer could take advantage of it to do centre-left government differently, by deferring less to the rich, creating a more expansive electoral coalition, being more inclusive of the poor and the young, and dropping some of centrist's anxious assumptions about this country's essential conservatism.

Only a couple of years ago, almost no one imagined that by 2024 Labour would have more than three times as many Commons seats as the Tories. Suddenly, one of the key principles of centre-left politics is that governments should do what circumstances allow. This autumn, with the budget and the Labour conference, we will begin to find out whether the party likes having a great window of opportunity, or would prefer it to narrow again.

If you are outraged by Trump's use of AI

Sophia Smith Galer

A COUPLE of weeks ago, Donald Trump decided it would be fun to accuse the US vice-president, Kamala Harris, of using AI in images showing a large crowd greeting her at an airport. "Has anyone noticed that Kamala CHEATED at the airport?" Trump furiously thumbed into his phone. "There was nobody at the plane, and she 'AI'd it [...]' She should be disqualified because the creation of a fake image is election interference. Anyone who does that will cheat at anything!"

Just as some animals are more equal than others, some politicians are more honest. So this week, when the former president himself posted an obviously AI-generated image of what looks like the back of Harris's head in front of an enormous communist crowd with a huge hammer and sickle unfurled above them, he presumably did

not consider it election interference. Trump has also recently shared AI-generated images of himself, Elon Musk and Taylor Swift.

These images are concerning - especially given most image generators have put up guardrails against making content of real people. But it seems that Trump isn't trying to pass the images off as real: I think this is him trying to be funny.

Over on the Trump campaign team, someone has learned how to work an AI-image generator and has become a little prompt-happy. A weird video of Trump and Elon Musk dancing together isn't exactly an example of the kind of election-manipulating deepfake media that many disinformation commentators are worried about. It is an example of a candidate desperately trying to remain on your algorithm. AI generation just requires a few

prompts and maybe a paid subscription to a generator. It's a lot cheaper, and quicker, than hiring creatives who need to spend time ideating and creating before something is ready to publish.

AI-generated images and deepfakes are the poor man's meme. Actual successful memes - a humorous piece of content designed to be spread online - are crafted by individuals who have adopted the language and culture of the internet, and know how to inject zeitgeisty topics into social posts designed to resonate and go viral. The combination of text with images or video is a subtle art, and it is one that Harris's campaign team practises well. Everyone online knows about the coconut tree, and the chronically online will know about the Charli xcx accolade that "Kamala IS brat".

By contrast, the AI posts

Trump has shared are not high internet humour; they're cheap algo-fodder. A trick he is also trialling is combining AI images with real ones in an attempt to lend them some veracity, or perhaps just to sharpen the comedy potential. In his post where he states "I accept!" alongside images suggesting Swifties are "turning to Trump", he has combined a real photograph of a woman wearing a "Swifties for Trump" T-shirt with a satirical AI compilation of fans wearing T-shirts with the same slogan and an AI-generated image of Swift as Uncle Sam, captioned "Taylor wants you to vote for Donald Trump". It's the kind of content your family's errant uncle might forward to you, that he in turn got from his mate, because they haven't got anything better to do.

Trump doesn't expect or need Swift's endorsement,

and so the humour is in the incredulosity of it. Posts like this aren't about genuinely persuading audiences that Swift supports him; it's about ensuring the intravenous drip of content into his supporters' Facebook groups and WhatsApp conversations never runs dry. Trump has also always been a wind-up merchant. He knows Swift fans would react angrily to his post. He also knows that such rage-baiting will amplify his content on Truth Social's and X's algorithms - and garner coverage in the mainstream media. When people wag their fingers at him for posting content like this, some see it as righteously battling misinformation, but to his fans it looks like not getting the joke. (Of course, it is easier to understand jokes when they have at least one measly crumb of decent comedy to them.)

The idea that Harris is a communist, that Trump and

Musk are dancing pals, and that even Swifties can't escape Trump fandom aligns with the narrative of popularity, relatable light-heartedness and prestige that Trump likes to court. Narrative is far more important than truth, particularly in the US, where political ideology is so powerful it was one of the most significant factors determining whether somebody would take the Covid-19 vaccine or not. Trump's AI posts are best understood not as outright misinformation - intended to be taken at face value - but as part of the same intoxicating mix of real and false information that has always characterised his rhetoric. Trump isn't interested in telling the truth; he's interested in telling his truth - as are his fiercest supporters. In his world, AI is just another tool to do this. Whether he is willing to accept the reality that he can't make a joke, or take one, is another story.

The last great engine of the world economy is sputtering out

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard

A jumbo US rate cut of 50 points in September is back on the table, and possibly several cuts in a quick succession as the Federal Reserve is forced into a screeching hand-brake turn. Markets have been caught off guard by a drastic revision of non-farm payrolls, the worst miss since the Lehman crisis. Labour economists can justifiably say "I told you so". They have been warning all year that instant headline figures do not catch early signs of trouble in the US jobs market when the economic cycle rolls over. You have to look under the bonnet. "The Fed is late, and is now going to have to scramble, in an undignified manner," said Paul Donovan, chief economist at UBS wealth management.

One has to sympathise with Fed chairman Jay Powell as he descends on Jackson Hole this Friday for the annual ritual of marshmallow roasting and camp-fire songs. The institution has been misled once again by unreliable data. The gain in non-farm payrolls in the twelve months to March was 818,000 less than previously stated. The enormous error flattered Bidenomics and overstated the US boom. We should assume that GDP growth will be revised down as well - unless productivity has magically surged, which I doubt. Citigroup says the economy may already be well into recession. It has pencilled in double-decker cuts in both September and early November. The start of a US rate-cutting cycle is an intoxicating tonic for global equities, small caps, emerging markets and commodities, provided it comes with a soft landing. It is a different story if a slowdown flips into a hard landing. Portfolios are cut to ribbons once that is allowed to happen.

"We say sell the first cut as hard landing risks are clearly rising," said Michael Hartnett, investment guru at Bank of America. The S&P 500 fell by an average of 6pc three months after the first cut in the seven hard landing episodes since 1970, and this time stock P/E ratios are stretched to the moon. It is

sobering that combined federal, state, and local deficits running above 8pc of GDP this year are still not enough stimulus to stop US unemployment ratcheting up to 4.3pc and triggering the recessionary Sahm rule. If that level of spending cannot buy you perma-boom, what can?

The August tremor on global markets was probably a false alarm but there is a non-trivial risk that it may have been picking up real stress in the US economy and the world's dollarised financial system.

The eurozone is still in a deep manufacturing recession. It is tightening fiscal policy by 1pc of GDP this year as the Stability Pact comes back in force. But it is China that keeps sinking further into depression, unable or unwilling to stop the onset of post-bubble debt deflation. Used home prices in the 70-city index have dropped 14pc so far from peak to trough, falling almost every month since mid-2021 in slow torture, grinding away at the stored wealth of the Chinese middle class.

The VIX volatility index hit an intraday high of 65 on Aug 5. This has only ever happened twice before: in October 2008 and in March 2020, when Covid shut the economy and briefly broke the US Treasury market.

"We think it would be a mistake for the Fed to conclude that the turmoil was a head-fake," said Krishna Guha from Evercore ISI. "Happily we think the Fed leadership 'get this'. Having seen a live demo of what an adverse macro-market plunge into a hard landing would look like, it will want to make extra-sure this does not materialise." Fed minutes published this week revealed that several members wanted a rate cut in July even before the trouble in early August. "Many participants noted that reducing policy restraint too late or too little could risk unduly weakening economic activity or

employment [and] could transition to a more serious deterioration."

The first stage of a labour downturn is clearly underway. Job offers in cyclical sectors such as restaurants and construction are plummeting. The second stage of rising lay-offs has not begun but may not be far away. The worry is that it can happen suddenly once confidence snaps, setting off the self-feeding cascade of a classic recession. Steven Blitz from TS Lombard said the Fed is now paying the price for its (ridiculous)

policy of data dependency. "When the bad data shows up, policy is already late. There is a reason sharp downward revisions occur just before or during recessions," he said.

Central banking is like ice hockey. You have to skate to where the puck is going, not where it is, and the lag times of monetary policy can be a year or two. We will find out soon whether or not the Powell Fed has committed a second error by staying too tight for too long, the mirror image of staying too loose as the money supply exploded and the economy roared back at the end of Covid.

No other part of the world looks ready to take the baton as the US slows. The eurozone is still in a deep manufacturing recession. It is tightening fiscal policy by 1pc of GDP this year as the Stability Pact comes back in force. But it is

China that keeps sinking further into depression, unable or unwilling to stop the onset of post-bubble debt deflation. Used home prices in the 70-city index have dropped 14pc so far from peak to trough, falling almost every month since mid-2021 in slow torture, grinding away at the stored wealth of the Chinese middle class. Fear of further price falls is in turn leading to extreme precautionary saving and a mood of cosmic gloom. New home starts have fallen 63pc from their peak, a steeper and deeper property bust than Japan saw in the 1990s.

The authorities are dabbling with a resolution mechanism but the scale is not up to the problem. "The sums so far are still too small to make a meaningful difference," said Capital Economics. Xi Jinping is too alarmed by rising debt to let rip with demand stimulus. The People's Bank is too worried about the exchange rate and mismatches in the Chinese bond market to let rip with serious money. The result is a death spiral in the monetary aggregates. Janus Henderson investors says two of its key measures are now dangerously weak. "True M1" is contracting at a 4pc rate (six-month annualised) and the China corporate liquidity ratio has dropped to unprecedented levels.

Rather than grasping the nettle at this year's Third Plenum, the Communist Party has opted to double down on its strategy, aiming to export its way out of trouble and dump its excess capacity on the rest of us. China's slump is why iron ore prices have crashed. It is a large reason why Brent crude is hovering at two-year lows near \$76, even though the OPEC-Russia cartel is withholding three million barrels a day to prop up prices. China rescued the world economy when the West came off the rails in 2008-2009. Fifteen years later it is more likely to compound a global recession. Markets are betting that the Powell Fed will pull off an immaculate soft landing and keep the world afloat. Let us pray that they are right.

New mpox variant may appear to be less deadly

Debora MacKenzie

LAST week, for the second time in two years, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a "public health emergency of international concern" for mpox. A new version of the virus formerly known as monkeypox is spreading mainly via heterosexual transmission, and turning up in places as far-flung as Kenya and Sweden. There will be more. You may be thinking: didn't that go away two years ago? Is this one more deadly? Is it easy to catch?

There has been some confusion in what you may have read, and it isn't surprising. Mpox has morphed into four different diseases in the past few years, and official sources often mash them up. There's the original clade I in central Africa and clade II in west Africa, which we have known about since the 1970s. Then there is a recently evolved, sexually transmitted "b" version of each. Clade Ib is currently causing the most alarm. And it could be about to cause a pandemic.

Pandemic is a scary word. But all it really means is an epidemic that goes global and affects a lot of people. Two years ago, the sexually transmitted clade IIb did just that, and it has now infected almost 100,000 people in 116 countries, killing 208 of them. Now the question is whether clade Ib might do the same - and, if it does, whether it will be worse. Thankfully, it hasn't so far been as deadly as some feared.

Mpox is a virus found in small mammals such as rodents in Africa, and is closely related to smallpox. People who get it, often by eating an infected animal, develop pustules and fever, like smallpox but less deadly. Until recently, they could pass the virus to other people through extensive skin contact, and those people might pass it on again, but the infection petered out after two or three such passages. So it seemed fairly unthreatening, especially in places where no animals carried it, and it received little official attention.

But mpox wasn't inept - it was just being held back by the competition. Until 1980, most adults had survived smallpox or been vaccinated, so they were also immune to mpox. When a human-to-human

chain of transmission reached them, it stopped. Then we eradicated smallpox and stopped vaccinating against it. By 2010, mpox cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) had increased 20-fold, and nearly all were in people born after 1980, who weren't immune. Scientists warned cases would keep rising: as fewer and fewer people in the population were immune, each infection could spread farther.

More cases meant more opportunities for mpox viruses to adapt, transmit more efficiently and beat other viruses to the next human. In 2016, a clade II virus in Nigeria did precisely that, and started spreading sexually, mostly between men. With no need for animal carriers, it was able to go global. Nigerian doctors noticed a nasty new disease, but no official alarms were sounded until a case turned up in London in 2022, and the WHO declared an emergency. Scientists worked out what had happened by analysing telltale mutations that a virus only gets in humans.

Doctors found that vaccinating and contact-tracing the men with the most partners, who were effectively super-spreaders, was enough to limit outbreaks. Rich countries used smallpox vaccine stockpiled against bioterrorism. Poor countries got none, but people also became immune through infection. Cases fell steeply by January 2023, although the virus hasn't been wiped out and it's probably here to stay.

Now let's compare clade I, which is raging in the DRC, jumping from fewer than 6,000 known cases in 2022 to more than 16,000 so far this year. Experts fear war and increasing poverty are forcing more people to eat rodents. But with so few people in the DRC now old enough to have been vaccinated against smallpox, the virus can spread to more people before hitting a dead end. Chains of infection in most of the DRC still start with animals, but are now spending longer in humans. Late last year, south-eastern DRC, which had been mpox-free, started finding the virus among female sex workers. Clade Ib, a new variant of clade I had been spreading in people since September 2023.

Cases of it are now shooting up faster than the old clade I virus in the rest of the country, and invading new countries, triggering last week's alarm from the WHO.

Thankfully, it isn't as nasty as some feared. Clade I has been killing 5% of people infected with it in the DRC, especially children. But data shows clade Ib is killing only about 0.6%. Experts don't know if this virus can spread in heterosexual contact networks in the same way that clade IIb did in men, but we could know soon.

Frustratingly, though, we could have attacked mpox in Africa before it came to this. Experts have called for vaccination to limit outbreaks. But WHO rules make it hard for poor countries to buy expensive smallpox vaccine outside an official emergency. The DRC still has no supplies: the 50,000 doses that the US donated in May won't arrive for another two months. But the WHO emergency declaration means that could be accelerated, while more donations are being announced.

If we had been buying vaccines earlier for countries with mpox, manufacturers might have toolled up to make more. As it is, the only big manufacturer, Bavarian-Nordic in Denmark, will be busy replacing the 5m stockpile doses the US used in 2022 until the end of the year. It can make only 10m by the end of 2025. By then, the world could be clamouring for more vaccines, and rich countries would almost certainly be first in line, again.

There is hope. BioNtech, the German firm that pioneered mRNA vaccines for Covid, has a promising one for mpox that could be faster and cheaper to make than the current vaccine. It is also building a vaccine plant in Rwanda. But its vaccine hasn't yet cleared large-scale human trials. Meanwhile, as another obscure virus explodes, potentially causing a pandemic that will confront us all, we still haven't learned the big lesson of Covid: a disease anywhere can be a threat everywhere. We can't protect our own populations without working better with others. Maybe this time we will learn that - before yet another virus becomes a global problem.

The Guardian

Kyiv's Russian incursion on a knife edge

Aliona Hlivo

EACH dawn in Russia sees a repeat of the last: in key cities, the hum of drones fills the air, distant oil depots erupt into flames and military convoys explode. Meanwhile, Putin deflects blame on television, visiting sites far removed from the war to distract from the embarrassment. The Russian army has even turned its deadly weapons on itself, bombing its own soil in an attempt to repel the Ukrainian forces who crossed the border into Kursk a fortnight ago.

All this drums home the degree to which the remarkable Kyiv incursion has rattled Moscow. Incredibly, the Kremlin is already preparing the public for this incursion to last "months", with President Putin giving orders to liberate the Kursk region by as late as October 1. Those who predicted in these pages that the Ukrainians intended to stay in the region longer than many assumed would appear to have been proven correct.

And yet, it is important to recognise that the success of the operation militarily is still very much in the balance. While there is evidence that some Russian troops are being diverted from Ukraine to counter the incursion, Moscow's assault in the Donbas continues unabated; the town of New York - one might say symbolically, given limp American support for Kyiv earlier this year - has fallen. This is a worrying sign, as a strategic diversion is a key goal for Ukraine; another is the encirclement of Russian positions near Kharkiv, which President Zelensky

referred to as a "buffer zone" to prevent relentless attacks on the city.

Pressure by Russia in eastern Ukraine, in short, continues to grow, so time is of the essence for Kyiv to make more progress in Kursk, which will stall Moscow in Ukraine itself.

Politically, much is riding on the success of this operation for Zelensky. It's a high-risk, high-reward gamble. He may seek to use captured Russian conscripts as leverage to secure the release of Ukrainian prisoners of war. More crucially, holding Kursk could play a significant role in the approaching negotiations with Russia. Zelensky has already indicated that a second peace summit, scheduled for the end of this year, will include the Russian side. Early indications of this may emerge during the visit to Kyiv by India's prime minister Narendra Modi today, who previously visited Moscow this summer and has positioned himself as a potential mediator in the conflict.

All this underlines the urgency for the West to do more. Throughout 2024, with limited Western resources and declining morale at home, Ukraine has relied on ingenuity to stay in the fight. This has led to the deployment of long-range, domestically produced drones and the destruction of Russian supply lines, airfields, and oil depots deep within Russia. Some Ukrainian sources believe this represents the best chance to end the war of attrition - a situation created by Russian recklessness and Western hesitation - and to bring Russia to the

negotiating table on Ukraine's terms.

Holding Kursk, and potentially even Bryansk or Belgorod in the near future, would serve as crucial bargaining chips were that to happen. Again, these would be gains made despite, rather than because of, Western support. The fact that the incursion has not yet prompted countries like Britain to authorise further weapon transfers, such as Storm Shadow missiles, is perplexing and frustrating given Britain's role in setting the tone for other Nato powers. For the Kursk operation has fatally undermined the argument that Russia would use nuclear weapons if certain lines are crossed. But still the West hesitates.

Meanwhile, within Russia, the narrative is shifting, even within its propaganda apparatus, as doubts grow about the regime's strength. Reports of the Russian army's tactics of indiscriminate, chaotic bombings in Kursk's most populated areas are causing widespread unrest. It wouldn't be surprising if this Ukrainian incursion triggers the emergence of another figure like Wagner's Prigozhin on the stage of Russian military-political theatre at some point.

So the next logical step is obvious: for the West to give more weapons and permissions to Ukraine. If the Kursk operation fails in its objectives, and Moscow continues making progress in Ukraine, their surprise will have achieved little. So much depends on the coming days. Britain and the West must act before the opportunity is lost.

The Telegraph

Political criticism and controversy swirls ahead of China video game release

Wenhao Ma

THE release of a Chinese video game touted as the country's first to meet Triple-A standards, has sparked a flurry of online criticism of the Chinese government. Video games are given a AAA label when they are backed by big funds, highly developed and distributed by well-known publishers.

The Aug. 20 worldwide release of the Chinese game Black Myth: Wukong has been anticipated since its demo got more than 56 million views on the Chinese video-sharing website Bilibili in 2020. On YouTube, which is banned in China, the game demo had more than 10 million views. Developed by China-based Game Science, the game has players take on the role of the Monkey King, a character from the Chinese classic novel Journey to the West, and defeat monsters wreaking havoc on the world.

Although the game has no direct connection to politics, Chinese commenters took to a US-based gaming discussion board ahead of the release to criticize the Chinese government and President Xi Jinping. The discussion board on Steam, a Washington state-based online gaming platform, was hit with a slew of comments in Chinese last week that directly and indirectly criticized Chinese authorities and Xi. One mocked Xi's unprecedented third term as leader, saying, "I will continue to be Jade Emperor in Black Myth: Wukong. Raise your hands if you oppose it." Most critical posts ranted against the Chinese government, in ways unrelated to the game.

"Overthrow the Communist Party of China and establish a democratic constitutional system where everyone has a vote," read what appeared to be the first critical comment. "Thank you to the party, thank you to our great chief accel-

erator, Xi Jinping," another comment reads, mocking Xi's policies as accelerating China's economic decline. Another post listed the timeline of the weeks-long 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests and the subsequent violent crackdown that occurred when Chinese troops used lethal force against student-led demonstrators, killing hundreds, perhaps thousands. Such critical comments of China's government and leaders are not allowed on China's internet, where an army of censors frequently scrubs websites and discussion boards of comments that do not follow the Chinese Communist Party's line.

Observers were surprised to find by the afternoon of Aug. 16, many of the critical posts on Steam's US discussion board had similarly been removed. Li Ying, a Chinese social media influencer and government critic known online as Teacher Li, posted his opposition to the removal on Aug. 14 on X with screenshots of the original posts. "Steam is inherently a free platform, with a wide variety of games here, and players are free to express any opinions and opinions about the game," he wrote on X.

Steam's China-based website does not have a discussion board, and the US-based discussion board is only available to users outside China. Those inside China need to use a Virtual Private Network, or VPN, which helps users bypass controls to access internet content outside the country that is blocked. VOA reached out to Steam seeking comment about why the posts were deleted but did not receive a reply. Steam's discussion board rules do not explicitly prohibit political posts but say that users are not allowed to post "disrespectful" content and to avoid posting content unrelated to the topic. While the game is not directly connected

to the Chinese government, it did receive some official help and praise. The city government of Hangzhou, where Game Science is located, gave the game a grant in 2022. State media in the province, Zhejiang, described the game as "one of the most important explorers in the history of AAA games in China - an explorer that deserves applause and encouragement."

It's not the first time Black Myth: Wukong has stirred up some controversy. The game's developers have been accused of making lewd and sexist remarks. Feng Ji, the founder and CEO of Game Science, in a Weibo post last year lamenting the difficulties in development, used words with erotic connotations and compared his desire for expanding development to oral sex. Yang Qi, the game's artistic director, remarked as early as 2013 on Weibo that they would not pander to female players in the game's production.

"I don't need the reverse drive of female players. I don't take care of those lewd insects who come to pick up girls; some things are made for pure men," he wrote. In response, a female influencer posted on the gender-focused WeChat account Orange Umbrella, urging Game Science to respect female gamers. "As a fellow player, I know how much hard work and dedication it takes to make a game, and Black Myth: Wukong's dedication and seriousness in the production are commendable," she wrote. "However, don't let the backward gender consciousness push players who are also full of expectations for the game in the opposite direction more and more." When Western media, including IGN, one of the most influential US online news sites for video games, reported last year on the controversial comments, nationalist Chinese commenters called the coverage an

attempt to impose western values and put down China's gaming industry. "Judging the Chinese game with the politically correct stance of the West is really biased for the media," a review article reads. The article said whether the developers' remarks constituted sexism "depends on the perspective."

On Weibo, one commenter called IGN a "clown" and wrote, "In order to suppress the rise of Chinese games, the gender card is unsurprisingly played again." Despite the controversies, gaming industry experts expect Black Myth: Wukong to be a big hit. Daniel Camilo, a game industry consultant based in southern China's Shenzhen city, noted to VOA that sexism in the gaming industry is not new and has little impact on commercial success. "Hardcore gamers and fans that actively discuss these issues and are aware of them usually represent a very small [loud] minority online that accounts for a small residual amount of those who actually buy games," he said. The game has already received high praise from reviewers in China and abroad. IGN gave the game an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10 on Aug. 16, calling it a "great action game with great fights and exciting and powerful opponents, albeit with a few bugs."

The Chinese version of IGN gave the game a perfect score of 10, writing, "This is a truly competitive domestic game in the global market, and I believe it will be a strong contender for this year's Game of the Year." Camilo noted the high quality of the homegrown game has given Chinese players something to be proud of that might even help improve China's international image. "Black Myth will change perceptions people have regarding Chinese games and, to some extent, China and its cultural output and soft power really," he said.

the mercy of the EU when it comes to whether Namibia's beef and charcoal will still be able to enter their market. "If they found that maybe this beef is coming out of an area where deforestation is occurring, then that may affect our exports."

Last year, Namibia exported 270,000 tons of charcoal worth \$72 billion (1.3 billion NAD) mainly to South Africa, which then exports it to other markets, including Europe. Europe is the top destination for Namibia's beef, with the union consuming about 80 percent of the country's total exports valued at roughly \$23.5 million (420 million NAD). Namibia is not the only country affected by the new EU regulations. Other countries include Brazil, Cameroon and Nigeria. Products that are affected by the new EU regulations include cocoa, soy, palm oil and coffee.

VOA

He cautioned that Namibia is at

NAMIBIA'S minister of Agriculture has urged farmers in the Southern African country to look at alternative markets for its charcoal and beef products since the European Union, one of its largest trading partners, has implemented nontariff barriers that came into force in 2023. A unilateral decision by the European Union to impose regulations on agricultural products from Namibia that come from areas that have been deforested has raised concerns regarding market access for products such as beef and charcoal.

These products will no longer have access to the European market unless they comply with the new rules that Namibian Minister of Agriculture Calle Schlettwein describes as stringent and prohibitive. "When you want to conduct agriculture, you have to clear

lands. We have [the] charcoal industry. We have a number of industries in the agricultural sector where we do have an impact on deforestation. And I said that farmers must be careful that if they do that, they must be in compliance with these regulations."

The chairperson of the Namibia Biomass Industry Group, which represents over 150 members in the sector, Colin Lindeque, says the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) will not negatively impact exports to the EU.

He said the EU is only asking for additional information. It wants geographic location tags that show that the charcoal they are exporting does not come from areas that have been deforested, but rather areas that are regarded as savannah, an argument with which Schlettwein disagrees. Lindeque told VOA the

Vitalio Angula

regulations are fair, and the members of the Bio-mass Industry Group are compliant and meet the new EU requirements.

"There was a consultant here recently from the EU looking at EUDR, and they specifically said Namibia's bush encroachment is definitely not a forest in their opinion. But one of the challenges is our government hasn't made the distinction, and that is actually the bigger point of interest, because we in the current Forest Act of 2001 do not even define what a forest is." Director of Forestry at Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Johnson Ndokosho, says the ambiguities in the country's law regarding what is considered a forest, woodlands and savannah are being dealt with in the new Forestry Act, which is being revised.

He cautioned that Namibia is at



SCCI asks KP govt to withdraw two percent tax on exports

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq demanded the immediate withdrawal of the 2 percent tax imposed on exports by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

Similarly, he asked for the abolishment of fixed tax Rs 1,000 on commercial and domestic consumers in the electricity bills.

Likewise, he called for immediate withdrawal of the fixed tax imposed by FBR on shopkeepers from Rs 10,000 to Rs 45,000.

The SCCI chief backed a call of shutter-down given by the central traders' organization on August 28 against unjust taxation and government anti-traders initiatives.

Fuad Ishaq strongly opposed the collection of double cess on imports and demanded to immediately withdraw it.

The chamber president presented these demands, which were unanimously approved in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the SCCI through a resolution, while addressing during the visit of the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in the chamber house on Friday.

During the meeting, Businessman Forum leader former senator Ilyas Ahmed Bilour, SCCI Senior Vice President Sanaullah Khan, Vice President Ejaz Khan Afridi, Former President of FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, Life-time President of Anjuman Tajran Haji Muhammad Afzal, SCCI former presidents Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Malik Niaz Ahmed, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Hasnain Khurshid Ahmed, Sherbaz Bilour,

former senior vice presidents Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Imran Khan Mohmand, former vice presidents Abdul Jalil Jan, Javed Akhtar, Shuja Muhammad, executive committee members Affaf Ali Khan, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Faisal Afzal, Haji Ghulam Hussain, Naeem Qasmi, Qaratul Ain, President of Tajir Ittehad Peshawar Mujibur Rahman, President of Tajir Insaaf Shahid Khan, traders' leader Haji Naseer, Sher Farzand, Zafarullah Shinwari, Provincial Chairman of Pakistan Tea Association Ashfaq Ahmed, Aftab Iqbal, Nadeem Rauf, Ehsanullah, Sadar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ishtiaq Paracha, Hasnain Shiraz, Shahid Khan, Women Chamber Senior Vice President Anila Khalid, Secretary General Muqtasad Ahsan, Secretary Sohail Anjum, traders' leaders, industrialists, representatives of business organizations, officials, exporters and importers participated in large numbers.

Fuad Ishaq while referring to Article 158 of the Constitution, said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has the first right under the said article on the natural resources of the province, but unfortunately, the province was not given constitutional rights which is continuously rendering sacrifices for the past 45 years. He said that business, education, health and other facilities are not being provided to the people of the K-P. He emphasized that steps should be taken to provide special facilities and incentives to the people and business community of the province which had adversely been affected by

terrorism.

The SCCI chief termed the Tajir Dost scheme as an anti-trader initiative and said that the budget proposals presented by the chamber should be implemented with true spirit.

Fuad Ishaq, while presenting the suggestions to increase mutual trade, export and transit trade said that there is a need to deregulate the country's economy.

He said that KP is producing additional electricity and gas, but electricity rates are being charged from this province equal to other provinces.

He said that the SCCI has initiated an organized struggle against the IPPs contracts in which they have gained success because these wrong agreements are damaging the national economy.

Fuad Ishaq said that KP is also surplus in gas production, despite the fact that this province has been put into the RLNG basket, while oil production in KP is 31,000 barrels of oil per day, which is 42 percent of the country's total production and demanded to set up an oil refinery.

The chamber president said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa owes Rs1800billion outstanding against the federal government, if this money is given to KP, the fate of the province can change.

Later, while addressing the ceremony, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has assured the Sarhad Chamber and the business community that they will effectively take up constitutional rights of the province on its natural resources with the federal government.

Governor said that for the development and sta-

bility of the country's economy, it is very important to provide facilities and incentives to the business community because the business community can play its full role in putting the economy in the right direction.

Faisal Kundi paid tribute to the sacrifices made by the people, business community and security forces of the province for peace.

Governor said that for the improvement of business, trade and economy, it is the need of the hour to provide a peaceful and conducive environment for investors. He called for establishing good relations with neighboring countries including the promotion of Pakistan-Afghan mutual trade.

He also assured to take steps to set up an oil refinery for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Governor announced on this occasion to convene a Jirga of all political parties, business community and stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive report/case about the constitutional rights of KP province and present it to the federal government. Achieving all constitutional rights can be ensured in a good manner, he said.

Faisal Kundi also promised to arrange a meeting with the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of the business community.

The Governor said that the government is fully paying attention to the provision of youth and women social and economic empowerment, and provision of health, education and basic facilities.

He asked the business community to come forward to support the players.



PESHAWAR: President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq presenting shield to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

Traders raise concern with Jam Kamal over business activities

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan visited the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Friday.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, Muhammad Zubair Motiwala, Chief Executive Officer, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and other office bearers and stakeholders of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry warmly welcomed the visit of the Federal Minister for Commerce.

The speakers, including Acting President of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Saquib Fayyaz



and the Chief Executive Officer of the Trade Development Authority Pakistan, Zubair Motiwala raised their concerns over the present situation of the business, especially the ease of doing business and the cost of doing business and exports before Mr. Kamal.

The Federal Minister assured complete support from the Commerce Ministry as well from the Government of Pakistan under the vision of Prime Minister to boost Pakistan's

economy and ease of doing business. He said that the survival of the Pakistan economy is directly connected with the performance of the Commerce Ministry and the Chambers of Commerce simultaneously. The trade officers on missions have been especially assigned to promote the trade and commerce of the country, he further added.

The Minister for Commerce was further apprised regarding the

apprehensions among the business community regarding the loadshedding, the tariff rise in gas and electricity. He said that the country's economic situation was badly affected due to the post covid pandemic, and there was a time when the situation was quite alarming with the impression of the default. Despite all challenges, this country not only survived but we were going in the right direction under the vision of the Prime Minister.

S&P 500 nears record high as Powell signals imminent rate cut

NEW YORK (Reuters): Wall Street's stock indexes jumped on Friday, with the benchmark S&P 500 index nearing a record high, after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said "the time has come" to reduce interest rates.

At a highly anticipated annual economic conference in Jackson Hole, Powell endorsed imminent policy easing citing risks in the job market and inflation coming within reach of the Fed's 2% target.

The S&P 500 extended early gains and was less than 1% away from surpassing a record high clinched in July, after falling as much as 9.7% from that level earlier this month. Megacap growth names such as Meta (META.O), opens new tab and Amazon.com (AMZN.O), opens new tab climbed 1% each, boosting the index, while chip stocks such as Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab and Broadcom (AVGO.O), opens new tab rose more than 3% each.

At 10:05 a.m. the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJI), opens new tab rose 302.68 points, or 0.74%, to 41,015.46, the S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab gained 56.13 points, or 1.01%, to 5,626.77 and the

Nasdaq Composite (.IXIC), opens new tab gained 255.03 points, or 1.45%, to 17,874.38.

The three indexes were on track for their second straight week of gains, with the S&P 500 poised for an over 1% rise.

All S&P 500 sectors advanced, led by a 1.4% rise in technology stocks (.SPLRCT), opens new tab, while the Philadelphia chip index (.SOX), opens new tab advanced 2.2%.

Meanwhile, Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic said the Fed is on the cusp of being in a position to start lowering its benchmark interest rate, according to a report. The Fed is scheduled to meet on Sept. 17 and 18, with traders pricing in a 71.5% chance that the central bank will cut borrowing costs by 25 basis points, according to CME Group's FedWatch tool.

"The market has been predicting the first rate cut to start going back to March of this year and investors have been disappointed multiple times," said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA Research in New York.

"The only question is by how much and, unlike the sprinters in the Olympics, the Fed will not explode out of the blocks with a 50-

basis-point cut."

Minutes from the Fed's July meeting this week showed a number of policymakers were ready to consider rate cuts come September, while recent economic data signaled the U.S. economy was slowing, albeit gradually, assuaging fears over a sharp downturn.

That has helped Wall Street's three main indexes recover from a plunge earlier this month triggered by a dour July employment report and yen carry trade.

Among other movers on Friday, Workday (WDAY.O), opens new tab shares jumped 11.2% after the human resource software provider beat market expectations for second-quarter revenue and announced a \$1 billion stock buyback plan.

Cruise will offer its autonomous vehicles on ride-hailing platform Uber (UBER.N), opens new tab starting next year, the companies said, as the General Motors-backed (GM.N), opens new tab robotaxi firm attempts a comeback, sending shares of the automaker up 2.2%.

Ross Stores (RSTO.O), opens new tab gained 3.8% after the discount retailer raised its fiscal 2024 profit forecast.

FPCCI hails govt for reducing expenditures

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain has commended the decision of the government to decrease its expenditures.

Talking to business community on Friday, he termed the cut in government's expenditures vital for economic revival and said that without it economic development of country was not possible.

He said that the condition of people was deteriorating due to the continuous increase in taxes, but the government's income was not improving because its expenses were continuously increasing.

Mian Zahid Hussain further stated that the continuous increase in expenditure was not only happening in the current government, but it has been going on for the last several decades, and no government has tried to reduce the expenses.

All governments instead have increased their dependence on loans, causing the country to reach the bankruptcy threshold, he added.

Pakistan eyes Turkish expertise to elevate aviation industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, while appreciating the success of Turkish aviation industry here on Friday, said that collaboration in the aviation sector with Turkiye was an important part of bilateral relations between the two countries.

During a meeting with Chairperson of Pegasus

Airlines, Mehmat T. Nane, who was accompanied by CEO of Lucky Cement Limited Muhammad Ali Tabbat, the minister noted that the collaboration in this field was aligned with the Prime Minister's vision to enhance Pakistan's aviation industry.

He also recalled a recent meeting with the Turkish Trade Minister, where both sides dis-

cussed various avenues for trade and business collaboration, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

This meeting, he noted, was part of the broader strategy to strengthen ties between Pakistan and Turkey in multiple sectors, including aviation.

On the occasion, Mehmat T. Nane presented an overview of the Turkish aviation strategy,

highlighting key aspects that could benefit Pakistan's aviation sector. He elaborated on how Pakistan could leverage Turkiye's experience and expertise to advance its own aviation industry.

The discussions were deemed highly fruitful, marking a step forward in Pakistan's efforts to boost its aviation capabilities and foster stronger economic ties with Turkiye.

KCCI announces support to shutterdown strike

KARACHI (PPI): President Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh has advised all its members to fully support the country-wide shutterdown on August 28 announced by traders community by keeping their businesses completely closed so that the government could be compelled to immediately withdraw the controversial Tajir Dost Scheme in addition to reducing the heavy electricity bills and other taxes.

In a statement issued, President KCCI stated that it was highly unfair to serve notices to registered and unregistered traders/shopkeepers to demand a hefty advance tax of

Rs60,000/- per month which has become a cause of harassment in all the markets. Such an unbearably high tax simply cannot be borne by more than 80 percent of shopkeepers all over the city, he said, adding that although it was assured that a mere tax of not more than Rs1,000/- to Rs1,200/- will be applied but the FBR was demanding Rs60,000/- which the Karachi Chamber strongly condemns.

Ifitikhar Sheikh said, "I would like to once again vociferously appeal the government to immediately defer Tajir Dost Scheme for a period of at least three months and hold consultations with all the stakeholders so the controversial Scheme could actually be made friendly and then implemented in the larger interest of the entire country."

He said that the Karachi Chamber has written several letters to policymakers wherein it has been cautioned that attempts were being made to sabotage Tajir Dost Scheme by implementing this scheme in an inappropriate manner but, unfortunately, no attention has been paid so far to this pressing issue.

"This scheme must be revisited immediately and only those measures should be adopted which were practically implementable and acceptable to all stakeholders."

President KCCI stated that the Karachi Chamber, being the premier

ally be made friendly and then implemented in the larger interest of the entire country.

He said that the Karachi Chamber has written several letters to policymakers wherein it has been cautioned that attempts were being made to sabotage Tajir Dost Scheme by implementing this scheme in an inappropriate manner but, unfortunately, no attention has been paid so far to this pressing issue.

"This scheme must be revisited immediately and only those measures should be adopted which were practically implementable and acceptable to all stakeholders."

President KCCI stated that the Karachi Chamber, being the premier

Chamber and leading voice of the entire business community, stands shoulder-to-shoulder with small traders and shopkeepers until this particular issue is amicably resolved as per traders' aspirations.

He said that in the ongoing era of inflation, it has become extremely difficult for shopkeepers to continue their businesses whereas the government, instead of providing relief, continues to impose heavy taxes and keeps on raising electricity bills which were not acceptable to any trader, therefore, the Karachi Chamber, keeping in view the gravity of situation, decided to fully support the countrywide strike call on August 28.

With Fed rate cut set, Powell's Jackson Hole talk could turn to the future

JACKSON HOLE, Wyoming (Reuters): Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said on Friday "the time has come" for the U.S. central bank to cut interest rates as rising risks to the job market left no room for further weakness and inflation was in reach of the Fed's 2% target, offering an explicit endorsement of an imminent policy easing.

"The upside risks to inflation have diminished. And the downside risks to employment have increased," Powell said in a highly anticipated speech to the Kansas City Fed's annual economic conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. "The time has come for policy to adjust. The

direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks."

Referencing the two goals that the Fed is tasked by Congress to achieve, Powell said his "confidence has grown that inflation is on a sustainable path back to 2%," after rising to about 7% during the COVID-19 pandemic, while unemployment is increasing.

While Powell said the jump of nearly a percentage point in the unemployment rate over the past year was due largely to rising labor supply and slowed hiring, not

increased layoffs, he also was emphatic that the Fed wanted to prevent any further erosion - his prior talk of labor market "pain" as necessary to control inflation now a thing of the past.

The current unemployment rate of 4.3% is roughly at the level Fed officials feel is consistent with stable inflation over the longer run.

"We do not seek or welcome further cooling in labor market conditions," Powell said. "We will do everything we can to support a strong labor market as we make further progress toward price stability. With an appropriate dialing back of policy restraint, there is good reason

to think that the economy will get back to 2% inflation while maintaining a strong labor market."

NEW CHAPTER Powell's comments are as close as he is likely to come to declaring victory over the outbreak of inflation that rattled the economy at the start of the pandemic.

The fast rise in prices led the Fed to increase its benchmark policy rate from the near-zero level to the current 5.25%-5.50% range, the highest level in a quarter of a century. It has been held there for more than a year even as the economy defied frequent predictions of recession, inflation fell, and economic

growth continued - the makings of a textbook "soft landing," with the endgame of rate cuts now set to begin.

"While the task is not complete, we have made a good deal of progress" toward restoring price stability, Powell said.

The Fed defines price stability as 2% inflation as measured by the personal consumption expenditures price index. The index is currently running at an annual rate of 2.5%.

Powell is speaking at the Jackson Lake Lodge in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park to a gathering of central bankers and economists that has become a glob-

al platform for officials to shape views of monetary policy and the economy.

His comments largely cement a decision the Fed has telegraphed through earlier Powell comments and a readout of the central bank's July meeting which said a "vast majority" of policymakers agreed rate cuts likely would begin next month.

But his emphatic language has now put beyond doubt that the Fed is opening a new chapter in monetary policy.

He did not, however, go much beyond that to describe how the Fed would be weighing its decisions from here as it navigates a long-awaited policy easing.

As in many of his prior Jackson Hole speeches, much of Powell's remarks were explanatory in nature, in this case rehearsing the combination of supply and demand shocks that caused inflation to rise at the start of the pandemic, why it persisted more than he and other policymakers thought it would, and how the unwinding of those shocks allowed inflation to fall without much initial damage to the job market.

Fed officials will provide updated economic projections at their Sept. 17-18 meeting that will provide more detail on how they expect the benchmark policy rate to evolve from here.



Shadman, Mushfiqur, Litton cut down Bangladesh's deficit

RAWALPINDI (Cricinfo): On a 35-degree third day broken up into sessions of uneven length - including a three-hour morning session - to accommodate Friday prayers, Bangladesh's batters weathered a period of early hostility before asserting themselves on Pakistan's bowlers as the Rawalpindi Test witnessed a riveting fight for first-innings honours.

Shadman Islam laid the foundations for Bangladesh's resistance with a 93 spanning more than five-and-a-half hours, and Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim and Litton Das built on this with half-centuries of their own. At stumps, Bangladesh were five down and 132 adrift of Pakistan's first-innings total, with Mushfiqur and Litton at the crease, having added an unbroken 98.

Litton joined Mushfiqur at a pivotal moment in Bangladesh's innings. Mohammad Ali had nipped out Shadman with the last ball before tea, and Shakib Al Hasan had fallen early, chipping the part-time spin of Saim Ayub to the fielder at cover. The sixth-wicket pair took quick charge of the situation, rattling along at more than five an over and launching a decisive counterattack against Pakistan's quicks when they took the second new ball late in the day.

Bangladesh scored 67 off the last 11 overs of the day, with Litton unfurling some exquisite strokeplay along the way.

The high point of this came in the 89th over of Bangladesh's innings - the 77th of the day - when Litton tore into Naseem Shah. He stepped out and chipped the first ball of the over straight back over the bowler for a one-bounce four, and followed up with an exhibition of pulling and hooking - two unstoppable fours and a massive six over square leg - to race past the half-century mark.

That over went for 18. Having conceded just 15 runs from his first 12 overs of the innings, and picked up a wicket in that time, Naseem gave away 62 in his last eight. Those numbers reflected Pakistan's wider fortunes: Bangladesh's scoring rate went from 2.97 in the first session to 3.33 in the second to 5.08 in the third.

Pakistan, though, still have a 132-run cushion, and will begin day four knowing they are two wickets away from Bangladesh's lower order.

They had to work extremely hard for the five wickets they did take, though, in conditions that were excellent for batting once the first new ball lost its shine, Pakistan's discipline and persistence for most of the day, however,

ensured that Bangladesh also had to work hard to earn their late scoring spree.

Starting the day on 27 for no loss, Bangladesh scored just 12 runs in 12 overs before the first drinks break, losing Zakir Hasan along the way. Naseem and Shaheen Shah Afridi were relentless with their probing in the channel and found enough movement to imperil on-the-up shots, and Bangladesh's top three resisted them for most part through a combination of skill, judgment and a bit of luck.

Pakistan made their breakthrough in the fifth over of the day, however, when Naseem's angle across the left-hander, and a bit of away seam movement and extra bounce, coaxed Zakir into a hard-hands push away from the body. Mohammad Rizwan - back as keeper after going off the field with cramps late on day two - flew to his left to complete the catch off the edge.

Runs flowed slightly quicker when the third and fourth seamers came on, and Najmul Hossain Shanto drove Shahzad crisply for fours through mid-off and extra-cover when he over-pitched. But those were marginal errors from Shahzad as he bowled to a plan, bringing Shanto forward with fuller lengths while angling the ball into

him from round the wicket. Having habituated Shanto into front-foot drives and blocks into the cover region with a slightly open bat face, he pulled his length back slightly and got one to nip back in off the seam and bowl him comprehensively through the gate.

Bangladesh were 53 for 2, and the seven overs before the next drinks break brought Shadman and Mominul just 12 runs.

Through all this, Shadman batted with poise, except for a couple of ungainly moments against the short ball when he top-edged pulls off Mohammad Ali and Shahzad, the ball falling safely in front of the long leg fielder both times.

As hard as Pakistan were pushing, however, the three-hour first session was always going to be a test for them. Having gone without a boundary through the first two hours of the day, Shadman found his release when Shaheen served up a pair of freebies in the 24th over of the morning, driving a half-volley to the cover boundary and punching a full-toss back past the bowler. Then he stepped out to Salman Ali Agha and drilled him through the covers for another boundary to enter the 40s.

Naseem returned to the attack, and his day, which had begun so brightly, began to unravel with three fours conceded in his last

two overs before lunch. Mominul hit two off successive balls - a cheeky uppercut over the slips followed by a premeditated step back and across to flat-bat a marginally short-of-length ball wide of mid-on - before Shadman closed out the session with a pulled four that brought up his fifty.

Shadman and Mominul put on 94 for the third wicket, before Shahzad broke the partnership in the fourth over after lunch. The wicket was near-identical to that of Zakir: a fullish length from round the wicket drew Mominul half-forward to defend, and inward seam movement pierced the bat-pad gap.

Pakistan twice came close to getting an lbw soon after this, with Shahzad reviewing a not-out call off an inducker against Mushfiqur Rahim and Shadman reviewing an out call against a slider from the offspinner Salman Ali Agha. Both reviews went Bangladesh's way.

As the second session wore on, Shadman began to look dangerous, rushing from 64 to 93 in just 25 balls, hitting six fours in that time. Then Ali took a leaf out of Shahzad's play-book and bowled him with the last ball before tea: once again, a ball from round the wicket that nipped into the left-hander and bowled him through the gate.

Manchester City re-sign Gundogan from Barcelona

MANCHESTER (BBC): Manchester City have completed the signing of former captain Ilkay Gundogan from Barcelona on an initial one-year deal with the option of a further 12 months.

The German midfielder, who was Pep Guardiola's first signing at the club in 2016, spent seven years at City before joining Barcelona on a free transfer in 2023.

The 33-year-old won 14 trophies in his first spell at the Etihad, scoring 60 goals in 304 appearances.

"My seven years at Manchester City were a time of pure contentment for me, both on and off the pitch," said Gundogan, who was City's captain when they won the Treble in 2023.

"Everyone knows the respect I have for Pep - he is the best manager in the world and working with him every day makes you a better player.

"Honestly, I cannot wait to wear the City shirt again."

Despite having an impressive debut campaign in Spain, Barcelona decided to part with Gundogan after struggling to register new signing Dani Olmo due to the club's financial issues.

Gundogan was one of the club's highest earners and his departure on a free transfer will help Barcelona comply with La Liga spending restrictions.

"I am leaving in a difficult situation, but if my departure can help the club financially, it makes me a bit less sad," Gundogan wrote on Instagram following the announcement.

Gundogan added he had been "looking forward to helping my team-mates in the new campaign" but he was "grateful" to have spent 12 months at Barcelona.

Speaking ahead of Ipswich Town's visit to Manchester on Saturday, Guardiola said the chance to re-sign the midfielder came out of the blue.

"It was a complete surprise, unexpected," said Guardiola.

"We didn't have any doubts when the possibility to re-sign him was open, and we're absolutely delighted that he's back."

Capped 82 times for Germany, Gundogan announced his international retirement following the country's Euro 2024 exit in the quarter-finals to Spain.

World Military Cadet Games Pak contingent win five medals



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The 4th CISM (International Military Sports Council) World Military Cadet Games are being conducted in Caracas, Venezuela from 16-22 August 2024. Pakistan Armed Forces contingent is participating in Track, Field and shooting events only.

CISM Pakistan Armed Forces tri services team has won five medals in the event; Gold Medal in 400m race and Silver Medal in 200m race by Chief Warrant Officer Mueed Bloch, Pakistan Air Force and ?Bronze Medal in 5000m race and Silver Medal in 10000m race by Sep Muhammad Akhtar, Pakistan Army.

In 25 Meter pistol shooting rapid team events category, Nk Qasim Bilal, Sepoy Ismail Khan and Sepoy Muhammad Rashid of Pakistan Army won Silver Medal.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and all Services Chiefs have conveyed their heart felt congratulation to the team on their remarkable performance.

Bellingham injured in lead-up to England games

LONDON (BBC): Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham has sustained a calf injury in training just over two weeks before England begin their Nations League campaign.

The 21-year-old was unable to finish a club session on Friday.

BBC Sport has contacted Real to establish how long Bellingham is likely to be out for.

Reports in Spain suggest he will be unavailable until late September, which would rule him out of Lee Carsley's opening two fixtures as England interim manager.

England face the

Republic of Ireland on 7 September and Finland on 10 September in the Nations League.

In a statement, Real said Bellingham had medical tests on Friday on the problem with his right calf and that his "progress will be monitored".

Carsley, 50, was announced as interim manager earlier this month following Gareth Southgate's resignation after Euro 2024.

Bellingham scored 23 goals in 42 appearances during his debut season at the Bernabeu last term as Madrid won a La Liga and Champions League double.

Beatriz Haddad Maia eases into Cleveland semis

CLEVELAND (Reuters): No. 1 seed Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil needed just 75 minutes to score a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Frenchwoman Clara Burel in the quarterfinals of Tennis in the Land on Thursday in Cleveland.

Haddad Maia won not only 21 of 27 first-service points (77.8 percent) but also 12 of her 22 first-return points (54.5 percent). She had two aces and broke Burel's serve five times in 13 chances.

Haddad Maia's semifinal opponent will be Czech third seed Katerina Siniakova, who rallied past American No. 6 seed

Peyton Stearns 1-6, 6-3, 6-4.

No. 5 seed Anastasia Potapova of Russia cruised to a 6-2, 6-1 win over Romania's Ana Bogdan. She advanced to face American McCartney Kessler, who followed her upset of No. 4 Xinyu Wang of China on Wednesday by eliminating Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-2.

Abierto GNP Seguros 2024

Lulu Sun of New Zealand toppled Erika Andreeva of Russia 6-4, 6-3 to reach the semifinals in Monterrey, Mexico.

Sun, who made a surprise run to the Wimbledon

quarterfinals last month, hit eight aces without a double fault and won 28 of 34 first-service points (82.4 percent).

She will face No. 3 seed Ekaterina Alexandrova of Russia in the semifinals. Alexandrova beat No. 7 seed Yue Yuan of China 7-5, 7-6 (3).

Second seed Emma Navarro of the United States beat ninth seed Magdalena Frech of Poland 6-7 (3), 6-0, 6-2. Navarro will face Czech sixth seed Linda Noskova, who handled Ukrainian fifth seed Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-4 in the final match Thursday night.

Mark Wood inflicts the body blows as Angelo fights for Sri Lanka

M A N C H E S T E R (Cricinfo): Sri Lanka's hopes of staying afloat in the first Test at Emirates Old Trafford were sinking fast by tea on the third afternoon, as Mark Wood struck twice in the middle session - once in the strictly literal sense - and Matthew Potts once, to cement the dominance that had been set in motion in the morning by Jamie Smith's maiden Test hundred.

By the interval, Angelo Mathews was 48 not out, having reprised some of the series-winning stroke-play that had stood out in Sri Lanka's triumphant tour ten years ago. But, having dispatched Dimuth Karunaratne with his very first ball, Wood seemed also have ended Dinesh Chandimal's involvement in the contest with a ferocious blow to the right thumb that left him shaking with pain as he was sent to hospital for an X-ray.

Those moments followed a catastrophic three-over foray immediately before lunch, in which both Nishan Madushka and Kusal Mendis were dismissed for ducks, by Chris Woakes and Gus Atkinson respectively.

And after Potts pinned Dhananjaya de Silva lbw

for 11, Sri Lanka were 107 for 4 - effectively five - at tea. They still trailed by 15, with an extended final session of the day to come, not to mention two more (admittedly weather-threatened) days over the weekend.

It was all a far cry from the competitive scenario that had seemed in prospect overnight, when England had resumed on 259 for 6, with a slender lead of 23 in the bag, but with most of their hopes of a big lead resting on the shoulders of their last - and most junior - recognised batter, Smith.

After resuming on 72 not out, Smith was quickly into his stride against a Sri Lanka attack that lacked much of the intensity that they had brought to their endeavours in the first half of England's innings, and when he crashed two boundaries through the covers in Asitha Fernando's first over of the day, it seemed he might be in a hurry to notch his three figures.

And yet, having fallen for 95 against West Indies at Edgbaston in his previous Test innings in July, Smith then throttled back appreciably, settling instead on building a resolute seventh-wicket stand of 66 with Gus Atkinson, whose own

score of 20 from 65 was his third such contribution in consecutive England innings.

Once again, England's progress was aided by some questionable Sri Lanka field placings, with Atkinson frequently offered easy singles through the off side to keep the strike rotating, while Smith himself took 27 deliveries to pick off the final 14 runs of his hundred, with the moment coming up with a firm clip off the pads through square leg off Milan Rathnayake.

At 24 days and 40 days, that made him the youngest England men's keeper to reach a Test century.

Moments later, Rathnayake had a moment of his own to savour, a maiden Test wicket - though perhaps not in the manner that he might have envisaged, as Atkinson feathered a leg-side delivery through to Chandimal, whose low take was confirmed by an umpire's review. And just when it seemed that Smith was set to cut loose, Prabath Jayasuriya fizzed down a faster, wider seaming delivery, and Chandimal did brilliantly to cling onto a fat deflection, standing up to the stumps.



RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh batter Shadman was bowled by Shahzad during the third day of first Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Rees-Zammit ends audition for Chiefs roster spot

NEW YORK (BBC): Louis Rees-Zammit had bright moments on his final chance to impress in preseason and stake his claim for a spot on the Kansas City Chiefs' 53-man regular season roster.

The Chiefs were well beaten 34-21 by the Chicago Bears on Thursday night, with the former Wales rugby star once again utilised in a number of roles.

Rees-Zammit was introduced on offense in the second half after a couple of special teams snaps in the first two quarters.

Watched on by his family, the 23-year-old made 36 yards on a kick return and showed improvement as a running back.

The highlight of his performance came early in the fourth quarter as he rushed for 10 yards and a first down, the longest of his young NFL career.

Now Rees-Zammit must wait for the franchise to decide who makes the cut from 90 players down to 53 for the start of the 2024 NFL season.

Head coach Andy Reid and the rest of the backroom staff at the Chiefs have until 21:00 BST on Tuesday, 27 August to finalise their regular season roster.

Back in January 2024, Rees-Zammit stunned the rugby world on the day Wales named their Six Nations squad.

The 23-year-old announced he would leave the sport immediately in order to pursue "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity".

Rees-Zammit took part in the 2024 NFL International Player Pathway (IPP), a 10-week crash course designed to teach players the skills to succeed in the NFL.

In late March, Rees-Zammit had the chance to impress scouts at the University of South Florida's Pro Day, and he made an impression.

The New York Jets, Cleveland Browns and Denver Broncos all met with the former Wales wing, before Rees-Zammit signed a three-year deal with the Chiefs.

In May 2024, Rees-Zammit met his new teammates for the first time - where he compared quarterback Patrick Mahomes to former Wales fly-half Dan Biggar.

Rees-Zammit spent the early part of the summer continuing to improve his on-field skills, while also studying the Chiefs' extensive playbook.

The Chiefs returned to

training camp in late July, with Rees-Zammit having eye-catching moments among others which highlighted his inexperience in the sport.

Then came time for his debut against the Jacksonville Jaguars on 10 August, where Rees-Zammit performed as running back, kicker and kick-returner.

A week later he made his home debut at Arrowhead against the Detroit Lions, once again appearing in a number of positions which highlighted his versatility.

The Chiefs rounded off preseason with Thursday night's loss against the Bears, their third straight defeat of preseason.

Rees-Zammit was once again made to wait to take to the field, but he gained more experience on special teams and at running back during the game.

After announcing his decision to pursue a career in the NFL, Rees-Zammit said he was targeting a role on offense.

"Running back, receiver, a bit of a hybrid. Whatever I get told, I will do," Rees-Zammit said back in January.

Rees-Zammit had limited opportunities at running back and wide receiver

during the Chiefs' three preseason games.

Based on the short sample size, and his efficiency when presented with the opportunities, it appears unlikely Rees-Zammit will carve out a role in either position on offence in 2024.

To make matters worse for Rees-Zammit, another rookie running back - Carson Steele - has demonstrated elite ability during preseason, capped off with a 31-yard run and touchdown against the Bears.

In the fourth quarter against the Bears, Rees-Zammit did show glimpses of what he can offer out of the backfield.

He averaged 5.2 yards per carry over four rushing attempts, a mark which is above the NFL average.

It is on special teams that Rees-Zammit has had more involvement in preseason.

On his debut, Rees-Zammit made a tackle during a special teams and also took a kick-off.

He continued his kicking duties against the Lions and returned a kick-off for 27 yards.

And against the Bears, Rees-Zammit recorded his career-high return of 36 yards.

**In brief****Arshad made Add Secy**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government on Friday appointed Muhammad Arshad Munir, a BS-21 officer of the Information Group as Additional Secretary, Prime Minister's Office (Public). The Cabinet Secretariat and Establishment Division have issued a notification to this effect, said a news release. Muhammad Arshad Munir was performing duties as the Executive Director General of the Information Service Academy. He has also served as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Anti-dengue awareness

RAWALPINDI (INP): The communication teams of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) on Friday carried out its cleanliness and anti-dengue awareness campaign in the mosques of Dhoke Kashmirian area Union Council-23 to raise awareness about the lifecycle, prevalence, treatment, and prevention of dengue. According to the RWMC spokesman, the teams asked the Masjid Imams/Khateebes of the area to play their part in educating the people about the importance of cleanliness in the light of Islamic teachings in the sermons of Friday prayer. The objective of the activity was to reach out to a maximum number of people to educate the general public about the precautionary measures for dengue to get rid of it, the spokesman said. The teams also distributed waste bags and leaflets among the faithful and educated them about the importance of cleanliness and the prevention of dengue. In a message, RWMC has requested the people to keep an eye on junkyards, schools, and under-construction buildings which lead to the spread of dengue larvae, and also make sure to leave no place wet or with stagnant water. Meanwhile, RWMC continuously carried out the cleanliness of the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium during the Pakistan-Bangladesh cricket test series match. The RWMC had deployed staff members, including sanitary workers and supervisors, in two shifts at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium while the areas inside and outside the stadium, including the double road, were being cleaned daily and workers were also present during the match till the end of the game. he waste bins placed from Faizabad to Double Road were also cleaned daily to ensure cleanliness.

IT lab established

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has established a brand-new IT lab at the F-11 Government Girls College, marking a significant milestone in the efforts to enhance digital literacy and education in Islamabad. According to the Education Ministry, the lab was set up in a record time of just three days. By mid-September, a total of 70 such state-of-the-art IT labs will be established in government schools and colleges across Islamabad, it added. Out of the 70 labs, the ministry said that around 50 labs will be set up in rural Islamabad, ensuring that students in these areas have access to the same quality of education and resources as their urban counterparts. As of now, 33 IT labs are already prepared and operational, paving the way for a digital revolution in Islamabad's education sector.

ESaaS to enhance Pakistan's tech capabilities: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam Friday said that Energy Storage as a Service (ESaaS) at an industrial scale is an emerging model, where energy storage systems are offered to customers as a service rather than a traditional capital expenditure.

Speaking as chief guest at the launching and signing ceremony of the "Industry-First Energy Storage as a Service Project" held here at a local hotel, the PM's climate aide said, "With the launching of the country's first ever project, we are embark today on a journey that not only would help advance our nation's technological capabilities but also reaffirms our unwavering commitment to combat climate change."

"The groundbreaking initiative represents a pivotal step forward in the present government's commitment to integrate innovative energy solutions and enhance the country's energy infrastructure for better and sustained energy supplies to the people," Ms. Alam remarked.

The initiative was actualized by the Brillanz Group and other key stakeholders involved in developing a transformative ecosystem for sustainability and decarbonization in Pakistan.

She said that this project basically aims to revolutionise energy storage capabilities and provide a sustainable solution for our energy needs, aligning with the present government's vision for a greener and climate-resilience future.

The PM's climate aide said, "With potential role to significantly reducing carbon emissions, the launch of Pakistan's first Energy Storage as a Service project at the industry scale is not

merely a technological milestone; it is a bold statement of our intent to lead by example in the global transition to a low-carbon future."

By adopting such innovative energy solutions that prioritize decarbonization agendas, the present government was sending a powerful message that sustainable practices are at the core of our development strategy, Romina Khurshid Alam stressed, adding that in fact the benefits of this project extended beyond mere addressing environmental concerns.

By reducing diesel consumption, we are not only promoting energy efficiency but also addressing a critical economic vulnerability—our reliance on diesel imports. This reduction helps to mitigate the strain on our foreign currency reserves and shields us, however modestly, from the fluctuations of exchange rates.

The PM's climate aide said further that Climate Change & Environmental Coordination ministry was proud to support the launch of the project, showcasing the government's commitment to the strategic partnership with the resource-rich private sector in driving forward the green transformation of the country's industrial sector.

"Only by working together (government and private sector), we can future-proof Pakistan's infrastructure, ensuring that it is resilient in the face of climate challenges while also enhancing network reliability for years to come," Romina Khurshid Alam emphasised.

She also hoped that the project would be a beacon and example for other countries in the region and beyond to demonstrate what could be achieved when

environmental sustainability and climate resilience are the priority.

"It is more than just a technological advancement; it is a commitment to a sustainable future for Pakistan. Together, we can ensure that our economic growth is not at odds with environmental stewardship but is instead a harmonious blend of both," she emphasised.

CEO INFRAELECTRIC, Bilal Qureshi said there were 8.5 billion mobile connections against total 7.9 billion world population that were providing an estimated potential of \$4.5 trillion to global economy.

"Telecom sector emits more carbon emissions than entire aviation industry combined. Pakistan is the fifth largest country in the world and bears the highest mobile penetration in the region with 48,000 towers and drones of telecom sector in Pakistan," he said.

Bilal Qureshi added that a total of 1.2 billion liters of diesel was used in Pakistan alone to run telecom towers whereas this project was a ground breaking project whereas this low carbon energy storage project would set a global benchmark in sustainable telecom industry.

SAPM on Digital Media, Fahd Haroon said the initiative would help make telecommunication industry more resilient and environment friendly with enhanced sustainability.

CEO Telenor, Khurram Ashfaq said Telenor had transformed it's power infrastructure with decline in diesel consumption from 44 million liters to 12 million liters.

However, the partners like INFRAELECTRIC and Saudi Pak Bank have helped the telecom company a lot in achieving this transformation.

NHMP shifted five passengers to hospital, 4 died

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway and Motorway Police on Friday found five people lifeless near Bhera interchange on the Motorway.

According to NHMP North Zone spokesman Muhammad Saqib, while patrolling the NHMP received a call that a Honda car was parked alongside the road.

Upon approaching the car to offer assistance, the NHMP found five individuals in a semi-conscious state and immediately shifted them to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Bhera for medical treatment.

During the treatment, four people died and one was in an unconscious condition, the spokesman

informed.

According to doctors, the death cause could be food poisoning, he said and added that the deceased have been identified as Romila, 60, Mahwish, 30, Samar, 28, and Aun, 4.

The travelers were residents of Lahore and were going to Islamabad from Lahore.

Implementation of Digital Parking Project directed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Friday instructed the authorities concerned to expedite the installation of hardware for the Digital Parking Project in Islamabad.

This directive comes after the development of software for the project.

The first phase of the project will focus on introducing digital parking in the city's busiest markets and markiz.

Chairman Randhawa

was chairing a meeting emphasizing the importance of taking all stakeholders, particularly local traders, into confidence to ensure the project's success.

He also directed that parking regulations and charges be finalized, drawing from experiences of other cities and international practices.

The revenue generated from digital parking will be utilized for the beautification, uplift, and repair/maintenance of markets and markiz.

Notably, Chairman

Randhawa stressed the need to include a system that prioritizes senior citizens, women, and people with special needs in the digital parking project. This move aims to enhance accessibility and convenience for vulnerable segments of society.

The swift implementation of the Digital Parking Project is expected to bring order and efficiency to Islamabad's parking management, making the city a more livable and visitor-friendly space.

Constant protests, traffic chaos undermine capital's ideal vision of life

ISLAMABAD (APP): Once revered as a sanctuary of serenity and peace, Islamabad is now entangled in a web of daily strife. For its residents, the idealized vision of life in the federal capital has become an increasingly elusive dream. The city, previously a symbol of tranquility, is now marred by ceaseless political protests, religious demonstrations, and the ever-present specter of commuting chaos. What was once seen as a haven has transformed into a battleground where daily existence is overshadowed by unrest, making life for its citizens an ongoing struggle.

Doctor Alina Nasir, a 42-year-old medical practitioner, who moved to

Islamabad from Azad Kashmir ten years ago for its reputed calm and better employment opportunities, now finds herself grappling with a relentless cycle of stress. "I imagined a peaceful life here, but it's been anything but that," she shares, her frustration palpable. "Every day, I worry about my children's safety, especially when they travel to and from school. The political rallies and roadblocks are constant, making the daily commute a nerve-wracking ordeal."

The city's infrastructure, once designed to accommodate its growing population, now buckles under the strain of frequent demonstrations and political unrest. The roads are often clogged

with traffic as protesters stage rallies, leaving residents stuck for hours. This has led to a deteriorating quality of life, where every journey feels like a gamble.

Ali Raza, a 45-year-old businessman, echoes Alina's sentiments. "I used to think of Islamabad as a place where I could grow old peacefully. Now, I'm not sure if I can even get to work on time. The protests that break out with little notice create havoc on our streets. It's not just inconvenient; it's dangerous."

For families like Jaffrys, a school teacher who also relocated to Islamabad from Rawalpindi's far-flung village Kallar Sayedan to provide their children

with better educational opportunities, the reality is far from ideal. "We moved here hoping for a safer environment for our kids," says Mrs. Riffat, her eyes reflecting concern. "But now, every day, we face the anxiety of whether they'll be able to get to school safely or if they'll be caught in a protest." Adding insult to injury are the frequent VIP movements, ongoing road construction projects, and high-profile cricket matches. These events often lead to road closures, making daily struggles of Islamabad's residents more stressful.

"It feels like we're constantly living in a pressure cooker," complains Anis ur Rehman, a 47-year-old IT professional. "VIP convoys

speed through our neighborhoods, roadwork is a never-ending saga, and cricket matches turn the city into a traffic nightmare. It's as if every aspect of daily life has become a series of obstacles. And unfortunately, I am residing near Faizabad, the epicentre of all the political and religious demonstrations."

The impact of this unrest extends beyond daily commutes and safety concerns. The constant disruptions are eroding the sense of community and well-being that once characterized Islamabad. Social gatherings are now rare, and the vibrancy of public life has been overshadowed by the grim reality of political and religious discord.

Doctor Maryam, a

local psychiatrist, provides insight into this growing malaise. "The persistent stress and uncertainty are taking a toll on people's mental health. The idealized image of Islamabad as a peaceful capital is crumbling, and with it, the psychological well-being of its residents is suffering." And it must be a matter of concern for the relevant authorities, she forcefully stressed.

Islamabad's transformation from a symbol of calm to a center of turmoil reflects broader socio-political changes in Pakistan. The city, envisioned in the 1960s as a serene administrative capital, now grapples with the pressures of rapid urbanization and political instability.

Efforts to address these issues have been inconsistent. While city officials occasionally announce plans to improve traffic management and enhance security, the effectiveness of these measures often falls short, leaving residents to steer the chaos largely on their own.

The daily trials of its residents—from navigating the maze of traffic caused by protests to ensuring their children's safety—paint a picture of a city struggling under the weight of its own idealization. As Islamabad faces this ongoing challenge, it begs the question: can a city truly reclaim its peace, or is it destined to be perpetually trapped in its own contradictions?



ISLAMABAD: Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Torrential rains predicted

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast torrential rains in the southern half of the country from August 26-29.

A low pressure currently located over west Bengal was likely to move westwards during the next couple of days and may approach southern parts of the country on August 25.

Due to this low-pressure weather system, strong monsoon currents were likely to enter the country from August 25 (night).

Under the influence of this weather system, rain-wind/thundershowers with scattered heavy falls with isolated very heavy are expected in Karachi, Hyderabad, Dadu,

Thatta, Badin, Sajawal, Shahed Benazirabad, Jamshoro, Tando Allayar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tharparkar, Nagarparkar, Mithi, Mirpur Khas, Umartot, Matiari, Sanghar, Sukkur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Kashmore, Khaipur, Larkana, Jacobabad and Nausheroferoze from August 25 (night) to August 29 with occasional gaps.

In Balochistan, rain-wind/thundershower with few heavy falls is expected in Khuzdar, Kalat, Lasbela, Awaran, Naseerabad, Sibbi, Jaffarabad, Kohlu, Harnai, Dera Bugti, Zhob, Quetta, Ziarat, Sherani, Qila Abdullah, Qila Saifullah, Barkhan, Musa Khel, Loralai, Mastung, Bolan, Jhal Magi, Kech, Panjgur, Gwadar, Jiwani, Pasni and Ormara from August 26-30 with occasional gaps.

In Punjab/Islamabad, rain-wind/thundershowers with few heavy falls are expected in Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Murree, Galliat, Attock, Chakwal, Tala Gang, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Wazirabad, Sahiwal, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Nankana Sahib, Chinot, Faisalabad, Lahore, Sheikhpura, Sialkot, Narowal, Okara, Pakpattan, Kasur, Khushab, Sargodha, Mianwali, Bhakkar, Layyah, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Kot Addu, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Khanpur and Rahimyar Khan from August 25 (night) to August 28 with occasional gaps.

Govt to establish teachers training center

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal has announced that the government within two years will establish a state-of-the-art Teachers Training Center for improving quality of education and to produce manpower meeting contemporary needs.

Speaking during the launching ceremony of the District Education Performance Index-2023 here on Friday, he said the incumbent government led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had initiated this project during its last tenure but due to political instability it remained incomplete.

Ahsan Iqbal said that in collaboration with provincial education departments, the Center would be the best in South Asia, where students could get quality education focusing on

improving their critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and team learning skills.

He said it would be a paradigm shift from memorization-based education adding that the initiative would also reform the existing examination system.

The minister planning said that memorization-based education was irrelevant in the modern era, where innovation and creativity derived development.

He believed that the country could not achieve the required goals of progress and prosperity without improving the education standard and developing human resources.

"The development of infrastructure alone cannot be useful."

Ahsan Iqbal citing examples from the world said no single country has attained development and prosperity without achieving at least a 90 percent literacy rate.

"Development is not possible without achieving the universal primary enrollment education target."

The minister also mentioned some other challenges, including the lack of an export-led economy and political instability.

"Unfortunately, our socio-economic platform is fractured due to which we are enlisted in the low-middle income countries' club and among the backward nations," he said highlighting the importance of economic and social alignment for the national development.

Recounting past efforts of the PML-N government initiatives for the socio-economic uplift of the country, he said it gave the Vision-2010 in 1998, the world's best road map for development, and the Vision-2025 in 2013 to place the country among the top economies of the world, but all fell victim of the political instability.

Legal Aid Society delegation calls on Azam Nazeer Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Legal Aid Society called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice & Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday and discussed issues related to sexual and gender based violence and the organization's extensive work across Pakistan.

The representatives provided detailed briefings on the ongoing efforts to combat sexual violence and the challenges in delivering legal aid to victims.

The minister expressed his commitment for a strategic collaboration between the Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA) and the

Legal Aid Society, noting that reforms to LAJA are already underway to enhance legal aid services across the country.

He further emphasized the ministry's commitment to introducing comprehensive reforms in the Qanoon-e-Shahadat and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to protect the rights of victims and witnesses, ensuring that criminal proceedings remain free from external influence.

Tarar reiterated that these legal reforms will ensure the protection of every victim's rights and that no influential party can manipulate or subvert the law.

He also commended the Legal Aid Society for its significant contributions and tireless efforts in combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) across the country.

He said the Legal Aid Society has been at the forefront addressing SGBV by providing legal aid, enhancing protection mechanisms, and working to build the capacity of stakeholders. Their efforts in creating a safer environment for women and children, particularly those affected by sexual and gender-based violence, have been crucial to advancing justice and human rights in the country.



Heroin price soars

LONDON (Khamaa Press): A report by Princeton University's "World Politics" journal highlighted that the price of one kilogram of Afghanistan heroin in the UK has doubled from \$15,000 to \$30,000. The journal noted that large quantities of opium are currently being stockpiled in Afghanistan. Despite the Taliban's ban on poppy cultivation, the trade and smuggling of drugs in Afghanistan continue to supply European markets.

The Frontier Post

Safar 18 1446 — Saturday, August 24, 2024

\$500,000 worth of drugs seized

KABUL (Khamaa Press): The National Security Committee of Kazakhstan has announced seizure of 50 kilograms of drugs from Afghanistan in collaboration with Russian intelligence services. The committee stated that the seized drugs were of the hashish type, with an estimated value of around \$500,000 on the "black market." On Friday, a statement revealing that the intelligence services of Kazakhstan and Russia successfully blocked a drug trafficking route from Afghanistan.

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

Procurement commission approves projects worth 5 billion afghanis



KABUL (Ariana News): The National Procurement Commission on Wednesday approved contracts for 31 projects totally worth about five billion afghanis.

According to a statement released by the office of Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs who chaired the commission's meeting, seven contracts were amended.

The approved and amended projects

include the completion of the remaining work on the Ab Gardan Storage Dam in Badghis province, the rehabilitation of a turbine at the Naghlu Power Plant, the provision of electrical equipment in various provinces, the provision of high-quality and fast telecommunications and internet services to citizens, the delivery of services at various customs across the country, the completion

of a major water supply network in Qala-e-Naw city in Badghis province, among others. These projects are funded by the Islamic Emirate.

Meanwhile, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, on Thursday met with a number of Kuwaiti and Russian businessmen separately and assured them that Afghanistan offers investment opportunities in various sectors.



KABUL: A beautiful high angle view of townscape against sky, in Kabul.

Political Deputy PM urges world to implement pledges

KABUL (Ariana News): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, on Wednesday emphasized that the Islamic Emirate has fulfilled its commitments to the world, and that pledges made at the third UN-sponsored Doha meeting should be implemented as soon as possible.

Speaking at a meeting with the envoy of the European Union in Kabul, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir said that the policy of the Islamic Emirate is engagement, mutual respect and cooperation. He added that opium cultivation in Afghanistan has been eliminated, corruption has ended, the treatment of drug addicts continues, and no country will face threats from Afghanistan.



Kabul, said that EU envoys have been able to raise a lot of aid for Afghans as a result of the cooperation of the Islamic Emirate.

She also assured him of the EU's continued assistance and said that the European Union seeks to implement the commitments made at the third meeting in Doha.

She stated that Afghanistan is moving in a

positive direction, and they will try to share the situation of Afghanistan with the members of the European Union.

Separately, Rafaella also met with Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, deputy foreign minister for political affairs.

She said that first she will travel to Qatar to participate in the meeting of the countries' missions for

Afghanistan in Doha, and then she will participate in a meeting with the officials of the European Union in Brussels to discuss Afghanistan.

In the meeting, Stanikzai voiced appreciation of the European Union's assistance to Afghanistan and assured them of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' cooperation.

Iran bans Afghan nationals in 10 South Khorasan counties

KABUL (Agencies): An official of the Islamic Republic announced that in South Khorasan province, Afghan residents are only permitted to reside in the Khushf and Birjand counties.

Mohsen Safaei, the Director-General of Foreign Nationals and Immigrants at the South Khorasan Governorate, stated that Afghan residency is prohibited in the other ten counties of the province.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, published on Thursday, Safaei

added that over 10,000 foreign nationals reside in South Khorasan. He mentioned that the majority of foreign residents in South Khorasan are Afghans.

Safaei also reported that approximately 1,700 foreign students and 600 foreign university students are studying in South Khorasan.

The Director-General emphasized that the purchase and sale of real estate to "undocumented Afghans" is strictly forbidden.

This Iranian official warned that no assistance

will be provided to "undocumented Afghans," and they will be identified and deported from Iran upon detection.

Recently, Iranian authorities have stated that they are closing their borders to prevent the illegal entry of migrants, the movement of terrorists, and drug traffickers.

The strict measures implemented by Iranian authorities against Afghan refugees reflect a broader trend of forced deportations amid the worsening human

itarian crisis in Afghanistan. As Iran tightens its border controls and enforces severe restrictions on Afghan residents, thousands of vulnerable refugees face an uncertain future, compounded by the dire conditions in their home country.

The forced deportation of Afghan refugees amid the ongoing crisis not only exacerbates the challenges for those fleeing conflict and poverty but also raises significant humanitarian concerns on the global stage.

Taliban bans the sound of women's voices singing or reading in public

KABUL (CNN): Afghanistan's Taliban rulers are cracking down on the sound of women's voices in public, under a strict new set of vice and virtue laws under the Islamist regime.

The laws were issued Wednesday after they were approved by supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, a government spokesman said, and cover aspects of everyday life like public transportation, music, shaving and celebrations.

Among the new rules, Article 13 relates to

women: It says it is mandatory for a woman to veil her body at all times in public and that a face covering is essential to avoid temptation and tempting others. Clothing should not be thin, tight or short.

Women are also obliged to cover themselves in front of non-Muslim males and females to avoid being corrupted. A woman's voice is deemed intimate and so should not be heard singing, reciting, or reading aloud in public. It is forbidden for women to look at men they are not related to by blood or marriage and vice versa.

"Inshallah we assure you that this Islamic law will be of great help in the promotion of virtue and the elimination of vice," said ministry spokesman Maulvi Abdul Ghafar Farooq on Thursday, of the new laws.

First formal declaration of vice and virtue laws

The 114-page, 35-article document seen by The Associated Press constitutes the first formal declaration of vice and virtue laws in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power in

2021, when it also set up a ministry for the "propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice."

The laws will empower the ministry to be at the frontline of regulating personal conduct, administering punishments like warnings or arrest if enforcers allege that Afghans have broken the laws.

The laws ban the publication of images of living beings, threatening an already fragile Afghan media landscape; the playing of music; the transportation of solo female travelers; and the mixing of

men and women who are not related to each other. The laws also oblige passengers and drivers to perform prayers at designated times.

According to the ministry website, the promotion of virtue includes prayer, aligning the character and behavior of Muslims with Islamic law, encouraging women to wear hijab, and inviting people to comply with the five pillars of Islam. It also says the elimination of vice involves prohibiting people from doing things forbidden by Islamic law.



Taliban want people to visit Afghanistan

KABUL (CNN): Ben Herskowitz stood on a hill overlooking the ancient archaeological landscape of Bamiyan, nestled among the high mountains of the Hindu Kush. In the distance, he could see white snow-capped mountains, greenery and blossoming trees spread across Afghanistan's Bamiyan Valley.

It was "one of the most beautiful places I've been to in my life," Herskowitz said. "So many different diverse landscapes in one area. I've never seen contrast like that in one place."

Herskowitz, a 22-year-old from Vermont in the United States, found himself thousands of miles from home in May, with Afghanistan's spectacular landscapes nearly all to himself.

"You go to Rome or Greece to see ruins and there are thousands of tourists blocking your way all around you, but here you can sit up in these beautiful places that have so much history from so many periods, and you're the only one there," Herskowitz explained.

The conflict-ravaged country, not known as a vacation hot spot, has seen an increase in tourism since

the Taliban returned to power in August 2021 after the US withdrawal.

Visitors from around the world have been immersing themselves in Afghanistan's scenic landscape and ancient history. They've been taking dips in the turquoise lakes of the Band-e-Amir National Park, exploring Buddhist art and ruins in Bamiyan and shopping in the bustling bazaars of Kabul, all while experiencing the legendary hospitality of Afghans.

About 691 tourists visited Afghanistan in 2021, rising to 2,300 the following year and 7,000 in 2023, according to the Associated Press, citing Mohammad Saeed, head of the Tourism Directorate in Kabul. More than 10,179 have visited the country since August 2021, a spokesperson for Afghanistan's Ministry of Tourism told CNN.

While those figures seem low, the steady increase points to a new buzz around tourism in Afghanistan even while the country struggles with a humanitarian crisis and poverty following decades of war. Many countries have not formally recognized the Taliban as the government of

Afghanistan, and the United Nations calls Afghanistan under the Taliban the most repressive country in the world for women's rights.

"There's a flow of tourists coming into the country since the fall of the republic," says Khyber Khan, founder of Afghan tour company Unchartered Afghanistan. The country is known as a conflict zone, but "we have so many things to offer – culture, people, landscape," Khan said. One now sees "a lot of tourists especially in Kabul, you always see a group of tourists," Khan said.

Taliban officials say they are supporting tourism.

"The growth of the tourism industry has a positive effect on the country's economy," the spokesperson for the Ministry of Culture said. The country sees most tourists coming from the United States, the European Union, China, India, the United Arab Emirates and Iran, the spokesperson added.

A department has been created under the ministry to provide services to tourists and train students in the tourism industry and hotel management, the

spokesperson said.

Bringing tourism money into a country largely isolated by international sanctions is seen by some as lending unwarranted legitimacy to the Taliban's repressive regime at a time when it continues to deny many of its citizens basic human rights.

The UN's special rapporteur for human rights, Richard Bennett, said this week that he had been barred from Afghanistan, a move that sent "a concerning signal about [the Taliban's] engagement with the United Nations and the international community on human rights."

Herskowitz, a part-time social media content creator and traveler, says he was intrigued to explore Afghanistan after hearing how "beautiful" and "hospitable" it is from other tourists who recently visited.

While many travelers have reported positive experiences, many Western governments warn against traveling to the country.

Afghanistan carries a Level 4: Do Not Travel advisory from the US State Department, which cites "terrorism, risk of wrongful detention, civil unrest, kidnapping and crime" as

reasons for its rating. The United Kingdom also "advises against all travel to Afghanistan."

In May 2024, three Spanish tourists were among four people killed when gunmen opened fire on a group of international tourists and Afghans in Bamiyan. It was not clear who was behind the attack.

Despite being aware of the travel advisories warnings, Herskowitz still opted to go to Afghanistan after learning from his community of fellow "extreme travelers" that it's a relatively safe place for tourists.

"I prefer to get my information from friends who have actually been to these places recently and give me an update on what it's actually like to visit," Herskowitz told CNN. "From my experience, I felt super safe the entire time."

With his best friend from Vermont and two other UK travelers and content creators, Herskowitz embarked on a private eight-day tour across the country with two local Afghan tour guides.

Bamiyan, a central Afghanistan city and region that's listed as a UNESCO World Heritage

Site, was Herskowitz's favorite destination they visited.

"It's an ancient city" and has "these amazing ruins that are really spectacular to see," Herskowitz said. He described staying in a hotel with views of the remains of monumental sixth-century Buddha statues. Two of the standing Buddha statues in this area were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001.

Herskowitz also explored Band-e-Amir's series of six lakes by pedal boat amid picturesque red-hued cliffs and rocky natural dams. The park was "just out of this world," Herskowitz said.

But experiencing Afghan hospitality is what really struck Herskowitz. "The hospitality there is so welcoming," Herskowitz said. "Locals were so happy to see a tourist in their country. You're a guest in their country and so they want to invite you for something to show their hospitality."

When shopping in Kabul, Herskowitz said shopkeepers constantly offered him and his friends tea, food and even safe lodging if they needed it.

Herskowitz also said he saw a "good amount" of

other tourists during his time in Afghanistan. He said he came across three different 14-member tour groups from Italy, Greece and Indonesia.

To accommodate the increase in tourists, tourism companies have popped up in Afghanistan.

"The presence of tourists has increased because it's not an active war zone anymore," Khan said. He started Unchartered Afghanistan in 2023.

Ehsan Barakzai, founder of Afghan tour company Destination Afghanistan, says the "gate (to Afghanistan) has just opened, so everyone is coming."

Barakzai personally gave 130 people tours of Afghanistan in 2023, he said, adding that most of his customers come from China, Germany, Canada and the United States.

"A lot of tourists came from watching YouTubers and people on social documenting their travel to Afghanistan," Barakzai explained.

Tourists can enter Afghanistan only after obtaining a tourist visa from one of Afghanistan's consulates. A consulate will normally provide the

visa if an individual has a letter of invitation from a tour company in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has consulates in the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan as well as embassies in Germany, Spain and the Netherlands, among other countries.

Additionally, tour companies must be registered and licensed to operate with the Ministry of Culture for "better coordination," the ministry spokesperson said.

Bookings for Afghanistan in 2023 were at the highest ever level for tour company Untamed Borders, founder James Wilcox told CNN. Untamed Borders has been offering tours in Afghanistan since 2007, Wilcox said.

"Since the Taliban took over, the security situation has changed. One of the biggest risks isn't there anymore – before the risk was the Taliban," Wilcox explained. A security risk for tourists traveling to Afghanistan before the Taliban takeover was the deadly fighting between the Taliban as an insurgency group against US forces and the previous US-backed government of Afghanistan.



DHKA: A woman and her child wade through floodwaters in Feni, one of the worst-hit areas in Bangladesh.

4 of family found dead in car on motorway

F.P. Report

BHERA: Four bodies, including those of three women, were found in a car near Bhera on M-2 Motorway on Friday. According to rescue sources, the car was travelling from Lahore to Islamabad. The driver, Umar Qasim, was shifted to hospital in an unconscious state, while the deceased were identified as 25-year-old Samer, 60-year-old Romila, 30-year-old Meher, and 6-year-old Aun Ali. Rescue sources said the affected family was from McLeod Road, Lahore. The cause of death for the four family members found in the car is still unknown. The bodies have been shifted to the THQ hospital, Bhera. The Motorway spokesperson said five people were found unconscious in the car near Bhera and they were taken to the hospital, but four of them passed away during treatment. The spokesperson added that one patient remained unconscious, and investigation was under way.

Russia ‘advances’ in Ukraine

KYIV: There is heavy, “chaotic” fighting in the eastern Ukrainian town of New York. Its prewar population stood at 3,000, and many worked at the Communist-era phenol plant whose odorous exhaust once filled the town’s centre. But the plant has been damaged. Most residents have fled heavy shelling and the ever-shifting front line. “It almost doesn’t exist as such, because one building is ours, another is already under [Russians], yet another one is ours again,” a Ukrainian serviceman wrote on Telegram on Wednesday. “There’s chaos on both sides,” according to Deep State, a Ukrainian Telegram channel that publishes verified maps of hostilities and data on losses on both sides. These days, New York is dotted with explosion craters, damaged buildings with broken windows and gaping roofs – and shallow, hastily-dug graves. The town is about 60km (37 miles) from Pokrovsk, a Ukrainian defensive stronghold which Russian forces are bearing down on. Moscow claimed to have taken New York earlier this week, but Kyiv says there are still sizeable pockets of resistance and that Russians move towards the larger town of Toretsk bypassing them. Russia’s top brass routinely claim to have completely occupied Ukrainian towns even though they remain contested for days or even weeks. Fighting in eastern Ukraine has heated up while Kyiv’s successful surprise offensive in the western Russian region of Kursk captures the world’s attention. But the incursion has eclipsed the doom and gloom of Donetsk in news reports. A top military expert warns that that Kyiv should concentrate its efforts to “stop the dangerous advance in the east”. “Because there, it’s not the matter of residential areas taken over by Russians, but the matter of a serious threat to entire agglomerations,” General Lieutenant Ihor Romanenko, former deputy head of Ukraine’s General Staff of Armed Forces told Al Jazeera. — Aljazeera

JI announces shutter down strike from 28th

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ameer Jam-
aat-e-Islami (JI) Hafiz
Naem ur Rehman has
called on the public, espe-
cially traders, to ensure the
success of the shutter-down
strike on August 28.
Addressing a press con-
ference in Peshawar on
Friday, he emphasized that
the strike’s success is cru-
cial for the welfare of the
people. Hafiz Naem ur
Rehman urged traders to
remain united and not fall
victim to the government’s
attempts to sow division
within their ranks, stressing
the importance of solidarity
against such conspiracies.
He also affirmed that JI
would compel the govern-
ment to honor the agree-
ment reached following JI’s
14-day sit-in protest.
Looking ahead, he
announced that JI would
launch a nationwide mem-
bership campaign starting
on September 1. This cam-
paign will focus on mass
mobilization across various
issues, including electoral
and land reforms, universal
access to education and
healthcare, democracy,
missing persons, the rule of
law, and freedom of expres-

sion.

The JI chief strongly
condemned the Rahim Yar
Khan incident, expressing
solidarity with the police
and highlighting the grow-
ing lawlessness in the coun-
try. He pointed out that
even those tasked with pro-
tecting the public are not
safe, criticizing the PML-N
and PPP governments in
Punjab and Sindh for fail-
ing to maintain law and
order. According to him, it
is the dacoits who truly rule
the Kacha region of Punjab
and Sindh. Hafiz Naem
said both the PML-N and
PPP came to power through
rigged elections with the
backing of the establish-
ment, which he said always
provide support to incom-
petent leaders and later
regrets it.
He further held the
PML-N, PPP, and their
allies responsible for the
current crises facing the
country. Commenting on
the deteriorating security
situation in Khyber
Pakhtunkhwa, the JI chief
mentioned reports of a mil-
itary operation in the
region, reiterating JI’s
stance that military action
cannot bring lasting peace.
Instead, he argued that true

peace would be achieved
through providing basic
facilities, such as health-
care, education, and
employment, to the people.
He called on the govern-
ments of Pakistan and
Afghanistan to engage in
dialogue to establish peace
in the region.
Hafiz Naem criticized
Nawaz Sharif for indulging
in provincial politics over
the issue of electricity tar-
iffs, offering relief to the
people of Punjab despite
having served as the coun-
try’s prime minister. He
repeated JI’s demand for
nationwide relief on elec-
tricity tariffs and called on
provincial governments to
do the same.
Earlier, while addressing
a JI leadership convention
at Qartaba City in
Islamabad, Rehman
emphasized the party’s
focus on youth and its
intention to actively recruit
women during the upcom-
ing membership drive. He
concluded by reaffirming
JI’s commitment to bring-
ing real change to the coun-
try with the support of the
people. JI vice-emir Dr
Usama Razi and secretary
general Amirul Azim also
spoke on occasion.

Funeral prayers held for 28 Pakistani pilgrims died in Iran

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Funeral
prayers for 28 Pakistani pil-
grims, who lost their lives
in a tragic road accident in
the Iranian province of
Yazd on Wednesday were
offered at Yazd airport on
Friday.
On the direction of
Prime Minister Muhammad
Shehbaz Sharif, a special
aircraft has arrived at Yazd
airport to bring back the
bodies and the injured,
according to a statement
received here.
The 28 bodies and 16
injured who have been dis-
charged from the hospital,
will be transported to
Jacobabad through the spe-
cial flight. The funeral was
attended by a representative
of the Iranian Supreme
Leader Yazd Ayatullah
Naseri, Governor Yazd

Mehran Fatemi, Deputy
Governor Yazd Abdul
Husseni, Pakistan Amba-
sador to Iran Mudassir
Tipu, and embassy officers.
According to the foreign
office, those killed in the
road accident include
Kashif Ali s/o Kareem Bux,
Habibullah Soomro s/o
Abdul Khaliq Soomro s/o
Abdul Abbas Javed s/o
Javed Ahmed, Zaheer
Abbas Memon s/o Memon
Ghulam Ali, Aafaque
Ahmed s/o Ayaz Hussain
Junejo, Muntazar Mehdi
s/o Muharam Ali
Khuahwar, Sadiya Azad,
Nazeem Akhtar d/o
Ghulam Ali Khuahwar,
Noor Muhammad Khoso
s/o Jan Muhammad Khoso,
Imran Ali Khaihor s/o
Muhammad Bachal
Khaihor, Asif Ali s/o
Khair Muhammad Sarki,

Salman Mustafa s/o
Ghulam Mustafa Shaikh,
Kainat d/o of Rustam Ali,
Seerat Abbas Shah s/o Lott
Ali Shah, Rustam Ali s/o
Muhammad Bux, Ruk-
hsana Parveen d/o Syed
Nazir Shah, Aijaz Ali Man-
ganhar s/o Mohammad
Amin Manghanhar, Par-
veen d/o Ghulam Sarwar La-
njari, Mohsin Ali s/o Hassan
Ali, Karim Khatoun d/o
Rustam Ali, Muhammad
Bux Khaskheli s/o Amir
Bux, Rehmat Khatoun
Mugheri d/o of Rajib Ali
Mugheri, Zameeno Qurban
d/o Qurban Hussain,
Jamshed Iqbal s/o
Muhammad Fareed, Zahid
Ali Soomro s/o Ghulam
Rasool Soomro, Ambreen
d/o Syed Madad Ali Shah,
Saima Begum d/o Mohabat
Ali Lund Baloch, and
Reema d/o Jameel Ahmed.

PHC approached to probe wheat scandal via NAB

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Former Fed-
eral Minister filed writ peti-
tion at Peshawar High
Court (PHC) against the
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa gov-
ernment’s alleged corrup-
tion in the purchase of 3.5
metric tons of wheat. The
petition seeks an inquiry
into the matter by the
National Accountability
Bureau (NAB) and asks the
court to stop the Anti-
Corruption Committee
from investigating the
wheat scandal.
The former federal min-
ister Khawaja Muhammad
Khan Hoti filed petition
through his lawyer Salim
Shah Hoti advocate. The
petition alleges that billions
of rupees were embezzled
in the wheat purchase and
demands an inquiry by
NAB.
The Khyber
Pakhtunkhwa government
had approved the purchase
of 3.5 metric tons of wheat
this year, for which 21 cen-
ters were established
across the province. However,
irregularities were reported in the pur-

MPAs approached PHC for appointment of DDAC chairmen

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A writ petition has been filed at Peshawar High Court (PHC) due to failure of provincial government to appoint chairmen of the District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) in six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Members Provincial Assembly including Ahmed Kundi and Sanaullah through Sultan Muhammad Khan filed writ plea while Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, and Secretary Local Government are made as respondents.

The writ pleaded that they are members of the Provincial Assembly and belong to the opposition benches and argued that the Chief Minister didn’t appointed DDAC chairmen in the six districts including Dera Ismail Khan, North Waziristan, Kohistan, Khyber, Upper Chitral, and Upper Dir is a violation of their rights and the rights of the people of these districts.

chase process, and corrup-
tion allegations surfaced,
the writ argued.

Despite this, the Chief
Minister formed a three-
member Anti-Corruption
Committee, which found
Provincial Minister
Shakeel Ahmad guilty in
another case. The commit-
tee has now summoned
Provincial Minister for
Food, Zahoor Shah Toru,
the petition added.

However, the petition
argues that this committee
has no legal status, and the
wheat scandal inquiry
should be conducted by
NAB to expose those who
are involved in the mal-
practices. The court has
been requested to declare
the Anti-Corruption
Committee illegal and stop
it from investigating the
wheat scandal until a deci-
sion is made.

LEAs hit back at gangsters in Rahim Yar Khan

F.P. Report

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Police claimed on Friday to have killed the mastermind of the audacious attack on law enforcers in Katcha area of Rahim Yar Khan. Twelve policemen were martyred and eight others injured when a band of dacoits attacked the convoy with rocket launchers and firing near Machka police camp II here. A Punjab police spokesman claimed that teams of law enforcers began operation and shot dead prime suspect Bashir Shar. Police also injured Shar’s five accomplices including Naseer and Gadikosh.

Punjab IGP Usman Anwar said operation to eliminate gangsters in Katcha area was under way. All those involved in attack on police would bite the dust, he resolved. Hours earlier, IGP Dr Anwar, along with Additional IG Special Branch Zulfiqar Hameed, Additional IG CTD Waseem Sial and other senior officers, reached Rahim Yar Khan.

The provincial police chief and others will inquire after the injured in hospital and also visit the spot where the attack took place. According to police, 20 policemen were on way to re-join their duty by two vehicles after day-off when one of the vehicles broke down. A group of dacoits attacked the police contingent with rocket launchers. Later, they resorted to indiscriminate firing on the vehicles.

Eleven policemen were martyred on the spot while one succumbed to his injuries in hospital, they added. Five policemen, who went missing in the mayhem, were later recovered. After the incident was reported, a heavy contingent of police from across the district was called to the scene under the command of a DPO.

The injured policemen were shifted to the Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Rahim Yar Khan. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the attack. Naqvi expressed deep sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of 12 police personnel in the attack. He paid tribute to the martyred police officers and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured. He extended heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the martyrs.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of police personnel in the Katcha area. She paid tribute to the police officials martyred in the attack and extended condolences to the grieving families. She instructed that the injured policemen should be given the best medical care. The chief minister also sought a report from IGP Usman Anwar on the incident.

Bilawal flays dacoits attaan on Police

F.P. Report

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the coward attack on a police party by dacoits in Punjab, which resulted in the tragic martyrdom of 14 police officers.

In a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP extended his heartfelt condolences and expressed solidarity with the families of the martyred officers. “My heart goes out to the bereaved families. These brave officers were the valiant sons of our nation, and their sacrifices will not go in vain,” he affirmed.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari paid tribute to the fallen officers, acknowledging their unwavering commitment to duty. “The sacrifices made by the officers and personnel of Punjab Police in the line of duty are truly commendable and will be remembered forever,” he added.

He further urged the provincial government to ensure that those responsible for this heinous act are swiftly brought to justice. Emphasizing the importance of maintaining law and order, Chairman Bilawal stressed, “It is the provincial government’s responsibility to deal criminal elements with an iron fist.” Additionally, he called for a thorough investigation into the incident and demanded that the best possible medical care be provided to the injured officers.

Thousands stranded as floods hit India and Bangladesh

NEW DELHI, DHAKA (AFP): Floodwaters have inundated parts of India and Bangladesh, stranding hundreds of thousands of people in India’s northeast and neighbouring Bangladesh’s eastern region. The death toll in Bangladesh, which is still recovering from weeks of political turmoil, had risen to 13 on Friday. Some 4.5 million people were affected by the floods in eastern Bangladesh, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief said. Soldiers in lifeboats ferried people to safety in India’s northeastern state of Tripura on Friday after heavy rains triggered floods and landslides, forcing more than 65,000 people from their homes and killing at least 23 people, the authorities said.

Television images showed army personnel manning the rescue craft, while cars and buses were marooned in streets of knee-deep water, and disaster management officials said four days of incessant rain had swollen rivers. The authorities have opened 450 relief camps in Tripura, where about 1.7 million people have been affected, along with extensive damage to infrastructure, crops and livestock.

The rains and the rising waters from upstream Tripura devastated many areas in eastern Bangladesh. Many in the worst-hit districts such as Cumilla, Feni and Noakhali called for rescue as power was cut and road links were disconnected. Travel and communications were severed between the capital, Dhaka, and the southeastern port city of Chittagong as parts of a major highway were under water.

While annual monsoon rains in South

Asia regularly cause significant destruction, climate change is altering weather patterns and increasing the frequency of extreme weather events. “It’s a catastrophic situation here,” rescue volunteer Zahed Hossain Bhuiya, 35, told the AFP news agency from Feni. “We are trying to rescue as many people as we can.” Nur Islam, a shopkeeper in Feni, said his home had been completely submerged.

“Everything is underwater,” the 60-year-old said. Bangladesh’s disaster management ministry said in a bulletin that the latest toll of 13 deaths included fatalities in cities along the country’s southeastern coast. That included Chittagong and Cox’s Bazar, a district home to about a million Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar. Nearly 190,000 others were taken to emergency relief shelters, according to the bulletin.

While both the neighbours have been affected by the floods, many Bangladeshis blamed India, saying it opened a river dam in Tripura, causing sudden floods in Bangladesh. India’s Ministry of External Affairs denied that in a statement, saying the dam is far from the border and that India had seen the “heaviest rains of this year” this week, and that the flow of water downstream was due to “automatic releases”.

Tripura state’s main river, Gomti, was flowing above the danger mark, government officials said. The Gomti flows through the district of Cumilla in Bangladesh to empty into the Bay of Bengal. India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers that flow from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal.

Missing persons case: Court flays authorities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During a hearing at the Islamabad High Court, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked that it appears the government itself might be benefiting from enforced disappearances. The observation was made during the case concerning the recovery of two missing brothers of Azhar Mashwani.

The petitioner’s counsel, Babar Awan, presented his arguments before the court, while Additional Attorney General (AAG) Munawar Iqbal Dogal informed the court that high-level contacts have been made, and efforts are ongoing to locate the missing individuals.

A police officer from Lahore informed the court that despite receiving CCTV footage from the family, the poor resolution made it difficult for NADRA or forensic agencies to identify anyone. Geo-fencing data covering 10,000 numbers had been obtained, but so far, no actionable information has been found. The officer also highlighted the limitations of the Safe City Project,

stating that it does not cover every angle, and law enforcement agencies have not made significant progress.

The court expressed frustration, stating that it seems as though the government is the main beneficiary of enforced disappearances.

Justice Aurangzeb questioned how people could be abducted without the Chief Executive taking action, despite being informed of such incidents. The court noted that although the Attorney General had promised to brief the Prime Minister, there seems to be little concern from the top levels of government. Babar Awan argued that the Prime Minister does not even have time to read the court’s orders. The court then asked the AAG why the investigation appears to have stalled since the case began in the Islamabad High Court. The AAG responded that a geo-fencing report had been prepared.

Justice Aurangzeb further questioned the police officer on how long the individuals had been miss-

ing, to which the officer responded that they disappeared on June 6. The court remarked that three months have passed, yet two individuals remain forcibly disappeared, stressing the toll this must be taking on their families.

The court also questioned whether the meeting between the Prime Minister and Attorney General yielded any results. During the proceedings, Babar Awan requested that the Prime Minister be summoned to court, but the court clarified that the Prime Minister is the head of state and the Attorney General is the head of law according to the Constitution. The court stated that it had summoned the Attorney General following due process.

Justice Aurangzeb commented that if the government fails to follow due process, there is little the court can do. He lamented the damage these incidents are causing to the country’s reputation. The case was adjourned until Tuesday, with the judge noting that he would not be available that day, and the case should not be delayed due to his absence.

White House sees latest Gaza talks as ‘constructive’

WASHINGTON (AFP): Talks in Cairo on reaching a Gaza truce have made progress, the White House said Friday, as it urged Israel and Hamas to move forward. The White House confirmed that CIA chief William Burns and senior official Brett McGurk were taking part in discussions which started at a preliminary level Thursday.

“There has been progress made. We need now for both sides to come together and

work toward implementation,” National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters. “The preliminary talks that we had going into Cairo last night were constructive in nature. So we want to see that same sort of momentum continue here over the next couple of days,” he said.

Kirby said that reports that the diplomacy was “near collapse” were inaccurate. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited the

Middle East this week and said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was onboard with a US proposal to bridge gaps and reach a ceasefire in the more than 10-month conflict. Kirby said that the United States continued to believe that Netanyahu accepted the proposal, even though the right-wing leader has insisted on Israeli troops staying on the Gaza-Egypt border, butting heads with both Washington and Cairo.

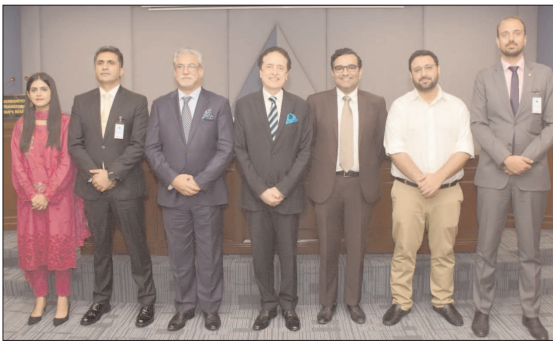
CASS hosts seminar

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, organised a seminar titled “Inter-generational Societal Transformations and Pakistan’s Resilience” on 22 August 2024. The event focused on bridging the generational gap in Pakistan to strengthen the nation’s resilience.

The seminar commenced with opening remarks by Dr Bilal Ghazanfar, Associate Senior Researcher at CASS, Lahore, who emphasised that technology has transformed the average generational gap into a generational break.

Mian Imran Masood, former Education Minister of Punjab, delivered the keynote address, wherein he emphasised the necessity of bolstering intergenerational connectivity through educational and social initiatives. Mr Oves Anwar, Director, Research Society of International Law, highlighted the technological prowess and innovative



mindset of younger generations and noted that they have the potential to reshape Pakistan’s future in a digitised world. Dr Yaqoob Ahmed Bangash, Associate Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Information Technology University, emphasised the need for enhancing communication between generations to leverage experience and wisdom.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS Lahore, highlighted that the widening generational gap in Pakistan poses a significant threat to

national cohesion and development. In his opinion, divergent worldviews, exacerbated by the amplifying effects of social media, have led to a polarisation of societal discourse in Pakistan. He warned that if left unchecked, this divide could undermine Pakistan’s ability to build a unified society that meets the challenges of the 21st century.

The question-and-answer session generated insightful discussions. The seminar highlighted the complexity of the inter-generational gap and identified steps that can be taken to build a more equitable, and prosperous Pakistan for generations to come.